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## Exploring The Potential of Traditional Beverages as Welcome Drinks in The Hospitality Industry: A Case Study of GRAMM Hotel By Ambarrukmo Yogyakarta

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**Abstract:** This study aims to analyze the potential of traditional beverages as welcome drinks in the hospitality industry. The study employed a qualitative method using a case study approach at GRAMM Hotel by Ambarrukmo in Yogyakarta. Data were collected through interviews with the Front Office Department, the Food and Beverage Service Department, and hotel management, and were supplemented by observations and documentation. The results indicate that traditional beverages have high potential as welcome drinks because they represent local culture and provide a unique experience for guests. The beverages deemed most promising are secang jahe, jahe asem jawi, and lemongrass. These three beverages are served on a rotating basis according to the operational schedule and availability of raw materials to maintain product quality and provide variety for guests. Although there are challenges related to shelf life and the consistency of raw materials, the implementation of traditional beverages can increase the added value of services and strengthen the hotel's image based on local culture.

**Keyword:** Traditional Beverages, Welcome Drinks, Local Culture, Hospitality Industry.

### INTRODUCTION

The hospitality industry continues to evolve in tandem with increasing public mobility, growth in the tourism sector, and shifting traveler preferences that increasingly prioritize authentic experiences during their stays. The term experience is a broad term used to describe people's feelings and encounters during everyday life (Hosany et al., 2022). Intensifying competition is driving hotels to focus not only on providing amenities and comfort, but also on creating added value that sets their services apart from competitors. One widely adopted strategy is integrating local cultural elements into the guest experience through various forms of services and offerings. This approach aligns with the trend of experience-based tourism, in which travelers seek not only accommodations but also opportunities to learn about the culture

and local wisdom of the regions they visit. Therefore, hotels are required to develop service innovations that not only enhance guest satisfaction but also support the preservation of local culture as part of a tourist destination's identity and competitiveness.

In the hospitality industry, guest experience is one of the key factors determining a service success and competitiveness (Zarezadeh et al., 2022). The increasingly competitive tourism industry is driving hotels to not only provide adequate facilities but also create memorable experiences for guests throughout their stay. Guest experience encompasses all interactions and guests' perceptions of the services they receive, from the moment they arrive until they check out. A positive experience can increase guest satisfaction, loyalty, and the likelihood that guests will return and recommend the hotel to other potential guests. Therefore, hotels need to develop various service strategies that can provide added value and build an emotional connection with guests. One approach is to integrate elements of local culture into hotel services, so that guests not only enjoy comfort but also an authentic experience that reflects the character and identity of the destination they are visiting.

One of the most common forms of initial service provided at hotels is the serving of a welcome drink. In addition to serving as a greeting, the welcome drink is part of a service strategy that can create a positive experience from the moment a guest arrives. GRAMM Hotel by Ambarrukmo was selected because it is a culturally themed hotel located in Yogyakarta, a destination strongly associated with Javanese cultural heritage. The hotel actively incorporates local cultural elements into its services, making it a relevant setting for examining the potential use of traditional beverages as welcome drinks. A welcome drink designed to highlight local identity can enhance the experiential value of the stay, strengthen the hotel's image, and serve as a means of promoting local culture to tourists. This concept aligns with trends in the hospitality industry that emphasize the importance of personalized service and authentic experiences as competitive advantages.

In this context, traditional beverages have great potential to be developed as welcome drinks because they not only offer distinctive flavors but also embody cultural values, history, and local wisdom that are integral to a destination's identity. Various studies indicate that tourists increasingly value local culinary experiences as part of their overall travel experience. Tourists' positive perceptions of traditional beverages as signature products of a destination indicate that local beverages can enhance satisfaction while strengthening a region's cultural appeal.

