

# DENPASAR FESTIVAL: A SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL FESTIVAL AS A REFLECTION OF DENPASAR AS A CREATIVE CITY

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## Abstract

A program called "Sightseeing Denpasar" was formed to accommodate various arts and cultural activities, and also to develop tourism in the city of Denpasar. One of its signature activities is called Denpasar Festival. This article focused on examining the role of Denpasar Festival as a sustainable cultural festival to reflect Denpasar as a creative city. The method used is a literature study using journals related to Denpasar festival, sustainable festival and creative city. The results of this study showed that Denpasar Festival plays a significant role in the development and preservation of culture and tourism in Denpasar City. The application of Tri Hita Karana values is a good guideline for Denpasar Festival to become a sustainable festival. Reflecting on the Denpasar Festival, Denpasar City has great potential to become a culture-based creative city. Moreover, Denpasar has a historical and cultural background, as well as creative human resources, so Denpasar City is very capable of fulfilling the criteria for Creative City development.

**Keywords:** *Denpasar Festival, Tri Hita Karana, Sustainable Festival, Creative City*

## I INTRODUCTION

Bali is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world because it has great tourism potential. Its natural beauty, uniqueness and cultural diversity are the reasons for tourists to come to Bali. This culture is what drives every tourism activity in Bali and gives a different impression to every tourist who visits Bali (Yanthy & Kesumadewi, 2015). The barometer of tourism, and the image of Bali as a whole, lies in the provincial capital, Denpasar City (Setianti et al., 2018).

Denpasar, as the capital city of Bali, has a number of tourist attractions that are not inferior to other areas in Bali. Although it does not have many natural attractions, Denpasar City has culture as their flagship tourism. Currently, cultural tourism is one of the growing types of tourism. Travellers come to visit destinations to experience cultural heritage, perform activities, and engage with local communities (Abouelmagd, 2023).

Denpasar City has a tourism development program called "Sightseeing Denpasar" which was created by the Government in 2008 (Dewiyanti & Antara, 2017). This program aims to accommodate various arts and cultural activities in Denpasar City, as well as to realize Denpasar as a culture-based creative city (Pemerintah Kota Denpasar, 2008). Denpasar sightseeing program is implemented into several activities that are packaged in various forms such as cultural and tourist attractions, cultural parades to sports activities.

These activities are carried out from the beginning to the end of the year, and show the spirit of innovation and creativity of the Denpasar community. One of the flagship activities of this program is the Denpasar Festival. This festival is held along the heritage area of Denpasar City, which includes Puputan Field Gusti Ngurah Made Agung, Catur Muka Statue Area, Gajah Mada Street, and Veteran Street. This heritage area is also known as the 0 (zero) point of Denpasar city (Dewiyanti & Antara, 2017). Denpasar Festival is attractively packaged into various activities, such as cultural parades, culinary festivals, creative economy exhibitions, creation and entertainment stages, floriculture and sun release parades (Bappeda Kota Denpasar, 2014).

The Denpasar Festival is designed to showcase the rich culture and creativity of the community, where the community can actively participate and enjoy the event. Duran, Hamarat, & Özkul (2014) mentioned that festivals are important because they play a social and cultural role so that they are increasingly being created and promoted as tourist attractions. It is undeniable that festivals also contribute to the development of tourism in Bali (Yanthy & Kesumadewi, 2015). Festivals are a means of developing creativity that involves various parties.

Denpasar City does not only rely on its natural and cultural resources, but also utilizes the potential of its human resources. Denpasar utilizes three potential human resources that are not only renewable

but also unlimited, namely ideas, talent, and creativity (Setianti et al., 2018). Denpasar Festival is a "display" of Denpasar's rich creative resources. Through the Denpasar Festival, the Denpasar City Government wants to involve all parties to jointly build Denpasar into a creative city (Harsemadi et al., 2015).

Landry (2008) states that creative cities can develop an environment that helps people to think, plan, and act creatively in the city. Creativity is the main vision of Denpasar City Development. In this condition, creativity is seen as an instrument and way of thinking in order to get solutions to problems that occur in the city (Nientied & Toto, 2010). Utilizing culture and creativity as a driving force for sustainable development and urban regeneration is a way for cities to respond to the challenges they face (UNESCO, 2004). Community participation in celebratory, cultural and other activities leads to economic benefits as well as opportunities to promote tourism-related businesses (Angel et al., 2023).

