

Bali's cultural festivals: A visitor magnet supporting sustainable tourism

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Abstract: This study aims to further understand the perceptions of visitors to the Cultural Festival towards strengthening Balinese cultural identity. Cultural festivals in Bali are held with the aim of maintaining, preserving and as exposure of cultural values to the wider public. Cultural Festival activities in Bali organized by the government such as the Bali Arts Festival, Denpasar Festival and the latest is the Kesanga Festival. In organizing each festival, the principle of sustainability is one of the strong foundations for maintaining social, economic and environmental values without distorting local traditions and culture. This study uses quantitative data that is described descriptively. The unstructured interview was conducted during the data collection with informants from the representative of the festivals' social media associates. The data in this study were collected using a questionnaire distribution technique. The number of samples in this study was 100 respondents calculated using the Slovin formula with a 90% confidence level and a 10% error rate with no specific criteria yet mainly has experience in visiting (visitor) one of the cultural event used as research object. The results of the study showed that the variables of marketing strategy, cultural experience, cultural authenticity, and sustainability practices play an important role in creating strengthening cultural identity at cultural festivals in Bali.

Keywords: Authenticity, Cultural Experience, Cultural Festival, Marketing Strategy, Sustainability

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Introduction

The event sector in the world has an important role as a tool to regenerate the cultural life order of society, as a stimulus for investment to boost equality of life and directly impact tourism (Rizzello, 2014). On the other hand, cultural events are also able to foster pride and community involvement by celebrating local culture and traditions, so that they can produce a stronger sense of identity and cohesion in society (Botti et al., 2018; Pernecky, 2015). Events like this often serve as a platform for cultural exchange, providing an enriching experience for locals and tourists (Kruger et al., 2014). Furthermore, events are often used as a medium to increase exposure to cultural existence to the general public. One of the most frequently used formats is the festival. The festival itself encourages a high level of visitor involvement and evokes joyful emotions that tend to have a more significant impact on post-festival cultural and social engagement. Engaged visitors, categorized as "Learners" and "Doers," tend to contribute to the legacy and sustainability of the festival (Koenig-Lewis et al., 2021). This offers a unique and authentic cultural experience that can increase visitor satisfaction and attract more tourists. While the event has positive impacts on cultural, economic and social existence, the industry is not free from challenges, especially in terms of sustainable tourism. Issues such as environmental degradation, inequality, and the need for fiscal reform are important areas that need to be addressed (Mohanty et al., 2022).

Bali, which is one of the cultural tourism destinations in Indonesia, is famous for its rich cultural heritage and lively festivals that attract domestic and international tourists. One of the

most important cultural events in Bali is the Bali Arts Festival (PKB). This annual festival is a colossal celebration of performing arts that aims to preserve and explore Balinese arts and culture. The festival features various programs, involving many artists and attracting many audiences. The management of public spaces at the Bali Arts Center is very important to ensure a high-quality festival experience for artists, entrepreneurs, and audiences (Mas Triadnyani et al., 2024). This public space is also intended as a space for holding cultural performances and performances, but over time it has changed its function to become an exhibition space for MSME products from Balinese craftsmen when PKB activities are carried out. In addition to being a cultural preservation activity, PKB is also a space to stimulate the local economy by utilizing community enthusiasm and providing space for economic actors. Wulandari et al., (2021) found that the implementation of the Bali Art Festival (PKB) had a positive impact not only on the local economy, but also on cultural preservation which indirectly had an impact on environmental sustainability.

In addition to the Bali Arts Festival, various cultural festivals are also held in Bali to preserve tangible and intangible culture in Bali. Kesanga Festival and Denpasar Festival are other forms of cultural festivals held annually in Bali. Denpasar Festival is a local product or tangible culture festival organized by the Denpasar City Government. This festival is held in December every year, in collaboration with culinary actors in all regencies/cities in Bali. This activity emphasizes the role and function of local business actors in the form of culinary, textile actors and other local cultural products. Denpasar Festival features various cultural performances and exhibitions, allowing local artists and creators to showcase their work. This inclusiveness encourages active participation from the community, making it a lively and interesting activity that becomes a strong magnet to attract tourist visits (Setianti et al., 2018). It is also held in the Titik 0 area of Denpasar City which is the philosophical axis and economic center of Denpasar City. This activity plays an important role in building the image of the city of Denpasar, helping to increase public knowledge and perception of the city as a creative and inclusive destination (Setianti et al., 2018). If the Denpasar Festival focuses on preserving local cuisine, then the Kesanga Festival has a different format. The Kesanga Festival is one of the Balinese Cultural Festivals held to welcome the holy day of Nyepi by the Balinese Hindu Community. This festival is a forum for youth creativity competitions in Bali that showcase the work of Ogoh-Ogoh or a replication of a giant or Butha that symbolizes negative energy in human life. This competition not only requires participants (groups of Banjar youth) to produce beautiful ogoh-ogoh works, but also beautiful and philosophical dance fragment performances. The Kesanga Festival attracts great enthusiasm from the community which can be seen from the large number of visits each year.