Several studies have also shown that traditional beverages have been successfully used as welcome drinks or signature drinks to introduce local culture to tourists, such as Loloh Don Cemcem and Loloh Sembung in Bali. The results of these studies indicate that serving traditional beverages not only provides functional benefits to guests but also serves as a medium for cultural promotion and supports service differentiation in the tourism sector. This study contributes to the hospitality literature by examining traditional beverages not merely as culinary products but as experiential hospitality tools that can enhance guest experience while strengthening local cultural branding within hotel operations.

Nevertheless, research on the implementation of traditional beverages as welcome drinks in star-rated hotels particularly as it relates to enhancing the guest experience and strengthening the hotel's cultural identity remains relatively limited. Most previous studies have focused on traditional beverages in the context of culinary tourism or tourism villages, and thus have not explained how traditional beverages can be integrated into hotel service strategies. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the potential of traditional beverages as welcome drinks at GRAMM Hotel by Ambarrukmo in Yogyakarta and to identify the factors that support their implementation in enhancing the guest experience and strengthening the hotel's image based on local culture.

## METHOD

### Type of Research

This study employed a qualitative research approach using a case study design to explore the potential of traditional beverages as welcome drinks in the hospitality industry. A qualitative approach was selected because it enables an in-depth understanding of participants' perceptions, experiences, and perspectives regarding the implementation of traditional beverages as part of hotel service innovation (Flyvbjerg, 2006). The case study design was considered appropriate because the research focused on a single hospitality establishment, namely GRAMM Hotel by Ambarrukmo Yogyakarta, allowing an intensive examination of the phenomenon within its real-life operational context. The hotel was selected because it actively incorporates local cultural values into its hospitality services and branding, making it an appropriate setting for investigating the integration of traditional beverages into guest experiences.

### Time and Location of the Study

The study was conducted at Gramm Hotel by Ambarrukmo Yogyakarta. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation, and document analysis the period from September 20 to October 20, 2025.

### Research Informants

The research was conducted at GRAMM Hotel by Ambarrukmo Yogyakarta. Informants were selected using purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in planning, preparing, and serving welcome drinks. The participants consisted of the Front Office Manager and staff, Food and Beverage Manager, Food and Beverage Service staff, Executive Chef responsible for beverage preparation, and hotel guests who had experienced the welcome drink service. These informants were expected to provide comprehensive insights into the operational practices, service objectives, guest perceptions, and challenges associated with implementing traditional beverages as welcome drinks.

**Table 1. Research Informants Profile**

Informant Code	Position	Years of Experience	Selection Criteria
A1	Front Office Supervisor	5 years	Responsible for guest arrival services and welcome drink implementation.
A2	Front Office Staff	3 years	Directly involved in serving welcome drinks to guests.
A3	Food and Beverage Manager	5 years	Responsible for beverage planning and quality control.
A4	Food and Beverage Service Supervisor	5 years	Involved in beverage preparation and presentation.
A5	Food and Beverage Service Staff	5 years	Responsible for beverage production and ingredient management.

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A6	Executive Chef	5 years	Provided information regarding the preparation process and characteristics of traditional beverages.
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Source: Primary data processed by the researcher (2025)

### Data Collection Techniques and Tools

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, direct observation, and documentation. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected informants who were directly involved in the planning, preparation, and service of welcome drinks at GRAMM Hotel by Ambarrukmo Yogyakarta. The informants consisted of hotel management, Food and Beverage staff, Front Office staff, and hotel guests who had experienced the welcome drink service. This interview technique enabled the researcher to obtain comprehensive information regarding the potential of traditional beverages as welcome drinks, their contribution to guest experience, and factors influencing their implementation.

Observations were conducted to examine the actual practices of welcome drink service, including beverage preparation, presentation, serving procedures, and guest responses. Both participatory and non-participatory observations were employed to gain a deeper understanding of how traditional beverages were integrated into the hotel’s hospitality services. Documentation was used to complement the primary data obtained from interviews and observations. The collected documents included beverage menus, promotional materials, photographs of beverage presentation, and other relevant hotel documents related to the welcome drink program. To support the data collection process, the researcher used an interview guide, a voice recorder, and field notes. The interview guide ensured consistency during interviews while allowing flexibility for further exploration of emerging issues. Voice recordings were transcribed for data analysis, whereas field notes were used to record important observations and contextual information that could not be captured through audio recordings.

