

## Transformations In Boyacá's Traditional Gastronomy And Its Influence On Cultural Identity

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### ABSTRACT

Traditional gastronomy is a representation of the cultural identity of the communities that live in the department of Boyacá, Colombia; but due to changes in eating habits and the scarcity of traditional ingredients, it faces the threat of disappearance. Faced with this problem, this study seeks to formulate guidelines for its preservation. A qualitative action research approach was used, with a purposive sample of 80 representatives of the culinary sector, including chefs and experts in ancestral gastronomy. The results allow us to establish that the gastronomic crisis is attributed to the preference for processed foods and the scarcity of essential raw materials, such as cereals, which are fundamental in traditional gastronomy. It is therefore essential to implement strategies to mitigate this loss and preserve this cultural legacy rooted in the history and identity of Boyacá. It is concluded that ignoring this crisis and not acting to safeguard it could lead to its disappearance, significantly affecting the cultural identity of the communities, as traditional gastronomy is a vital element of their cultural heritage.

**Keywords:** Boyacá, gastronomy, cultural identity, preservation

### INTRODUCTION

Boyacense traditional gastronomy plays a fundamental role in the cultural identity of communities, as it serves as a link rooted in the history and heritage of a region. However, in the current context, this cultural heritage faces the threat of disappearance, due to changes in eating habits and the availability of ingredients. Authors such as (Brulotte and Giovine, 2016; Hirschfelder et al., 2020; Partarakis et al., 2021) state that the shift to new eating habits, such as a preference for light and processed foods, is weakening the culinary traditions rooted in the culture of various communities.

This raises a relevant issue: How do changes in eating habits and the availability of traditional ingredients affect the gastronomy and cultural identity of local communities? The answer to this question is necessary to understand the magnitude of the challenge facing the preservation of traditional gastronomy in the department of Boyacá, Colombia.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to address this problem and to formulate guidelines for the preservation of traditional gastronomy in the department of Boyacá, Colombia. Taking as a reference the postulates of Trichopoulou (2012) on the influence of globalization on culinary traditions, and the perspective of Taheri and Gannon (2021) on the relationship between food and cultural identity, this study aims to analyze the factors that are leading to the gastronomic crisis in the region.

To achieve this objective, a qualitative action research approach is employed, focusing on the active participation of 80 representatives of the culinary sector, including chefs and experts in traditional gastronomy. Through this approach, we seek to understand the underlying causes of the gastronomic crisis and develop effective strategies to mitigate its impact on the cultural identity of Boyacá's communities.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review in this study focuses on exploring the concept of traditional gastronomy and, fundamentally, on highlighting its importance in the cultural identity of communities. This analysis seeks to understand the historical evolution of culinary practices rooted in tradition and how these have contributed to forging the identity of social groups.

### **Traditional Boyacense gastronomy**

Traditional gastronomy is a fundamental pillar in the cultural identity of communities, acting as a link between the past and the present, and transmitting deep-rooted values, customs and knowledge from generation to generation (Vega and López 2012). In the specific context of the department of Boyacá, Colombia, traditional gastronomy manifests itself as a reflection of the rich history and cultural diversity of the region.

To fully understand the concept of traditional gastronomy, it is essential to explore its depths. According to Ocampo (2006), traditional gastronomy can be defined as a set of culinary practices rooted in the history and culture of a place, transmitted from generation to generation and adapted to specific geographical, climatic and social conditions. This approach emphasizes the importance of considering not only the dishes and foods themselves, but also the production processes, culinary techniques, rituals associated with food and the symbolic significance that these practices have for local communities (Vargas and Gama, 2019).

In the context of Boyacá, traditional gastronomy has evolved over the centuries, fusing indigenous influences with elements of Spanish and African cuisine. As Estupiñan and Trujillo (2009) point out, the region's typical dishes, such as ajiaco, sancocho and envuelto, reflect this rich mix of cultures and traditions. For example, tamales, one of Boyacá's most emblematic preparations, is the result of combining corn dough with meat and other ingredients, wrapped in bijao leaves and steamed. This preparation, present in religious festivities and family celebrations, embodies the identity and cultural roots of the region (García, 2019).