Through the implementation of these three cultural festivals, it indicates the potency to be a catalyst to attract more visitors to come to Bali and enjoying the cultural vibrant aside from the one provided in the community daily life. It is due to the uniqueness and event-scape created specifically according to the theme of the festival itself. this study seeks to understand the factors in cultural festivals that influence the increase in the number of tourist visits and how these festivals can contribute to the implementation of sustainable tourism from a cultural perspective in the area. By exploring aspects such as marketing strategy, cultural experience, cultural authenticity, and sustainability practices, this study will also examine the economic and social impacts generated by these cultural festivals. In addition, this study will highlight how cultural festivals can be a means of education for tourists and local communities in understanding the values of local wisdom, as well as how environmentally friendly practices are applied in their implementation to support the principle of sustainability.

Economic, socio-cultural and environmental festivals are all affected by cultural festivals, which have a significant impact on the development of local communities (Negruşa et al., 2016). Festivals attract tourists, extend the holiday season, boost the local economy, and create new job opportunities and encourage local businesses (Botti et al., 2018; Mxunyelwa & Tshetu, 2018). Festivals such as Lucca Comics & Games in Italy attract large crowds, boosting tourism and the local economy (Uriarte et al., 2019). Festivals foster a sense of community bonding and belonging (Phipps, 2010). As seen in traditional festivals, such as Merrie Monarch in Hawaii and Garma in Australia, festivals facilitate cultural expression and intercultural exchange (Phipps, 2010). They are events that help maintain and promote cultural heritage and strengthen local and national identities (Crespi-Vallbona & Richards, 2007). Festivals enhance the cultural and

educational level of communities through a variety of activities that engage and educate participants (Herman, 2023). While festivals can have positive economic and social impacts, they also raise environmental questions toward tourist which lead them to implement the sustainable practices in their daily (Negruşa et al., 2016). To reduce their negative impacts, such as increased traffic and loss of resources, it is essential to manage festivals sustainably.

The number of people attending cultural events is largely influenced by the marketing strategy used. A positive attitude towards brand involvement significantly increases the number of people attending the event and their level of participation. Although most cultural festivals in Bali have a free entry system, this is not only an effective way to attract visitors. However, as an event organizer, the government often does not use effective marketing strategies. However, effortless marketing on social media and E-WOM can significantly influence tourist visits (Huh, 2018). Local events can improve the image of a destination, increase the desire to visit and help tourism recovery (Abou-Shouk, et al., 2024). While destination marketing tactics that improve the image of a destination can attract more visitors, experiential marketing tactics that create memorable and emotional experiences can have a big impact on visitor engagement and loyalty (Vila-Lopez et al., 2022). For example, events that incorporate experiential elements can make visitors feel closer to the brand, resulting in increased attendance and positive word-of-mouth recommendations (Gómez-Suárez & Yagüe, 2021). Events that incorporate unique cultural experiences, for example, can build customer loyalty and attract repeat visitors. Experiential marketing strategies that focus on creating valuable experiences are strategies that can increase visitor engagement and increase customer loyalty (Y. C. Lee et al., 2021).

Understanding visitor motivations and segmenting the market accordingly can help in developing effective marketing strategies (Meeprom, 2022). Different visitor segments, such as mass visitors, enthusiast visitors, and active visitors, have different motivations that can be targeted to increase attendance. Marketing strategies that focus on retaining repeat visitors can be more effective, as repeat visitors tend to have higher spending, longer stays, and stronger behavioral intentions than new visitors (Shani et al., 2009). Festivals and cultural events can enhance regional revitalization by engaging tourists and encouraging community participation (Chang & Ku, 2023). Marketing strategies that highlight community-related benefits and socio-cultural exchanges can attract more visitors. The market appeal of festivals can be leveraged in marketing strategies to enhance destination image and attract tourists, contributing to regional revitalization (Chang & Ku, 2023). Developing an effective marketing strategy can include understanding visitor motivations and segmenting the market accordingly. There are different motivations for increasing visitor attendance, including mass visitors, enthusiast visitors, and active visitors. Repeat visitors tend to spend more, stay longer, and have stronger behavioral intentions than new visitors, so marketing strategies that focus on retaining repeat visitors can be more effective. By engaging tourists and increasing community participation, festivals and cultural events can enhance a region's revitalization and draw more people. Marketing strategies that emphasize community benefits and socio-cultural exchanges can attract more visitors. In marketing strategies, the appeal of festival markets can be used to enhance the image of a destination and attract tourists.

