



KEBERLANJUTAN EKONOMI, SOSIAL-BUDAYA DAN LINGKUNGAN BALI DALAM SPIRIT FESTIVAL, UBUD, BALI

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Naskah Masuk: 30 Juni 2025 Direvisi: 12 September 2025 Diterima: 14 September 2025

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi dan menganalisis sejauh mana penerapan prinsip keberlanjutan ekonomi, sosial-budaya, dan lingkungan pada pelaksanaan Bali Spirit Festival di Ubud, Bali. Festival ini dikenal sebagai acara tahunan berskala internasional yang menggabungkan unsur spiritualitas, kebugaran, dan budaya lokal. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif melalui wawancara mendalam dengan pendiri festival dan pemangku kepentingan terkait. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Bali Spirit Festival memberikan kontribusi signifikan terhadap keberlanjutan ekonomi melalui pemberdayaan UMKM lokal, penciptaan lapangan kerja, serta promosi produk lokal. Dari aspek sosial-budaya, festival ini memperkuat ekspresi budaya lokal dan internasional namun masih terdapat tantangan dalam mencegah komersialisasi budaya. Dalam aspek lingkungan, festival telah menerapkan beberapa inisiatif ramah lingkungan, namun masih menghadapi kendala dalam pengelolaan limbah dan konsumsi energi. Penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya kolaborasi antara penyelenggara festival, komunitas lokal, dan pemerintah dalam mewujudkan praktik keberlanjutan yang holistik dalam penyelenggaraan acara. Temuan ini diharapkan dapat menjadi rujukan bagi pengembangan kebijakan manajemen acara berkelanjutan di destinasi wisata serupa.

Kata Kunci: festival budaya; keberlanjutan; ekonomi lokal; pelestarian lingkungan; pemberdayaan masyarakat

ECONOMIC, SOCIO-CULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY OF BALI SPIRIT FESTIVAL, UBUD, BALI

ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore and analyze the extent to which the principles of economic, socio-cultural, and environmental sustainability are implemented in the Bali Spirit Festival held in Ubud, Bali. The festival is an internationally recognized annual event combining spirituality, wellness, and local culture. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed through in-depth interviews with the festival's founder and relevant stakeholders. The findings reveal that the Bali Spirit Festival significantly contributes to economic sustainability by empowering local MSMEs, generating employment, and promoting local products. From the socio-cultural perspective, the festival promotes local and global cultural expression, although challenges



remain in avoiding cultural commodification. Environmentally, the festival has adopted several eco-friendly practices, but waste management and energy consumption still require improvement. This research underscores the importance of collaboration between festival organizers, local communities, and government bodies to realize holistic sustainability practices in event management. The findings are expected to inform future sustainable event policies in similar tourism destinations.

Keywords : cultural festival; sustainability; local economy; environmental preservation; community empowerment

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Bali Spirit Festival is an annual event held in Ubud, Bali, Indonesia. The festival was first held in 2008, and has become one of the world-renowned yoga, dance, music and wellness festivals and attracts both domestic and international participants. The festival offers a variety of activities such as yoga classes, meditations, workshops, and performances that promote wellness, healing, and spiritual growth. The festival brings together people from all over the world, fostering a global community centered on personal well-being and awareness (Bali Spirit Festival Website).

As global awareness of environmental and social responsibility grows, the impact of large-scale events like the Bali Spirit Festival is gaining increasing attention. An event often has significant environmental, social and economic consequences. Some of the impacts that may arise are such as reduced resources, increased waste, increased carbon emissions, cultural commodification, and pressure on local infrastructure. Therefore, attention to sustainable event management is increasing significantly, so many events today are trying to adopt various measures to reduce the negative impact of an activity on the environment, socio-culture of the local community and the economy.

The concept of sustainability in an event includes three main pillars, namely: environmental sustainability, socio-cultural sustainability, and economic sustainability. Environmental sustainability focuses on reducing the ecological footprint of events such as minimizing waste especially inorganic, saving energy, and using environmentally friendly resources. Socio-cultural sustainability includes how to ensure that event activities benefit local communities, preserve cultural heritage, promote inclusivity, and encourage positive social interaction. Economic sustainability emphasizes the long-term viability of the event, ensuring that the event supports local businesses, creates job opportunities, and contributes to the local economy in a way that can be sustained over time.