Boyacá's gastronomy is also distinguished by its diversity and versatility. In addition to the main dishes, the region has a wide variety of traditional snacks and drinks that complement the culinary experience. These include fava beans, roasted corn, salted potato, and potato chorreada, as well as masato, chicha, chocolate and agua de panela (Rincón, 2023). Likewise, the art of amasijos, which includes the elaboration of arepas, breads and a variety of baked goods, occupies a prominent place in Boyacá's gastronomy, evidencing the skill and creativity of local communities in the kitchen (Gutiérrez, 2020).

From this perspective, traditional gastronomy is not only a source of nutrition, but also a fundamental component of the cultural identity of Boyacá's communities. Through its flavours, aromas and rituals, traditional gastronomy connects people with their past, strengthening social ties and preserving the cultural legacy of the region.

### **Traditional gastronomy and cultural identity**

The relationship between traditional gastronomy and the cultural identity of communities has been the subject of study in various academic fields, showing how food and culinary practices

play a significant role in the configuration and expression of cultural identity in different socio-cultural contexts around the world. Authors such as Lin et al. (2021) and Ramazanova et al. (2022) have highlighted how gastronomy not only fulfils a food function, but also acts as a central element in defining the identity of a group or community.

From an anthropological perspective, Abidin et al. (2020) argue that food and culinary practices are vehicles of cultural expression, reflecting the history, geography, climate and social relations of a given region. In this sense, traditional gastronomy encapsulates the essence of a community, transmitting traditions, values and knowledge from generation to generation (Martigny, 2010). This notion is supported by Sobrado (2018), who emphasizes how typical dishes and ancestrally transmitted recipes embody a collective memory, evoking past traditions and affirming shared cultural identity.

Moreover, traditional cuisine not only reflects the identity of a community, but also becomes a means to express belonging to that community and to establish social ties (Kapkan, 2023). Banquets, festivals and family celebrations become spaces where food acts as a cohesive agent, strengthening family and community ties (Oñate et al., 2017). This social dimension of traditional gastronomy has been extensively studied by researchers such as Krisnadi (2018), Vázquez and Medina (2020), who have explored how food habits are intrinsically related to the social structures and cultural dynamics of a society.

Consequently, traditional gastronomy not only constitutes an essential element of the cultural identity of communities, but also plays a fundamental role in the transmission of cultural heritage, social cohesion and the preservation of cultural diversity.

### **Changes in Traditional Gastronomy and their Impact on Cultural Identity**

Nowadays, a series of significant changes have been observed in traditional gastronomy, transformations that transcend simple evolutions in culinary techniques and that have a profound impact on the cultural identity of communities. According to (Rodríguez and Cáceres, 2016; Quintero et al., 2019, Forgas et al., 2019), industrialization and changes in the socio-cultural environment represent a major challenge to this ancestral culinary legacy, gradually minimizing the knowledge and skills passed down from generation to generation. This process is aggravated by the migration of young people to urban areas, which contributes to the weakening of these deep-rooted local cultural traditions.

On the other hand, global climate change, as highlighted by Feldman and Wunderlich (2022) and Chapa (2017), has caused a series of adverse consequences for agriculture, directly affecting the availability of essential ingredients for traditional gastronomy. The scarcity of these elements further exacerbates the situation by jeopardising the ability of experts in this art to keep their culinary heritage alive, leading to a decline in interest in preserving these ancestral practices.

Additionally, globalization has fostered the homogenization of eating habits, as mentioned by (Mincyté and Plath, 2015; Mahecha, 2017; Ortíz, 2017; Frez et al., 2021), generating a reduction in interest in traditional foods. The promotion of a 'fitness' diet and the exclusion of basic ingredients of traditional gastronomy, such as carbohydrates and cereals, have contributed to increasing the distance between these deep-rooted culinary traditions and the cultural identity of communities.