Richards & King, (2022) found that tourists' experiences, satisfaction, and intention to re-recommend the festival were influenced by the cultural festival. This can cause visitors to want to do voluntary E-WoM during the festival. The emotional and authentic experience of the cultural festival shapes the festival's identity and drives tourism growth (Lee et al., 2015). Koenig-Lewis et al. (2021) found that the cultural and social legacy generated after the festival was significantly influenced by the level of visitor engagement during the festival. Festival identity was directly influenced by the authentic experience and support of visitors for tourism growth in traditional religious festivals (T. H. Lee et al., 2015). The perception and success of the cultural festival were influenced by its authenticity from the perspective of the host community. Satisfaction through the image and value of the festival was influenced by direct experiences, which strengthened the understanding of the festival's identity and place (Lin & Lee, 2020). By attracting tourists, extending the tourist season, and increasing the vitality of the city, cultural festivals greatly affect the local economy (Herman, 2023).

The experiences provided to visitors during cultural festivals enhance the location's image and behavioral outcomes, which in turn have a positive impact on the economy (Richards & King, 2022). Understanding what visitors spend at cultural festivals can help events survive and continue. Moreover, the goals of this festival could be achieved through a legacy of continued engagement with the culture and communities (Báez-Montenegro & Devesa, 2020). Cultural events such as festivals influence local communities and tourism, preserving local traditions, and promoting destinations (Correia et al., 2022). To understand the sociological factors that influence visitor numbers, it is important to understand how cultural festivals impact local communities and tourism (Correia et al., 2022). The psychological effects of cultural experiences on visitor behavior are demonstrated through positive impacts on tourist experience, satisfaction, and willingness to recommend and return. In addition, the quality of cultural festivals significantly influences visitor attendance and experience, as well as ecosystem impacts.

Methodology

Descriptive quantitative method was used in this study. Quantitative data, which is the main source of this study, was collected through the method of distributing online questionnaires to visitors of the Cultural Festival in Bali. In this study, 100 samples were selected using the Slovin formula. The respondents were from tourist (mainly domestic tourist with length of stay minimum 1 night stay) and visitor (mainly local community or people domiciled in Bali). These data was questioned in the beginning of the questionnaires. Therefore, the unstructured interview was conducted during the data collection with informants from the representative of the festivals management. There are three representatives from these three festivals were interviewed, mainly from its social media associates. It was under consideration that they have observed their visitors through their account insight over the years. The data were then analyzed using SPSS tools, including instrument tests, classical assumption tests, simple linear regression analysis, and hypothesis tests. After that, the results found were explained and presented in tabular form. Cronbach's Alpha test was used to measure internal consistency, and factor analysis was used to ensure the validity and reliability of the data. To ensure that the data met the required statistical assumptions, the classical assumption test involved normality, heteroscedasticity, and multicollinearity tests. The effect of independent variables on the dependent variables was determined by simple linear regression analysis; to measure statistical significance, the hypothesis was tested using the t-test and F-test. After that, the findings were interpreted by considering previous research and existing theoretical frameworks. This provides an overview of how cultural festivals contribute to attracting visitors and supporting sustainable tourism in Bali.

Results and Discussions

Results

Cultural Festival in Bali has an important role in maintaining and preserving Balinese culture to the general public, both local communities and other visitors. Furthermore, this festival can also function as a medium for cultural promotion and tourist attraction. This can be seen from the high enthusiasm of visitors every time this Cultural Festival is held. Bali Arts Festival, Denpasar Festival and Kesanga Festival are a forum for not only visitors but also directly provide economic impacts to MSME business actors who are partners in organizing the event. This certainly indicates the creation of inclusive sustainable tourism in Bali where the benefits can be obtained by various parties including visitors, business actors, government and tourists.

Respondents Characteristics

Based on the results of distributing questionnaires to 100 respondents, a picture of respondents was obtained which was divided based on gender and age. The characteristics of respondents regarding the implementation of the 2024 Bali Cultural Festival are as follows:

a. Respondent Characteristics Based on Gender

Respondent characteristics based on gender can be seen in Table 1 as follows:

Table 1. Gender Based

| No | Sex | Number | Percentage (%) |
|-------|--------|--------|----------------|
| 1 | Male | 62 | 62.0 |
| 2 | Female | 38 | 38.0 |
| Total | | 100 | 100.0 |

b. Respondent Characteristics based on Age

Respondents consist of various ages. In this research questionnaire, it is divided into 3 age ranges which can be seen in the following Table 2

Table 2. Respondent Characteristics Based on Age

| No. | Age | Number | Percentage (%) |
|-------|-----------------|--------|----------------|
| 1 | < 20 years old | 13 | 13.0 |
| 2 | 21-30 years old | 56 | 56.0 |
| 3 | 31-40 years old | 10 | 10.0 |
| 4 | 41-45 years old | 16 | 16.0 |
| 5 | > 50 years old | 5 | 5.0 |
| Total | | 100 | 100.0 |

c. Respondents' Travel Duration Data

According to the Glosarium of UNWTO, that tourist are defined from their length of stay with minimum one night and maximum one year. However, this study is not limited to only from tourist point of view yet also from the excursionist who mainly from the surrounding area of the venue or at least could reach the venue within 24 hours vice versa. The following table show the data of respondents' travel duration.