Several previous studies have examined Denpasar festival as a tourism attraction and city branding of Denpasar City. Such as Dewiyanti & Antara (2017) who analysed the role of Denpasar Festival in supporting tourism in Denpasar City and community participation in Denpasar Festival. Research Pendy & Putra (2021) saw the Denpasar Festival as a promotional medium for Denpasar City branding. Research Setianti et al. (2018) see Denpasar Festival as a form of city branding of Denpasar city and provide an overview of Denpasar City as a Creative City. There is still no research that links the Denpasar festival as a sustainable cultural festival, which is a "display" of the wealth of creative resources that can show the city of Denpasar as a Creative city.

Seeing the potential of Denpasar City which has a historical and cultural background, as well as creative human resources, Denpasar City is very capable of meeting the criteria for Creative City development. Therefore, the question arises, why is Denpasar still not part of UNESCO's creative city network? This study aims to investigate the opportunities for Denpasar to become a creative city through a sustainable cultural festival called Denpasar Festival. This study will analyse the role of Denpasar Festival as a sustainable cultural festival, which will continue to exist to be a place of appreciation for artists to work and bring Denpasar into a creative city. The aspects that will be used to study the problem refer to the economic, social, cultural and environmental sides.

## II MATERIALS AND METHOD

### 2.1 THEORETICAL CONCEPTS

#### 2.1.1 CULTURAL FESTIVAL

Festival is a cultural celebration and a combination of a series of events carried out by the community which includes values, ideology, identity, and sustainability (Yanthy & Kesumadewi, 2015). Historical, and cultural themes are used by festival organizers to attract visitors and create a cultural image (Duran et al., 2014). Cultural festivals are not only an effort to celebrate and preserve the culture of a region, but also provide economic and social benefits to local communities (Zou et al., 2021). Del Barrio et al. (2012) mentioned that festivals are a complex cultural phenomenon, not just a showcase of cultural accumulation. Cultural festivals represent the cultural values that exist in a region, become authentic to cultural identity, and become a process of a culture being offered, produced, and reproduced (Zhang et al., 2019).

Utilizing cultural festivals to represent a destination is an effective strategy for the government, it can increase the positive image of tourists when visiting the area (Vera & Chang, 2022). Okech (2011) stated that cultural festivals play three important roles in promoting tourism. 1) Festivals encourage local residents to survive by promoting the local spirit. 2) Festivals can be a business that can improve the economy of local communities. 3) Cultural festivals, with their performances and exhibitions, are an opportunity to enhance the city's image. Cultural festivals provide opportunities for domestic and international travellers to experience authentic local culture and allow them to be actively involved in the celebration (Taylor et al., 2014).

#### 2.1.2 SUSTAINABLE FESTIVAL

Sustainable festival is defined as a festival that continues in the long term with a focus on sustainable principles (Yanthy & Kesumadewi, 2015). The concept of a festival is to combine aspects of culture, entertainment, art, and performance by considering sustainable environmental, social, and economic impacts. Zifkos (2015) mentioned that there are three main aspects that sustainable festivals must fulfil:

- (a) Environmental impact, festivals should minimize their negative impact on the environment. Therefore, a festival that becomes a tourist attraction must be environmentally friendly and provide benefits to the local community.
- (b) Social impact, a festival should consider its impact on local communities including equality, participation and social benefits for local communities.
- (c) Economic impact: in addition to providing environmental and social benefits. Festivals should also provide economic benefits to local communities, including job creation, local economic development, and creating a self-sustaining economy.