In itself, these transformations represent an existential threat to traditional gastronomy and, consequently, to the cultural identity of the communities that practise it. Addressing this challenge requires deep reflection on the underlying factors and the implementation of

effective strategies that not only preserve this valuable culinary heritage, but also strengthen and revitalize the cultural identity of communities.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research was structured following qualitative methodological principles, with the aim of analyzing and understanding the complexity of the changes and factors that influence traditional gastronomy in the department of Boyacá, Colombia, and its impact on the cultural identity of the communities.

In line with this perspective, a qualitative methodology was chosen to explore and understand the subjectivity of the participants, as well as to interpret the meanings and experiences associated with traditional gastronomy. Kozleski (2017) argues that qualitative research is suitable for this purpose, as it focuses on understanding social phenomena from the perspective of the actors involved, allowing for an in-depth exploration of the motivations, beliefs and perceptions underlying their actions.

In terms of the scope of the research, descriptive research guidelines were adopted to detail in detail the relevant aspects identified at each stage of the study. According to Holmes et al., (2023), descriptive research focuses on describing characteristics and phenomena as they occur in their natural context, which is appropriate in this study to analyze in detail the changes and factors affecting traditional cuisine.

Finally, the research design was based on the action research method, which combines research processes and practical actions aimed at solving problems and improving the situation under study. Acharya and Mohanty's (2019) perspective highlights the usefulness of this approach in addressing complex social problems, as it allows for active participation of the researchers and the communities involved in identifying and solving problems. In this sense, the study not only focused on identifying the factors that affect traditional gastronomy, but also proposed concrete actions for its preservation and strengthening as an integral part of the cultural identity of Boyacense communities.

### **Unit of Study - Participants**

In relation to the unit of study, a detailed description of the participants involved in the research is presented. The sample consisted of a total of 80 individuals, mostly chefs and experts in the traditional culinary art of the department of Boyacá, Colombia. In addition, three teachers from the School of Gastronomy of the Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia, who have a deep knowledge of the ancestral gastronomic traditions of the region, were included.

For the selection of participants, a non-probabilistic convenience sampling was used, carefully considering the established criteria. These criteria included the condition of being a cook of traditional gastronomy, having more than ten years of experience in this work and belonging to the department of Boyacá, Colombia.

The selected participants came from various municipalities in the department of Boyacá, Colombia, including Paipa, Duitama, Sogamoso, Firavitoba and Venta Quemada. These localities were strategically selected due to their relevance in the preservation and practice of traditional gastronomy in the region. The choice of participants was based on the need to obtain a representative and diverse sample that would allow for an in-depth understanding of the changes and factors that influence traditional gastronomy in the department of Boyacá.

## **Techniques and Instruments**

This section details the techniques and instruments used in the development of the study, in line with the qualitative approach adopted. Two main techniques are highlighted: the opinion survey and the focus groups.

The opinion survey was used as a crucial tool to collect data on the perceptions, experiences and opinions of the participants regarding traditional gastronomy in the department of Boyacá, Colombia. For this purpose, a structured questionnaire including open-ended questions was implemented, allowing for a deeper exploration of participants' perspectives.

On the other hand, focus groups were used as a complementary technique to encourage the exchange of ideas and opinions among participants. A structured questionnaire was designed to guide the discussion in these groups, thus facilitating the identification of patterns, trends and discrepancies in the perceptions and experiences of individuals with respect to traditional gastronomy.

Importantly, both questionnaires used were subjected to a validation process by experts in the culinary art of traditional gastronomy. This validation guaranteed the reliability and validity of the instruments used, thus ensuring the quality of the data collected and the robustness of the study's findings.

## **Stages of the study**

The research process was structured in three stages with the aim of comprehensively addressing the challenges facing traditional gastronomy in the department of Boyacá, Colombia. In the first stage, priority was given to identifying and understanding the factors that have emerged in modern gastronomic changes, as well as their negative impact on traditional gastronomy. To this end, an opinion survey was administered to 80 selected participants in order to obtain a holistic view of the perceptions and experiences of the actors involved.