Table 3. Respondents Travel Duration

| No. | Age | Number | Percentage (%) |
|-------|--------------------|--------|----------------|
| 1 | Less than 24 hours | 32 | 32.0 |
| 2 | More than 24 hours | 68 | 68.0 |
| Total | | 100 | 100.0 |

Data Analysis**Validity Outcome**

The collected data was tested in Validity test and found that overall questionnaire items was valid to support the research hypothesis. The validity outcome was shown in Table 3 below.

Table 4. Validity Outcome

| Variables | Q. Item | r-count | Validity Standard | Outcome |
|---------------------------|---------|---------|-------------------|---------|
| X1.1 Marketing Strategy | X1.1.1 | 0.485** | 0.300 | Valid |
| | X1.1.2 | 0.492** | 0.300 | Valid |
| | X1.1.3 | 0.528** | 0.300 | Valid |
| | X1.1.4 | 0.438** | 0.300 | Valid |
| X1.2 Cultural Experiences | X1.2.1 | 0.525** | 0.300 | Valid |
| | X1.2.2 | 0.381** | 0.300 | Valid |
| | X1.2.3 | 0.565** | 0.300 | Valid |
| | X1.2.4 | 0.594** | 0.300 | Valid |
| | X1.2.5 | 0.443** | 0.300 | Valid |
| | X1.2.6 | 0.448** | 0.300 | Valid |
| | X1.2.7 | 0.493** | 0.300 | Valid |
| | X1.2.8 | 0.427** | 0.300 | Valid |

| | | | | | |
|------|-----------------------|--------|---------|-------|-------|
| | | X1.2.9 | 0.618** | 0.300 | Valid |
| X1.3 | Cultural Authenticity | X1.3.1 | 0.485** | 0.300 | Valid |
| | | X1.3.2 | 0.377** | 0.300 | Valid |
| | | X1.3.3 | 0.476** | 0.300 | Valid |
| | | X1.3.4 | 0.619** | 0.300 | Valid |
| | | X1.3.5 | 0.573** | 0.300 | Valid |
| | | X1.3.6 | 0.534** | 0.300 | Valid |
| | | X1.3.7 | 0.526** | 0.300 | Valid |
| | | X1.3.8 | 0.508** | 0.300 | Valid |
| X1.4 | Sustainable Practices | X1.4.1 | 0.503** | 0.300 | Valid |
| | | X1.4.2 | 0.486** | 0.300 | Valid |
| | | X1.4.3 | 0.664** | 0.300 | Valid |
| | | X1.4.4 | 0.472** | 0.300 | Valid |
| | | X1.4.5 | 0.544** | 0.300 | Valid |
| Y | Visitor Attraction | Y.1 | 0.511** | 0.300 | Valid |
| | | Y.2 | 0.644** | 0.300 | Valid |
| | | Y.3 | 0.784** | 0.300 | Valid |
| | | Y.4 | 0.727** | 0.300 | Valid |
| | | Y.5 | 0.636** | 0.300 | Valid |

Reliability Outcome

Reliability is the consistency of a series of measurements or a series of measuring instruments. This can be a measurement of the same measuring instrument (test with retest) will give the same results, or for more subjective measurements, whether two assessors give similar scores. The reliability test can be seen in Table 4.

Table 5. Reliability Outcome

| | Variables | Cronbach's Apha | Req. Cronbach's Apha | Outcome |
|---|--------------------|-----------------|----------------------|----------|
| X | Event | 0.924 | 0.600 | Reliable |
| Y | Visitor Attraction | 0.673 | 0.600 | Reliable |

The reliability test in Table 5 presents the Cronbach's Alpha value of each variable in the questionnaire greater than 0.6 so that it can be concluded that the questionnaire used is reliable. Because the questionnaire has been declared valid and reliable, the questionnaire can be used as a measuring tool and further analysis.

Recapitulation of Questionnaire Results

The data analysis technique in this study is to use a quantitative approach where the data collected as a questionnaire distribution will be analyzed descriptively. The questionnaire used to collect data is designed to explore visitors' perceptions of strengthening cultural identity. Visitor perceptions are converted into a "Likert Scale". Determine the highest and lowest values that can be achieved. In this case, the highest value is 5 and the lowest value is 1.

- Determine the size of the value area (score range) based on the difference between the highest value that can be achieved and the lowest value. In this case, the score range (R) is $5-1 = 4$.
- Determine the size of the value interval based on the comparison between the value area and the number of assessment criteria required. In this case, the number of assessment criteria is 5, namely very often, often, quite often, ever and never.