### Data Validity Techniques

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, this study employed source triangulation, method triangulation, and member checking. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from different informants, including hotel management, Front Office staff, Food and Beverage staff, and hotel guests. Method triangulation was carried out by comparing data collected through semi-structured interviews, direct observations, and documentation. In addition, member checking was conducted by confirming the interview results and preliminary findings with selected informants to ensure that the interpretations accurately reflected their perspectives and experiences. These procedures were applied to enhance the credibility, consistency, and reliability of the research findings.

The research method contains the type of research, sample and population or research subjects, time and place of research, instruments, procedures, and research techniques, as well as other matters relating to the method of research. This section can be divided into several sub-chapters, but no numbering is necessary.

### Data Analysis Techniques

The data were analyzed using the interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which consists of three stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data condensation involved selecting, simplifying, coding, and organizing information obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. The collected data were categorized into themes related to traditional

beverages, welcome drink services, guest experience, cultural representation, and implementation factors.

The second stage, data display, involved presenting the categorized data in descriptive narratives and thematic matrices to facilitate interpretation and identify patterns, similarities, and differences among informants' perspectives. Finally, conclusion drawing and verification were conducted by interpreting the findings and continuously comparing data from different sources and collection methods. This iterative process enabled the researcher to identify the potential of traditional beverages as welcome drinks and to understand the factors supporting their implementation in enhancing guest experience and promoting local cultural identity at GRAMM Hotel by Ambarrukmo Yogyakarta.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Traditional Beverages as Cultural Representation

The findings revealed that traditional beverages possess significant potential as a representation of Yogyakarta's cultural identity within the hospitality industry. Based on interviews with seven employees of GRAMM Hotel by Ambarrukmo Yogyakarta, traditional beverages were perceived not only as refreshments but also as cultural products that reflect local values, traditions, and community heritage. Informants emphasized that beverages such as *secang*, *jahe asem jawi*, and lemongrass tea embody local wisdom and can serve as an effective medium for introducing Yogyakarta's culture to hotel guests.

The informant explained that serving traditional beverages as welcome drinks can offer a different experience compared to generic welcome drinks. In addition to offering a distinctive flavor, traditional beverages also carry stories and philosophies that can be shared with guests as part of the hotel's service. One informant stated that traditional beverages are a form of cultural heritage that can be introduced to tourists through hospitality services. Thus, serving traditional beverages not only serves as a gesture of the hotel's hospitality but also as a means of introducing Yogyakarta's cultural identity.

Based on the interview results, the informants believe that traditional beverages have cultural value that can support the hotel's identity as part of a cultural tourism destination. The Food and Beverage Manager (A3) explained that *secang*, *jahe asem jawi*, and lemongrass tea were chosen as welcome drinks because these three beverages have distinctive flavors and effectively represent the culture of Yogyakarta to guests.

"*Secang*, Javanese ginger and tamarind tea, and lemongrass tea were chosen as welcome drinks at our hotel because their distinctive flavors represent the city of Yogyakarta and the local culture of the surrounding area" (A3).

The findings of this study indicate that traditional beverages can serve as a means of cultural communication between hotels and guests. Through the beverages served, guests have the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of local culture through an authentic culinary experience. This experience can provide added value for guests while reinforcing the hotel's identity as an accommodation that highlights local cultural elements in its services.

These findings are consistent with the research by (Lagarensen et al., n.d.2025), which states that integrating local culture into hotel services can enhance the tourist experience while strengthening the destination's identity. Furthermore, (Alexandra et al., 2026) explain that local gastronomy plays a crucial role in creating authentic tourism experiences because it showcases a region's character and uniqueness. In the context of this study, traditional beverages are viewed not only as food and beverage products but also as cultural representations that can support efforts to preserve local culture while enhancing the appeal of hospitality services.