Once the problem had been elucidated and the determining factors that have undermined traditional gastronomy in the region had been identified, the second phase of the study proceeded. In this stage, the focus was on the formulation of guidelines and directives aimed at safeguarding the traditional culinary art of the department of Boyacá, in order to preserve the idiosyncrasy and cultural identity of the local communities. The teachers, experts in the culinary art linked to the study, took on the responsibility of drawing up an action plan as a preventive measure against the continuing threat posed by the loss of traditional gastronomy. The third and final phase of the research was aimed at socializing the action plan conceived by the academics with the 80 participants involved in the study. This phase was carried out through the application of the focus group technique, with the aim of analyzing in detail the opinions, arguments and reflections of the experts and chefs who make up the traditional gastronomy network in the department of Boyacá. This process allowed the action plan to be validated and enriched through direct feedback from the key actors involved in the preservation of this important cultural legacy.

## **RESULTS**

The findings of this research constitute a focal point in the analysis of the transformations experienced by Boyacá's traditional gastronomy and its complex interaction with cultural identity. In this context, it reveals the impact that modifications in ancestral culinary practices have had on both the preservation and eventual decline of this valuable cultural heritage. The

results of this study offer a revealing insight into the way in which changes in local gastronomy have influenced the perception and sense of identity rooted in the Boyacan community.

### **Results stage one**

The analysis of the answers derived from the survey applied to the 80 representatives of the culinary sector, including chefs and experts in ancestral gastronomy, revealed the factors with the greatest impact on Boyaca's traditional gastronomy. These factors include industrialization, climate change and the new eating habits of the communities. Using AtlasTi research software and the process of open, axial and selective coding, these three main categories were identified. The category of '**Industrialization Processes**' emerges as a determining factor that has had an impact on Boyaca's traditional gastronomy. This phenomenon has provoked a marked decrease in the presence of small traditional gastronomic businesses, due to the fact that large entrepreneurs, backed by innovative technologies, can offer products more quickly and at lower costs. As a result, traditional culinary connoisseurs are constrained by the lack of access to advanced technologies, making it difficult for them to compete with gastronomic organizations that do have these tools.

The opinions of the respondents support these observations. For example, Respondent 1 stated: 'In my particular case, I use traditional methods for the preparation of Boyacán gastronomy dishes; I do not have high-level technologies that allow me to speed up processes'. Respondent 25 also said: 'Technological evolution is a challenge for traditional cooks, as many of us use traditional techniques in our gastronomic preparations'. In addition, Respondent 10 commented: 'The lack of access to modern technologies limits our ability to compete in today's market, which jeopardizes the continuity of our culinary traditions'. Finally, Respondent 45 added: 'While we value our culinary roots, we recognize the need to adapt to market demands in order to survive in today's gastronomy industry'.

The analysis of this category, based on the opinions gathered from the sample subjects, shows the negative impact of industrialization on Boyaca's traditional gastronomy. The decline of small gastronomic businesses and the threat to the preservation of ancestral knowledge represent significant challenges that require immediate attention and appropriate measures to safeguard this unique cultural heritage.

Overall, the opinions and arguments of traditional gastronomy connoisseurs and chefs reveal that the process of industrialization has considerably affected traditional gastronomy practitioners in the department of Boyacá, Colombia, with a particularly notable impact in the municipalities of Paipa, Duitama, Sogamoso, Firavitoba and Venta Quemada. The loss of authenticity and cultural diversity, as well as the gradual disappearance of ancestral culinary practices, are worrying consequences of this trend. It is therefore necessary to implement strategies and policies that promote the protection and revitalization of Boyaca's traditional gastronomy, thus preserving its cultural richness and historical identity for future generations. On the other hand, the results of the category '**Climate Change**' are revealed as a relevant aspect in the analysis. According to respondents, variations in climate have had significant consequences for gastronomy professionals, who have been hampered by the scarcity of inputs suitable for the preparation of typical regional dishes. For example, wheat, maize, potato and other crops have suffered adverse impacts as a result of climatic fluctuations, which has led to a reduction in the availability of fresh and quality ingredients, directly affecting the authenticity and variety of Boyacán's traditional gastronomy.