Although the Bali Spirit Festival already has a reputation for its commitment to wellness, it is important to understand the extent to which sustainability is integrated into the implementation of the event. There is a growing interest in how cultural and wellness festivals like the Bali Spirit Festival can strike a balance between respecting cultural heritage and promoting responsible tourism. The Ubud area itself is famous for its natural beauty, rich culture and thriving tourism industry. However, as the number of tourists increases and large-scale events such as the Bali Spirit Festival increase, the potential pressure on resources, ecosystems and the surrounding community is also increasing

A number of previous studies have explored sustainability measures at various global festivals. Most festival-related studies take more business perspectives such as how to market, manage, execute and provide quality services and experiences (Park & Park, 2017;). Yet there is still very little festival research appearing in the business literature that focuses on social, cultural,

political, behavioral, etc. fields including those related to sustainability. A study was conducted to assess sustainable festival tourism and develop indicators by obtaining input from the perspective of stakeholders, namely tourists, local residents, business owners, and government agencies which found 20 indicators. (Liu, Lin, Wang, & Chen, 2019). A study discusses conceptually the sustainability of festivals from the perspective of the organization that conducts them, particularly in the context of how the organization of the event can become a permanent institution (Getz, D & Andersson, 2008). Research on the sustainability of an event is also often studied separately from one of the dimensions of sustainability such as research on sustainability from an ecological or environmental perspective (Zou, Meng, Bi, & Zhang, 2021), and from a socio-cultural perspective (Orfega, 2024; Nair, 2022;).

Although there is significant research on sustainability in events and festivals, most of it emphasizes sustainability from an ecological perspective, while sustainability which includes all three aspects namely environmental, socio-cultural and economic has not received attention, let alone on specific sustainability measures implemented by festivals related to wellness and culture. In addition, there is a gap in the literature regarding the integration of sustainability into the operational modes of events such as the Bali SPirit Festival, which includes tourism, wellness, and culture. Therefore, this study aims to fill these gaps by exploring how the Bali Spirit Festival implements sustainability measures and evaluates its effectiveness.

Given Bali's prominent role as a global tourism destination, examining the sustainability practices of one of its cultural festivals provides an opportunity to explore the potential of other events to adopt similar practices. In addition, assessing the effectiveness of the Bali Spirit Festival's sustainability initiatives can inform future policies and strategies for sustainable event management, not only in Bali but in other regions with similar socio-economic and environmental contexts.

II. LITERATUR REVIEW

Sustainability in Events and Festivals

Sustainability in the context of events and festivals has attracted significant attention in recent years as the global impact of large-scale gatherings on the environment and local communities has become more apparent. According to Mair and Jago (2010), the sustainability of events can be measured from three main dimensions: environmental, social, and economic sustainability. These three pillars are critical to ensuring that events not only focus on short-term enjoyment but also create a lasting positive impact on their environment.

Environmental Sustainability:

Environmental issues in the show mainly focus on reducing carbon footprints, minimizing waste, and conserving resources such as energy and water. High-profile events often lead to substantial environmental degradation, including increased waste generation, energy consumption, and transportation emissions (Getz, 2009). Some festivals have implemented initiatives such as waste management strategies, renewable energy sources, and carbon offset programs to mitigate these effects (Jones, 2014). Studies by Coyle et al. (2011) have shown that festivals can reduce their environmental impact through better waste separation, eco-friendly transportation options, and sustainable infrastructure choices.

Social Sustainability

Social sustainability refers to the impact of an event on the local community and culture. It

focuses on fostering positive social interactions, cultural preservation, inclusivity, and providing benefits to local stakeholders. According to Ritchie and Crouch (2003), festivals can serve as a platform for cultural exchange, community engagement, and social cohesion. However, there is a growing recognition that festivals need to balance these social benefits with the risks of cultural commodification and gentrification. Events such as the Bali Spirit Festival provide a unique opportunity to promote local culture and traditions while creating a sense of global solidarity and inclusivity (Maitland, 2011).

Economic Sustainability:

Economic sustainability concerns the long-term economic viability of an event and its ability to generate a positive financial impact for local communities. Major events can stimulate the local economy through increased tourism, local business opportunities, and job creation (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003; Thommandru, et al., 2023). However, there are challenges in ensuring that economic benefits are distributed equally, with some areas of society potentially excluded from these opportunities (Wearing & McDonald, 2002). In the case of Bali, sustainable tourism practices are essential to ensure that the economic benefits of the festival support local communities without causing economic inequality or environmental degradation.

III. METHOD

This research adopts a qualitative approach to comprehensively understand the sustainability measures implemented by the Bali Spirit Festival. This approach allows for a more in-depth analysis of the environmental, socio-cultural and economic sustainability practices of the Bali Spirit Festival. This study is a descriptive research that aims to explore in depth the sustainability measures of the implementation of the Bali Spirit Festival. Descriptive research is appropriate to understand existing practices and assess their impact on the environment, local communities and the economy. This approach makes it possible to examine sustainability efforts, both tangible and intangible, through a qualitative lens. Data collection was carried out by in-depth interviews with the founder of the Bali Spirit Festival such as I Made Gunarta who clearly knew the vision and mission as well as the implementation of the event. In addition, interviews were also conducted with stakeholders involved in the implementation and the local community.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Bali Spirit Festival can be categorized as an event that contributes to sustainable development with an integrative approach. Despite providing economic and socio-cultural benefits, long-term sustainability still requires improvements in participatory planning, equitable distribution of benefits, and consistent enforcement of environmentally friendly practices.