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that traditional beverages have great potential to be served as a welcome drink at GRAMM Hotel by Ambarrukmo Yogyakarta

because they represent the local cultural identity, provide guests with an authentic experience, and reinforce the hotel's image as one that prioritizes the cultural values of Yogyakarta.

### **Traditional Beverage and Guest Experience**

The research findings indicate that traditional beverages served as welcome drinks provide a positive experience for guests at GRAMM Hotel by Ambarrukmo in Yogyakarta. Based on interview results, informants explained that guests showed interest in the traditional beverages served because they offered a new experience that differed from the welcome drinks they typically encounter at other hotels. This interest was evident in guests' responses, as they offered positive comments after tasting the beverages and expressed a desire to learn more about the ingredients and origins of the drinks.

This was stated by Informant A1, the Front Office Supervisor, who said:

“After tasting the traditional welcome drink we serve, guests often say that it's their first time trying it and that they're intrigued by it, especially international guests.” (A1)

This statement indicates that traditional beverages can create a unique and memorable experience for guests. The experience of trying a beverage they have never consumed before adds value to the service process, as guests not only receive a welcome drink but also gain an authentic cultural experience. For international tourists, this experience serves as a way to learn about local culture through the region's distinctive culinary offerings.

These findings indicate that traditional beverages play an important role in shaping the guest experience, particularly during the early stages of a guest's interaction with the hotel. As a form of first-encounter service, a welcome drink can create a first impression that influences guests' perceptions of the overall quality of service. When the beverage served has unique characteristics and reflects local culture, the guest's experience becomes more meaningful than simply receiving a standard welcome drink.

The findings of this study align with the concept that experience as the term is used in philosophy, psychology, and in consumer behavior and marketing (Schmitt, 2011) modern consumers seek not only products or services, but also memorable and emotionally meaningful experiences. In the hospitality industry, unique experiences can be a key factor in enhancing guest satisfaction and loyalty. Traditional beverages served as welcome drinks provide a sensory experience through their taste, aroma, and accompanying cultural stories, thereby creating stronger memories for guests.

Furthermore, Spence (2022) explains that multisensory experiences involving the senses of taste, smell, and sight have a significant influence on customers' perceptions of a service. The results of this study support these findings, as guests expressed interest after tasting traditional beverages with flavor and aroma characteristics distinct from the beverages they typically consume. Thus, serving traditional beverages as a welcome drink not only serves as a gesture of hospitality but also as a strategy to enhance the quality of the guest experience by offering an authentic and memorable cultural experience.

Based on the research findings, the traditional beverages served as welcome drinks at GRAMM Hotel by Ambarrukmo in Yogyakarta have been shown to positively contribute to the guest experience. The unique flavors, aromas, and cultural significance of these traditional beverages create a distinctive and memorable experience, especially for guests trying them for the first time. The research findings indicate that guests, particularly international tourists, show interest in traditional beverages because they provide an opportunity to learn about local culture through an authentic culinary experience. Thus, traditional beverages serve not only as a welcome drink but also as a means to create sensory and cultural experiences that reinforce guests' first impressions of the hotel. Therefore, incorporating traditional beverages as a welcome drink can be an effective strategy for enhancing service quality, enriching the guest

experience, and strengthening the hotel's cultural identity amid an increasingly competitive hospitality industry.

### **Supporting Factors for Implementation**

The research findings indicate that there are several factors supporting the implementation of traditional beverages as welcome drinks at GRAMM Hotel by Ambarrukmo in Yogyakarta. These factors include the close connection between traditional beverages and the local culture, the availability of easily obtainable ingredients, and support from various hotel departments for the use of traditional beverages as part of guest service. The informants assessed that these conditions present a significant opportunity for the hotel to integrate traditional beverages into its welcome drink service on a sustainable basis.