Participants' perceptions confirm these findings. Respondent 7, for example, noted that 'climate changes have directly impacted our ability to obtain fresh and quality ingredients for

our traditional gastronomic preparations'. Similarly, Respondent 14 expressed that 'the scarcity of agricultural products due to climatic changes has forced us to look for alternatives in the preparation of our dishes, which has impacted on the authenticity of our gastronomy'. In addition, Respondent 20 highlighted that 'climatic changes have reduced the variety of ingredients available, limiting our culinary creativity'. Finally, Respondent 35 stated that 'changing climatic conditions represent a constant challenge to maintain the quality and authenticity of our traditional dishes'.

The analysis of this category highlights the adverse impact of climate change on Boyaca's traditional gastronomy. The lack of adequate inputs and the need to seek alternatives in the preparation of dishes pose significant challenges that demand attention and appropriate measures to preserve the authenticity and culinary richness of the region. Therefore, it is essential to implement adaptation and mitigation strategies that allow traditional gastronomy professionals to face the challenges derived from climate change, thus guaranteeing the continuity and prosperity of this valuable manifestation of Boyacá's culture.

Finally, the analysis of the category '**New Eating Habits of the Communities**' emerges as a relevant aspect in this research. According to the data collected, there has been a significant change in the eating patterns of Boyacan communities in recent decades. This change has been driven by several factors, including globalisation, urbanisation and the influence of the media. As a result, new food preferences and lifestyles have been adopted that have had a direct impact on the traditional gastronomy of the region.

The opinions gathered from the participants support these statements. For example, Respondent 12 mentioned that 'the influence of fast food and processed foods has led to a decrease in the consumption of traditional dishes in the Boyacán community'. Similarly, Respondent 18 expressed that 'lack of time and the convenience of ready-to-eat foods have changed eating habits, leading people away from traditional preparations'. In addition, Respondent 27 noted that 'exposure to different cultures and cooking styles has generated a greater interest in trying new foods and recipes, leaving aside local culinary traditions'.

The analysis of this category reveals the profound impact of new eating habits on Boyaca's traditional gastronomy. The preference for processed foods, the lack of time to prepare traditional dishes and the influence of other cultures have led to a gradual loss of the authenticity and diversity of regional cuisine. This phenomenon poses significant challenges for the preservation of traditional gastronomy and underlines the need to promote initiatives that encourage respect and appreciation of ancestral culinary practices.

In this sense, the results of this research highlight the importance of understanding and addressing changes in the eating habits of Boyacán communities. It is essential to develop strategies that promote healthy and sustainable eating, while preserving and revitalizing local culinary traditions for future generations.

### **Results of stage two**

In response to the challenges identified during the first stage of the research, where the factors affecting traditional gastronomy in the department of Boyacá were evaluated, and in which the negative influence of industrialization, climatic changes and new eating habits on the preservation of this culinary legacy were identified as the main findings, a strategic action plan has been developed. The main objective of this plan is to safeguard and promote traditional gastronomy as an essential part of the cultural identity of the region.

The general objective of the action plan is to preserve and promote the traditional gastronomy of the department of Boyacá, Colombia, as an integral part of its cultural identity, facing the

challenges derived from industrialization, climatic changes and new eating habits. Specific objectives focused on the safeguarding of Boyacá's traditional gastronomy were also formulated, which are as follows:

- Raise community awareness of the importance of traditional gastronomy as a cultural heritage and a driving force for local development.
- Support small entrepreneurs in the traditional culinary sector in Boyacá to strengthen their capacities and competitiveness in the market.
- Promote crop diversification and the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices to mitigate the effects of climate change on the production of key ingredients for traditional gastronomy.
- Promote conscious and healthy eating, incorporating traditional gluten-free ingredients and adapting recipes to meet the demands of today's market.
- Promote gastronomic tourism in Boyacá through promotional campaigns on social networks and the organization of gastronomic events that highlight the culinary richness of the region.