### **2.1.3 CREATIVE CITY**

Landry (2008) defines a creative city as "a set of urban innovation tools", capable of finding solutions to problems and generating creative environments where people can think, plan and act creatively for the development of the city. Creative cities are created by the collaboration of different actors, different tools, in different historical settings (Damme et al., 2017). Creative cities reflect cultures, norms, and systems that emerge and are continuously renewed (Watson & Taylor, 2014). According to UNCTAD (Girard, Baycan, & Nijkamp, 2011) Creative cities are understood and utilized in four ways: as arts and cultural infrastructure, creative economy, synonymous with a strong creative class, and as a place to foster a culture of creativity. A creative city should be committed to fostering the creativity of its citizens and providing a place that satisfies their experience emotionally (Galaby & Abdrabo, 2020)

Nientied & Toto (2010) mentioned that there are four approaches that distinguish the concept of creative cities, namely as a place that emphasizes creative environments, as a cultural and arts policy agenda for local governments, as a destination for real estate development, and as a forum for the formation of creative cities. Landry (2008) explains that there are seven conditions for realizing creative cities from various aspects, namely leadership, quality of human resources, public space and facilities, community, diversity of talent, network. Galaby & Abdrabo (2020) mentioned that there are three domains of creative cities, namely:

- (a) Cultural vibrancy. Assesses the extent to which a city has a rich culture and supportive infrastructure. It also includes the capacity of a city to attract the whole community to participate in their cultural environment.
- (b) Creative economy. Assesses the extent to which a city has access to creative jobs, is conducive to innovation and how well a city can develop creative and innovative ideas to create new jobs.
- (c) Environmental ease. Measures the role of government in carrying out its obligations, ease of access to talent in the form of available human resources, tolerance of diversity and trust among residents, and adequate access to mobility.

### **2.1.4 TRI HITA KARANA**

Tri Hita Karana is a spiritual belief that prioritizes harmony and the principles of togetherness in human life (Betan et al., 2015). This harmonious relationship is related to environmental awareness, the social and spiritual relationship living creatures (Geria et al., 2023). Tri Hita Karana describes three harmonious relationships, specifically the relationship between humans and God, between humans, and humans and nature (Rosalina et al., 2023).

## **2.2 METHOD**

This research uses qualitative methods. (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) defines qualitative method as an approach to exploring and understanding a central phenomenon that is done by observation, interview, or reviewing existing documents. Qualitative research produces descriptive data in the form of text or writing from research subjects. The purpose of this descriptive research is to make a systematic description and description of the facts, characteristics and relationships between the phenomena under study (Raco, 2018).

This research was conducted through using a literature study. Literature studies aim to provide an overview of certain issues. Typically, it is used to evaluate the state of knowledge on a particular topic (Snyder, 2019). The data used in this research is secondary data collected from several documentation and journals related to the Denpasar Festival, sustainable festival and also creative city. Furthermore, the analysis will be carried out using analysis according to Miles and Huberman (Abdul, 2020) where the

data obtained will go through the stages of data presentation, data reduction, data verification and then drawing conclusions.

### III FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Denpasar Festival is an annual program held by the Denpasar City Government to accommodate art activities in Denpasar City. All elements of society can play an active role and enjoy this event. The program is held in the heritage area, which is also known as the zero point of Denpasar City. Denpasar Festival is a "display" of Denpasar's rich creative resources. The program is attractively packaged into arts and cultural activities, culinary festivals, creative economy exhibitions, and parades.

Denpasar festival is a cultural themed festival used to support the Gajah Mada heritage area revitalization program (Dewiyanti & Antara, 2017). Not only as a momentum to flashback to Denpasar's authentic past, but it is used as a momentum to voice the future of Denpasar City based on creativity. One of the activities of this cultural festival features Balinese art performances and traditional Balinese food.

The community is given the opportunity to be actively involved in this event, local people can participate in the implementation of the event. Artists, dancers, photographers, and local entrepreneurs can show their contribution in this event. Through the Denpasar Festival, the productivity of local craftsmen increases, as well as providing opportunities for local entrepreneurs to promote their products. In addition, Denpasar Festival as a cultural festival is utilized as one of the promotional media for the province of Bali, many local and foreign tourists come to this festival. Seeing how art performances, culinary, entertainment, and also shopping is held simultaneously in one place, makes visitors able to do various activities in one place.