The involvement of local stakeholders, such as traditional villages, local governments, and environmentalist communities, is crucial in maintaining the sustainability of the festival. Institutional strengthening strategies and capacity building of local communities need to be implemented to strengthen Ubud's resilience as a sustainable cultural tourism destination.

1. Environmental Sustainability of Bali Spirit Festival

In the environmental aspect, the organizers of the Bali Spirit Festival have made efforts to reduce the ecological footprint such as the use of environmentally friendly materials, the provision of sorted trash cans, and the "Bring Your Own Bottle (BYOB)" campaign. Education about the importance of environmental conservation is also part of the festival's activities.

Nevertheless, the increase in the number of visitors has an impact on increasing the volume of waste and energy consumption. Waste management infrastructure at the event location also still needs to be improved to be in line with the principles of the green event carried out.

2. Socio-Cultural Sustainability of Bali Spirit Festival

Socio-culturally, the Bali Spirit Festival provides a space for local and international cultural expression in one harmonious container. The festival successfully promotes the values of spirituality, holistic health, and environmental awareness. The local community feels valued for their involvement in presenting traditional Balinese art performances, rituals, and handicrafts.

However, there are concerns over the potential commercialization of local culture that could displace the original spiritual meaning of Balinese traditions. In addition, not all segments of society feel directly involved, which creates a gap in participation between social groups.

3. Economic Sustainability of Bali Spirit Festival

The Bali Spirit Festival which is attended by around 500 people will definitely bring an economic impact both directly and indirectly to Ubud's tourist destinations and to the local community in Ubud. Therefore, economic impact studies are a reliable way to find out the impact of a festival on the economy (Nadotti & Vannoni, 2019).

The results of the study show that the Bali Spirit Festival has a significant economic impact on the local community in Ubud. In its implementation, the Bali Spirit Festival involves around 100 Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), consisting of 80 local businesses from Ubud and its surroundings, as well as 20 businesses from outside the region. These MSMEs participate as vendors in various festival activities, filling food booths, selling souvenirs, and providing products and services to support yoga activities. The high participation of local MSMEs, which reached 80%, reflects the active involvement of the local community in the festival's economic activities. This is a strong indicator that the Bali Spirit Festival also encourages economic sustainability through the empowerment of the local economy and the creation of business opportunities for the surrounding community. These findings are also in line with the opinion of Drummond et al. (2021), who stated that festivals can make a significant contribution to the economy of the host city, improve the image of the destination, and attract tourist visits.

In a study in South Africa, Toerin (2020) found that small cities are highly dependent on the tourism sector for most of their economic activity, and cities with more developed tourism infrastructure tend to have lower poverty rates. This is in line with the findings in the implementation of the Bali Spirit Festival in Ubud, where this festival makes a significant contribution to increasing the income of the local community. In addition to the direct impact felt by MSME actors involved in the festival, the increase in economic activity was also felt by accommodation, culinary, and transportation business actors around the event location. The majority of visitors who come from abroad certainly need a place to stay, food, and local transportation services, thus creating a multiplier effect for the community.

This festival also opens up temporary job opportunities for local residents, such as being security officers, event guides, and logistics staff. In addition, the Bali Spirit Festival is an important platform to promote local products such as handicrafts, traditional foods, and wellness products that are typical of Bali, thereby strengthening the economic competitiveness of the local community in the global market. Drummond (2021) emphasizes that festival

activities can produce a real positive impact on the local economy, while improving the image of the destination.

Nevertheless, the economic sustainability of the festival still faces serious challenges, especially due to its high dependence on foreign tourists and seasonal visiting patterns. Fluctuations in the number of visitors from year to year have a direct impact on the income stability of the people who depend on their income from this festival. This uncertainty requires a strategy of economic diversification and strengthening of the domestic market so that local economic resilience can be better maintained in the long term.

I. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that the Bali Spirit Festival has contributed positively to the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental sustainability aspects in the Ubud area. Economic sustainability can be seen from the active participation of local MSMEs and the increase in income of tourism actors. Socio-culturally, this festival is a forum for cross-border cultural interaction and expression and strengthens the image of Balinese culture, although efforts are still needed to avoid the commercialization of traditions. Meanwhile, in terms of the environment, the festival has adopted environmentally friendly measures even though waste management and energy consumption are still a challenge.

To improve sustainability in the future, it is recommended that festival organizers strengthen inclusive participation of local communities, expand environmental education for participants, and establish closer collaboration with the government and village communities. This effort is important so that the festival is not only an entertainment event, but also acts as a driving force for sustainable development in cultural tourism destinations such as Ubud.

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