Based on the formulated objectives, actions have been established with the aim of contributing to the conservation and perpetuation of Boyacá's traditional gastronomy. In this context, different specific measures have been identified and proposed to promote the preservation of the culinary tradition. Among these actions are the following:

- **Cultural Awareness and Promotion:** In order to increase awareness and appreciation for traditional gastronomy among the local community and visitors, it is essential to carry out the elaboration and dissemination of educational and promotional materials on Boyacá's traditional gastronomy.
- **Business Strengthening:** It is necessary to support small traditional gastronomic entrepreneurs in Boyacá by organizing workshops and specialized training, with the aim of improving their business management and adapting to new market trends.
- **Promotion of Sustainable Agricultural Practices:** Technical and financial advisory programmes for local farmers should be implemented to encourage crop diversification and the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices that ensure the continued availability of traditional ingredients.
- **Recipe Adaptation and Healthy Eating:** Strategic alliances with healthy and gluten-free food suppliers are required to promote conscious eating adapted to current consumer preferences. In addition, the use of local and high quality ingredients in traditional gastronomy will be promoted, as well as the adaptation of recipes to meet the demands of the current market.
- **Tourism Promotion and Gastronomic Events:** It is essential to design and execute digital campaigns in social networks to highlight the gastronomic offer of Boyacá and position the department as a culinary tourist destination. Local gastronomic events will also be organized to showcase the culinary richness of the region and attract tourists interested in traditional gastronomy.

Monitoring indicators will be established to measure the impact of the actions implemented, carrying out periodic evaluations to adjust and improve the action plan according to the results obtained. This action plan aims to face the current challenges and guarantee the preservation and promotion of the traditional gastronomic legacy of the department of Boyacá, thus contributing to the strengthening of its cultural identity and the socio-economic development of the region.

### **Results stage three**

In the third stage of this study, three focus groups were carried out with the participation of some of the 80 participating gastronomy experts, who were previously informed about the action plan formulated for the preservation and promotion of traditional gastronomy in the department of Boyacá. These focus groups were designed with the purpose of collecting the opinions, perspectives and recommendations of these experts, in order to enrich and validate the action plan, as well as to identify possible areas of improvement or discrepancies that could arise during its implementation. Through an open and constructive dialogue, the aim was to obtain a comprehensive and representative view of the gastronomic community, in order to strengthen the relevance and effectiveness of the action plan in question.

During the focus groups, gastronomy experts expressed different opinions regarding the proposed action plan. In general, there was a consensus regarding the importance of preserving and promoting traditional gastronomy as a fundamental part of Boyacá's cultural identity. However, some discrepancies and recommendations emerged that are worth highlighting.

Firstly, many experts emphasized the need to strengthen the cultural awareness and promotion component within the action plan. They suggested that more creative and effective strategies should be developed to increase awareness and appreciation of traditional cuisine among the local community and visitors. In addition, the importance of involving young people in this process through educational and cultural activities that allow them to value and appropriate their gastronomic heritage was highlighted.

In terms of business strengthening, experts agreed on the relevance of providing support and specialized training to small entrepreneurs in the traditional gastronomy sector in Boyacá. However, emphasis was placed on the need to ensure that these initiatives are inclusive and accessible to all actors involved, especially those with fewer resources or limited access to training opportunities.

In relation to the promotion of sustainable agricultural practices, experts emphasized the importance of establishing strategic partnerships with governmental and non-governmental organizations to ensure the success of these initiatives. It was suggested that more comprehensive technical and financial advisory programmes should be developed, addressing not only crop diversification, but also biodiversity conservation and environmental protection. Regarding the adaptation of recipes and healthy eating, the need to promote conscious eating adapted to the current needs and preferences of consumers was highlighted. It was suggested that new ways of preparing and presenting traditional dishes should be explored, using local and seasonal ingredients, as well as innovative cooking techniques that enhance their taste and nutritional value.

Finally, regarding tourism promotion and gastronomic events, experts emphasized the importance of developing more effective and attractive marketing strategies to attract tourists interested in Boyacá's traditional gastronomy. It was suggested that larger and more diverse gastronomic events should be organized, including interactive activities and unique culinary experiences that allow visitors to fully immerse themselves in the gastronomic richness of the region.