Based on the interview findings, Informant A6, the Executive Chef, explained that one of the main factors supporting the introduction of traditional beverages is the high level of public acceptance of these products, as well as the ease of obtaining the raw materials. "One reason traditional beverages can be served as welcome drinks at this hotel is that the local community already consumes these traditional beverages on a daily basis, and the ingredients are very easy to find." (A6)

This statement indicates that traditional beverages are deeply rooted in the lives of local communities, making them still relevant and readily accepted. Furthermore, the abundant availability of raw materials benefits hotels by ensuring production continuity, product quality, and operational efficiency. This finding was corroborated by Informant A4, the Food and Beverage Service Supervisor, who explained that the decision to serve traditional beverages as welcome drinks had been discussed and received support from various parties within the hotel. "We've held discussions and received approval from all parties at the hotel, so they've agreed to serve traditional beverages as welcome drinks because this can help introduce local attractions to more people." (A4). The results of the interviews indicate that internal organizational support is a key factor in the successful implementation of a service innovation. The consensus among the hotel's various departments reflects a shared commitment to providing services that are not only focused on guest satisfaction but also support the promotion of Yogyakarta's local culture and potential.

The findings of this study align with the concept of cultural hospitality, which emphasizes the importance of integrating local cultural elements into hospitality services as a means of creating authentic experiences for tourists. According to Prasetya et al. (2025), incorporating local cultural elements into hotel services can enhance the value of the guest experience while strengthening the identity of a tourist destination. Furthermore, Aprilia et al. (2026) explain that the use of local products in the tourism industry contributes to cultural preservation and enhances a destination's appeal through unique and distinctive experiences. In the context of this study, easy access to raw materials, the close connection between traditional beverages and local life, and support from hotel management are key factors in facilitating the implementation of traditional beverages as part of a culture-based service strategy.

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the implementation of traditional beverages as welcome drinks at GRAMM Hotel by Ambarrukmo in Yogyakarta is supported by cultural, operational, and organizational factors. The high level of public acceptance of traditional beverages, the availability of easily obtainable raw materials, and support from various parties within the hotel are the main factors enabling the implementation of this program. These conditions indicate that traditional beverages have strong potential to be developed as part of a hotel service strategy that prioritizes authentic experiences while introducing local culture to guests.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that traditional beverages have significant potential to be used as welcome drinks in the hospitality industry, particularly at GRAMM Hotel by Ambarrukmo in Yogyakarta. This potential is not only seen from the beverage product aspect but also from its role in supporting an experience-based service strategy. Traditional beverages can serve as a medium for representing Yogyakarta's local cultural identity, which can be introduced to guests upon their arrival, thereby adding value in creating a positive first impression of the hotel.

This study concludes that traditional beverages have strong potential to be implemented as welcome drinks in the hospitality industry, particularly at GRAMM Hotel by Ambarrukmo Yogyakarta. First, traditional beverages serve as a representation of local cultural identity, allowing hotels to introduce Yogyakarta's cultural values to guests while enhancing the symbolic value of hospitality services. Second, traditional beverages contribute to an experience-based service by providing unique and authentic guest experiences that differentiate the hotel from standard welcome drink offerings. Third, the successful implementation of traditional beverages as welcome drinks depends on strong managerial support, including policy direction, staff training, and standardized operating procedures. Despite their potential benefits, several challenges remain, such as product consistency, limited shelf life, and varying guest preferences, which require continuous innovation and operational improvement.

In addition, serving traditional beverages as welcome drinks has proven to provide a more authentic experience for guests—both domestic and international—as they offer unique flavors, cultural value, and a different experience compared to typical welcome drinks. This demonstrates that traditional beverages can help enhance a hotel's competitiveness through service differentiation rooted in local culture.

The success of implementing traditional beverages as welcome drinks is also greatly influenced by the support of hotel management, particularly in the form of operational policies, the development of standard operating procedures (SOPs), and employee training to ensure that the serving process meets the service standards of a star-rated hotel. On the other hand, this study also identified several challenges, such as limited product shelf life, flavor consistency, and differences in guest preferences. Therefore, continuous innovation in processing and serving is necessary to ensure that traditional beverages can continue to be implemented optimally without compromising the hotel's service quality standards.

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