- c. Calculate the average value with the sum of the values of each case in the distribution and divide it by the total number of observations of the distribution.
- d. Determine the range of values for each assessment criterion, in this case what is obtained is:
 - 1.0 – 1.7 = Very Bad
 - 1.8 – 2.5 = Bad
 - 2.6 – 3.3 = Sufficient
 - 3.4 – 4.1 = Good
 - 4.2 – 5.0 = Very Good

Dimension of Event

a. Marketing Strategy

Based on the criteria for the respondent assessment score above, the results of distributing questionnaires to 100 respondents, it can be concluded that the Marketing Strategy variable has a total score of 1615, with an average score of 4.04 so that the marketing variable has good research criteria. The following are the results of distributing questionnaires with the Marketing Strategy variable:

Table 6. Marketing Strategy

| Indicator | | Score | | | | | Total | Ave | Outcome |
|--------------------|--------|-------|---|----|----|----|-------|------|---------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | |
| Marketing Strategy | X1.1.1 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 70 | 23 | 416 | 4.16 | Good |
| | X1.1.2 | 0 | 1 | 21 | 58 | 20 | 397 | 3.97 | Good |
| | X1.1.3 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 65 | 21 | 407 | 4.07 | Good |
| | X1.1.4 | 0 | 3 | 13 | 70 | 14 | 395 | 3.95 | Good |
| Average | | | | | | | 1615 | 4.04 | Good |

According to Table 6, the following are the respondent assessment criteria based on the indicators used:

1. The location for the implementation of this cultural festival received an average value of 4.16 so that it falls into the good category.
2. The promotion through E-WoM social media in attracting visitors to watch the 2024 Bali Cultural Festival has an average value of 3.97 so that it falls into the good category.
3. There is interesting and relevant content used to attract visitors to come to the festival has an average value of 4.07 so that it falls into the good category.
4. The availability of complete and clear information regarding the implementation of the 2024 Bali Cultural Festival has an average value of 3.95 so that it falls into the good category.

b. Cultural Experiences

Based on the criteria for the respondent assessment score from the distribution of questionnaires to 100 respondents, it can be concluded that the Cultural Experiences variable has a total score of 3583, with an average score of 3.98 so that this variable has good criteria. The following are the results of the distribution of questionnaires with the variable:

Table 7. Cultural Experiences

| Indicator | | Score | | | | | Total | Ave | Outcome |
|----------------------|--------|-------|---|----|----|----|-------|------|---------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | |
| Cultural Experiences | X1.2.1 | 0 | 4 | 16 | 58 | 22 | 398 | 3.98 | Good |
| | X1.2.2 | 0 | 2 | 13 | 66 | 19 | 402 | 4.02 | Good |
| | X1.2.3 | 0 | 4 | 13 | 65 | 18 | 397 | 3.97 | Good |
| | X1.2.4 | 0 | 0 | 18 | 66 | 16 | 398 | 3.98 | Good |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---------|---|---|----|----|----|------|------|------|
| X1.2.5 | 0 | 0 | 13 | 75 | 12 | 399 | 3.99 | Good |
| X1.2.6 | 0 | 0 | 16 | 64 | 20 | 404 | 4.04 | Good |
| X1.2.7 | 0 | 0 | 13 | 71 | 16 | 403 | 4.03 | Good |
| X1.2.8 | 0 | 0 | 27 | 56 | 17 | 390 | 3.90 | Good |
| X1.2.9 | 0 | 0 | 27 | 54 | 19 | 392 | 3.92 | Good |
| Average | | | | | | 3583 | 3.98 | Good |

Based on Table 7, here are the respondent assessment criteria based on the indicators used:

1. Tourists feel they get an authentic cultural experience with an average value of 3.98, making it a good category.
2. Interaction with local communities increases tourists' cultural understanding with an average value of 4.02, making it a good category.
3. Visitors feel actively involved in the festival, not just passive spectators with an average value of 3.97, making it a good category.
4. Tourists feel inspired or emotionally touched by cultural performances with an average value of 3.98, making it a good category.
5. Visual and artistic elements in the festival provide an impressive experience with an average value of 3.99, making it a good category.
6. Cultural exchange between domestic, international, and local tourists and the local community with an average value of 4.04, making it a good category.
7. Tourists gain new insights into Balinese history and culture through the festival with an average value of 4.03, making it a good category.
8. Tourists feel more appreciative of Balinese culture after attending the festival has an average value of 3.90 so it is included in the good category.
9. The cultural experience gained makes tourists want to return to the festival in the future has an average value of 3.92 so it is included in the good category.

c. Cultural Authenticity

Based on the respondent assessment score criteria below the results of distributing questionnaires to 100 respondents, it can be concluded that the Cultural Authenticity variable has a total score of 3246, with an average score of 4.06 so that this variable has good research criteria. The following are the results of distributing questionnaires with the Cultural Authenticity variable:

Table 8. Cultural Authenticity

| Indicator | | Score | | | | | Total | Ave | Outcome |
|-----------------------|--------|-------|---|----|----|----|-------|------|---------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | |
| Cultural Authenticity | X1.3.1 | 0 | 0 | 11 | 72 | 17 | 406 | 4.06 | Good |
| | X1.3.2 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 66 | 22 | 410 | 4.10 | Good |
| | X1.3.3 | 0 | 0 | 25 | 49 | 26 | 401 | 4.01 | Good |
| | X1.3.4 | 0 | 1 | 19 | 56 | 24 | 403 | 4.03 | Good |
| | X1.3.5 | 0 | 0 | 19 | 54 | 27 | 408 | 4.08 | Good |
| | X1.3.6 | 0 | 0 | 13 | 65 | 22 | 409 | 4.09 | Good |
| | X1.3.7 | 0 | 0 | 19 | 59 | 22 | 403 | 4.03 | Good |
| | X1.3.8 | 0 | 0 | 15 | 64 | 21 | 406 | 4.06 | Good |
| Average | | | | | | | 3246 | 4.06 | Good |

Based on Table 8, here are the respondent assessment criteria based on the indicators used:

1. The festival maintains original and undistorted traditional cultural elements with an average value of 4.06, making it a good category.
2. Cultural products such as food, clothing, and crafts sold come from local sources and are made traditionally with an average value of 4.10, making it a good category.
3. Tourists consider the festival as a legitimate cultural representation even though it has undergone several modern adaptations with an average value of 4.01, making it a good category.
4. Tourists feel they have a deep and meaningful experience while attending the festival with an average value of 4.03, making it a good category.
5. Interaction with the local community makes tourists feel emotionally connected to Balinese culture with an average value of 4.08, making it a good category.
6. Local people play an active role in organizing the festival, both as participants and organizers with an average value of 4.09, making it a good category.
7. Tourists feel the presence of the local community as an integral part of the festival experience has an average value of 4.03 so it is included in the good category.
8. The festival functions as an educational tool that helps tourists understand Balinese culture more deeply has an average value of 4.06 so it is included in the good category.

d. Sustainable Practices

Based on the respondent assessment score criteria above, the results of distributing questionnaires to 100 respondents, it can be concluded that the Sustainable Practices variable has a total score of 1425, with an average score of 3.07 so that this variable has quite good research criteria.

Table 9. Sustainable Practices

| Table 57: Sustainable Practices | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------|-------|---|----|----|----|-------|------|---------|
| Indicator | | Score | | | | | Total | Ave | Outcome |
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | |
| Sustainable Practices | X1.4.1 | 0 | 6 | 18 | 56 | 20 | 390 | 3.90 | Good |
| | X1.4.2 | 0 | 1 | 6 | 69 | 24 | 416 | 4.16 | Good |
| | X1.4.3 | 0 | 1 | 12 | 63 | 24 | 410 | 4.10 | Good |
| | X1.4.4 | 0 | 0 | 13 | 74 | 13 | 400 | 4.00 | Good |
| | X1.4.5 | 0 | 1 | 8 | 77 | 14 | 404 | 4.04 | Good |
| Average | | | | | | | 2020 | 4.04 | Good |

Based on Table 9, here are the respondent assessment criteria based on the indicators used:

1. There is a reduction in the use of single-use plastic in the festival area with an average value of 3.90 so it is included in the good category.
2. The implementation of the festival in accordance with local values and norms (not exploitative) has an average value of 4.16 so it is included in the good category.
3. Support for local MSMEs and local producers (ex. crafts, culinary) has an average value of 4.10 so it is included in the good category.
4. Cross-sector collaboration: government, community, private sector, and NGOs has an average value of 4.00 so it is included in the good category.
5. Open communication of sustainability to the public and visitors has an average value of 4.04 so it is included in the good category.

Overall Results of Respondents' Perceptions of Strengthening Cultural Identity

Table 10. Overall Average Value of Variables

| No | Variables | Ave | Outcome |
|-------|-----------------------|------|---------|
| 1 | Marketing Strategy | 4.04 | Good |
| 2 | Cultural Experiences | 3.98 | Good |
| 3 | Cultural Authenticity | 4.06 | Good |
| 4 | Sustainable Practices | 4.04 | Good |
| Total | | 4.03 | Good |

Based on the table above, it is known that visitor perceptions related to the dimensions of the 2024 Bali Cultural Festival event are good with an average score of 4.03 which is in the good category. This shows that the strengthening of cultural identity has gone well and received a good response from visitors.