Overall, the results of the focus groups provided a comprehensive and detailed overview of the opinions and recommendations of the gastronomy experts, which will be fundamental to refine and enrich the proposed action plan. These reflections and suggestions will allow us to

move towards the effective preservation and promotion of the traditional gastronomy of the department of Boyacá, thus ensuring its cultural legacy for future generations.

## DISCUSSION

Traditional gastronomy plays a fundamental role in preserving the cultural identity of communities, serving as a tangible link to the past and a unique expression of the history and traditions of a place (Nevot, 2023). In the specific case of the department of Boyacá, this rich culinary heritage has transcended borders, gaining recognition worldwide for its authenticity and diversity (Muñoz, 2019).

The results of this study highlight the critical importance of safeguarding and promoting these traditional gastronomic practices, not only as a way to preserve the cultural heritage of the region, but also as a means to strengthen cultural identity and promote sustainable development (Kowalczyk and Kubal, 2020). Furthermore, it has been revealed that industrialization has led to a decrease in the presence of small traditional gastronomic businesses, as large entrepreneurs, taking advantage of innovative technologies, can offer products faster and at lower costs (Gabriel et al., 2018). This situation puts at risk the survival of traditional culinary art connoisseurs, whose knowledge and skills have been passed down from generation to generation.

Similarly, changes in eating habits, driven by the promotion of 'fitness' diets and the exclusion of basic ingredients of traditional cuisine, such as gluten-containing grains, represent an additional threat to the preservation of these culinary practices (Arianna et al., 2015). This trend towards more westernized and standardized diets not only affects gastronomic diversity, but also has profound implications for the health and well-being of communities.

To address these challenges, concerted action is required at the community, government and academic levels (López et al., 2016). Strategies that encourage the appreciation and promotion of traditional gastronomy need to be implemented, as well as measures to protect small-scale entrepreneurs and connoisseurs of traditional culinary art (Pipan and Gaćnik, 2021). Awareness-raising and education campaigns on the cultural and nutritional importance of traditional cuisine could help to reverse the trend towards a more homogenized diet.

It is also essential to promote research and innovation in the gastronomic field, seeking ways to adapt traditional practices to contemporary challenges such as climate change and globalization (Başaran, 2020). Collaboration between academia, the public sector and civil society is essential to develop policies and programmes that support the preservation and revitalization of traditional gastronomy in Boyacá and beyond.

Overall, this study highlights the importance of traditional gastronomy as a vital element of Boyacá's cultural identity and heritage. However, it also highlights the challenges facing this rich tradition in an increasingly globalized and industrialized world. To ensure its long-term survival, a collective commitment is required to protect, promote and preserve this invaluable culinary heritage for future generations.

## CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions of this study represent the culmination of a research process, which has sought to understand and address the challenges facing traditional gastronomy in the

department of Boyacá, Colombia, and its consequent impact on the cultural identity of local communities.

Firstly, the findings have revealed the magnitude of the factors that threaten the continuity of this invaluable culinary legacy. From industrialization to climatic changes and new eating habits induced by globalization, each element has contributed significantly to the transformation and, in many cases, the undermining of traditional gastronomy.

Based on a reflection on these findings, a comprehensive action plan has been formulated that seeks not only to preserve, but also to strengthen and revitalize this gastronomic heritage. The proposed strategy includes a series of concrete actions, such as the promotion of awareness-raising campaigns on the cultural importance of traditional gastronomy, the promotion of sustainable agricultural practices to guarantee the supply of traditional ingredients, and the incorporation of ancestral culinary techniques in the academic training of future chefs and connoisseurs of the culinary art.

These actions, based on critical discussion and consultation with experts, represent a crucial step towards safeguarding the cultural identity of the department of Boyacá - Colombia and the gastronomic legacy that has transcended borders. However, it recognizes the need for continued and collective commitment to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of these measures over time.

Ultimately, these conclusions are not only the closure of this research, but the starting point for a broader dialogue and concerted action for the preservation and valuation of traditional gastronomy as a vital component of the cultural heritage of Boyacá and humanity as a whole.

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