Discussions

Marketing strategy in increasing visitor visit in Bali Cultural Festival

Cultural Festival is a medium used to display cultural products for the purpose of preserving and exposing the local culture itself. However, not all people and tourists have great motivation to participate in the activity. (Ramukumba, 2017) in his research stated that it is important to understand and consider the differences in motivation for visits and tourist interest in this festival. This motivation can greatly depend on the age of tourists, significant differences in motivation between tourists who have visited before and tourists who are visiting for the first time and the purchasing patterns of these tourists. Moreover, understanding the motivation and preferences of tourists will make it easier to develop innovative and effective strategies to attract tourist visits to the Cultural Festival (Amorim et al., 2019). The results of this analysis show that the selection of the location for the festival has an effect on motivating tourist visits. If we look at the pattern of choosing the location for the festival, two of the three festivals are held in the cultural and economic center of the city, namely Titik 0, Denpasar City. This area makes it easy for anyone to come because it is located in the heart of Denpasar. In addition, the Bali Arts Festival is also held in a cultural conservation area, namely the Taman Budaya Art Center, which is also an artistic place for cultural exhibitions and has easy access for tourists. Kourkouridis & Salepaki (2024) also found that the characteristics of the venue including accessibility and infrastructure have a significant role in increasing tourist visits. One of the elements is the availability of well-optimized indoor space, the availability of convenient event settings that can enhance the visitor experience when coming to the festival. In addition, the selection of a location that has a cultural history can also significantly attract the number of tourist visits because of the strong elaboration between the products displayed, both exhibitions and performing arts, and the atmosphere built through the unique values of the surrounding historical buildings (Barrera-Fernández & Hernández-Escampa, 2017). (Tanford & Jung, 2017) stated that ensuring high levels of visitor satisfaction is essential to increasing visits and word-of-mouth promotion. Factors such as the quality of the festival program, the comfort of the facilities, and the overall atmosphere are important determinants of visitor satisfaction and loyalty. (Ahn et al., 2020) stated that the Festival relies heavily on recommendations from previous attendees. eWOM serves as a powerful promotional tool, helping to spread the word about the festival and attract new visitors. Moreover, E-WOM, both through social media and messaging applications, can play an important role in boosting tourist visits. This is because this strategy can influence tourists' decision-making to visit or not (Yanti et al., 2024). This study found that tourists or visitors gave representative results to the promotional strategy using E-WOM on social media. The government as the organizer uses this strategy from year to year to build an image and increase visitor excitement every year. In fact, the strategy of managing content that is relevant to exhibition products and cultural performances also contributes to increasing tourists' curiosity about the holding of the festival every year. In addition, especially for cultural performances at the Bali Arts Festival which tend to be crowded, it requires a clear and structured information delivery strategy so that it is easy for visitors to

understand. This is supported by research from (Semrad & Rivera, 2018) which states that utilizing social media platforms effectively can strengthen eWOM. This interaction encourages them to share experiences can help build a positive online reputation. When tourists are satisfied, cultural festivals will attract more visitors in the following year. This is influenced by not only cultural content but also marketing tactics such as location selection, infrastructure that supports culture, and the motivation of tourists to come. More attractive and accessible events can be created by understanding the behavior and psychological patterns of visitors, such as push factors, pull factors, and the openness of festival organizers to the public. Digital marketing through eWOM and social media is essential to attract customers, especially the younger generation. To increase visitor appeal and ensure the sustainable growth of cultural tourism in Bali, careful selection of venues, original cultural programs, and dynamic promotional approaches will be essential.

Cultural Experience as a Driving Force of Tourist Visit in Cultural Festival

One of the important elements found and influencing tourists' choice to visit cultural festivals, including Bali, is cultural experience. Bali as a cultural destination certainly has a big role in providing memorable cultural experiences to tourists. The results of data processing show that the overall perception of visitors' cultural experiences is in the "good" category, with an average score for all indicators between 3.90 and 4.04. These results indicate that cultural engagement is very important to make cultural festivals attractive to domestic and international visitors. The cultural festival was found to be able to provide an authentic Balinese experience without modernization that changes the uniqueness value ($M = 3.98$). This shows significant engagement with local cultural heritage and enhances tourists' knowledge and experience. This supports Pine and Gilmore's (1999) theory of the experience economy, which emphasizes that customers, including visitors, want personal, memorable, and emotionally satisfying experiences. In addition, the study found that cultural elements and artistic festivals created an immersive and memorable environment ($M = 3.99$), while cultural performances succeeded in inspiring or touching visitors' emotions ($M = 3.98$). The results indicate that the aesthetic and psychological aspects of the cultural experience were revived, which in turn increased visitor satisfaction. In addition to these attractions, it is evident that tourists understand Balinese culture better due to cultural exchanges between different groups of tourists and local residents ($M = 4.02$) and interactions with local communities ($M = 4.02$). Both of these findings are in line with Reisinger's (2013) theory that transformative tourism, which allows tourists to learn more about other cultures, can produce more appreciative and responsible tourists. Visitors are not just passive spectators, but also participate in the formation of shared cultural experiences, as demonstrated by the opportunity to actively participate in festival activities ($M = 3.97$). This is in line with the co-creation theory proposed by Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004), which states that interactions between service providers and customers create value. The data also showed that cultural festivals have an educational purpose. Visitors said they gained new insights into Balinese history and culture after attending the event ($M = 4.03$). They also said they appreciated Balinese culture more after attending the event ($M = 3.90$). These affective and cognitive engagements are crucial to fostering long-term interest and respect for the culture. Most importantly, the experience influences future behavioral intentions, as indicated by visitors' mean score ($M = 3.92$) to return. This is in line with research conducted by Richards (2011) and Moscardo (2008), which emphasize that tangible and significant cultural experiences increase location loyalty and repeat visits. Cultural experience is the main factor that attracts tourists to cultural festivals, according to the research. Sustainable tourism is driven by authenticity, educational value, enjoyable experiences, and emotional resonance. It also increases visitor satisfaction and fosters cultural connections and repeat visits. Therefore, cultural festivals in Bali not only serve as a means to entertain or preserve, but also serve as a powerful means to build sustainable cultural tourism.

Cultural Authenticity as the Identity and Unique Value

Cultural authenticity plays a vital role in the success of cultural festivals, especially in places with a strong cultural heritage such as Bali. The study shows that Bali visitors rated the authenticity of the festivals well, with an average score of 4.01–4.10 for all indicators. The results suggest that maintaining authenticity enhances the visitor experience and strengthens tourism identity in addition to being essential for cultural preservation. It was also supported by the previous study which stated that a place's authenticity and socio-culture play a pivotal role as a place's identity and becoming its unique selling point among the similar destination (Yanti, 2024). By maintaining undistorted traditional cultural components ($M = 4.06$), festivals emphasize their commitment to presenting culture in its original form. According to Taylor (2001), authenticity is essential in cultural tourism as visitors seek experiences that reflect the "true essence" of local culture. The authenticity of local products is further supported by the use of traditionally made local products such as clothing, food, and crafts ($M = 4.10$), which help create an immersive cultural environment and foster the local creative economy (Cohen, 1988; Chhabra et al., 2003). Interestingly, tourists still considered the festival as a valid cultural representation even though contemporary modifications were incorporated into the festival components ($M = 4.01$). This is in line with Wang's (1999) notion of constructive authenticity, meaning that visitors accept modified cultural forms as valid as long as they produce significant experiences. This notion is supported by the emotional and meaningful connections tourists felt during the festival ($M = 4.03$)—authenticity is cultural relevance and emotional resonance, not static preservation. In addition, festivals become more authentic due to the active involvement of local people as organizers and performers ($M = 4.09$). When local people participate directly in cultural expressions, the event becomes a shared place that reflects lived traditions rather than just an event for commercial gain (McKercher & du Cros, 2002). The value of community-based cultural tourism is further strengthened by tourists' sense of emotional connection with the local community ($M = 4.08$) and their presence as an essential component of the experience ($M = 4.03$). In addition, the festival provides an opportunity for tourists to learn about Balinese traditions ($M = 4.06$). The educational dimension of authenticity encourages greater cultural appreciation, according to Reisinger & Steiner (2006). This makes travel more transformative than consumptive. This educational role enhances the tourist experience and helps spread culture across generations and visitor groups.

Sustainable Practice to Promote Sustainability

To support sustainable tourism, cultural festivals must follow the principle of desire. The results of the study showed that Balinese cultural festivals have utilized various demands and received good ratings from visitors, with an average score of 3.90–4.16. Reducing the use of single-use plastics was a significant finding ($M = 3.90$). This shows awareness of environmental impacts and a real effort to reduce waste. This program is in line with research by Mair & Laing (2013), which found that the sustainable image of festivals that implement environmentally friendly practices such as reusing cutlery and providing recycling bins can be strengthened. In addition, conducting a non-exploitation festival that follows local values and practices ($M = 4.16$) shows respect for local culture. This practice is very important for cultural tourism because it ensures that culture is not overly commercialized, but is presented in an authentic and dignified manner (Richards, 2011). This method also helps maintain the cultural identity of local communities. Economic sustainability is highly dependent on supporting local MSMEs and producers ($M = 4.10$). Involving local actors in festivals boosts the local economy and provides tourists with an authentic experience. Previous studies (Getz & Page, 2016) have shown that festivals with local vendors increase a sense of community ownership and distribute economic benefits equitably. Furthermore, cross-sector collaboration between NGOs, the private sector, communities, and government ($M = 4.00$) shows good synergy in supporting sustainability goals. According to Jones (2014), this collaboration is very important to unite various resources, knowledge, and interests to create a sustainable festival. In addition, this form of cooperation

enhances participatory and responsible governance. Finally, effective transparency and education are indicated by open communication regarding sustainability practices to the public and visitors ($M = 4.04$). Visitors who are informed about sustainability efforts tend to be more involved and supportive of initiatives (Laing & Frost, 2010). During the festival, getting information about recycling systems, local support, and environmental impacts can increase awareness and responsible behavior. Furthermore, these actions not only help develop environmentally, socially and economically sustainable tourism, but also build a long-term foundation for sustainable cultural festivals, which are an important part of developing ethical and inclusive tourism in Bali.

Conclusions

Balinese cultural festivals attract tourists through four main factors: sustainability practices, cultural authenticity, cultural experiences, and marketing strategies. Marketing through e-WOM on social media increases festival visits, while cultural experiences foster active participation and knowledge exchange. Cultural authenticity, maintained through traditional elements and local products, provides a meaningful experience. Sustainability practices, such as reducing single-use plastic and supporting MSMEs, promote sustainable tourism. Strengthening these factors will improve festival quality and strengthen Bali's position as a sustainable cultural destination.

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