Denpasar festival is a cultural festival that is consistently held every year. Looking at the theory (Zifkos 2015) Denpasar Festival can be said to be a sustainable festival, because it has fulfilled the three aspects mentioned. Based on the Denpasar Festival.id website, it is known that this program has considered the three impacts mentioned by Zifkos, which will be explained in more detail as follows:

First, the environmental impact. Denpasar Festival implements the noble values of Tri Hita Karana, which is a harmonious relationship between fellow humans, the creator and the environment (Rosalina et al., 2023). Based on this foundation, Denpasar Festival upholds the concern for nature, it can be interpreted that humans are very dependent on their environment, the environment provides humans with the necessities to live. Therefore, the surrounding nature or environment must be well preserved in order to realize one of the values of Tri Hita Karana. In this context, Denpasar Festival gives creators the freedom to voice issues related to the environment.

Second, the social impact. Based on the noble value of Tri Hita Karana, the relationship between fellow humans. Denpasar Festival is held by involving all parties, and the community can play an active role in this activity. Everyone, be it famous artists, new artists or even children will be given the opportunity to show their talents. In addition, this activity is held to provide recreational facilities to the community to release boredom.

Third, the economic impact. It is not only artists and ordinary people who benefit from the Denpasar festival. Local entrepreneurs are also given the opportunity to market and promote their products. Denpasar Festival encourages the growth of entrepreneurship related to the creative economy. This is done so that it can have an impact on the economic independence of the Denpasar City community.

The Denpasar City Government wants to involve all parties to jointly build Denpasar into a creative city. Based on the article, Denpasar City has great potential to become a creative city. Denpasar has a historical and cultural background, as well as creative human resources, so Denpasar is very capable of meeting the criteria for developing a Creative City. According to Galaby & Abdrabo (2020), there are three domains of creative cities, namely:

First, the Spirit of Culture. Denpasar is a cultural tourism destination. Having a rich culture, the Denpasar city government has built infrastructure so that the existing art community can gather and the culture in Denpasar City continues to be preserved. One example is the Taman Werdi Budaya (Art Centre). This place is the center of art and culture in Denpasar. It functions as a venue for traditional Balinese art performances. In addition, the Denpasar city government also organizes various festivals, not only to preserve culture but also to encourage the creative economy in Denpasar city.

Second, the creative economy. Denpasar has creative human resources and a rich culture. Most of the population in Bali are people who work in the field of tourism. The number of workers in the hospitality sector reached 357,657. This sector has the highest increase with the addition of 87.28

thousand workers compared to 2022 (Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Bali, 2023). This number does not include the creative industry sector workforce that is formed from tourism. Tourism is a source of income for Balinese people, so it is not surprising that many creative industry products are offered in Bali.

Third, environmental comfort. As a world-famous tourist destination, Bali already has easy accessibility and transportation. Denpasar as the capital of the province has the availability of transportation and easy accessibility. Denpasar has a variety of public transportation options to support tourism, such as Trans Sarbagita, Kura-Kura Bus, Trans Metro Dewata, vehicle rental and online transportation. The role of the government in making Denpasar a creative city in addition to providing public facilities for cultural development, is to establish a curriculum of arts both dance, gamelan and Balinese language so that the culture is not lost over time.

#### IV CONCLUSION

Denpasar Festival is an annual program held by the Denpasar City Government to support and accommodate arts, culture, and creative economy activities in Denpasar City. The event is held in the heritage area, also known as the zero point of Denpasar City. The Denpasar Festival program is a forum for all elements of society to play an active role and enjoy a variety of activities such as arts and culture, culinary festivals, creative economy exhibitions, and parades. In addition, this festival also aims to support the revitalization of the Gajah Mada heritage area.

The festival provides opportunities for the local community, including artists, dancers, photographers, and local entrepreneurs, to participate and promote their products. Denpasar Festival also becomes one of the promotional media for the province of Bali, attracting local and foreign tourists. Denpasar Festival implements the values of Tri Hita Karana, which is a harmonious relationship between humans, creators, and the environment, thus fulfilling to be considered a sustainable festival as it takes into account environmental, social, and economic impacts. This festival

The Denpasar City Government has a vision to make the city a creative city, relying on its cultural heritage and creative human resources. When viewed from the three domains of creative cities, namely cultural spirit, creative economy, and environmental ease. Denpasar City has great potential to become a creative city. Moreover, Denpasar has a historical and cultural background, as well as creative human resources, so Denpasar City is very capable of meeting the criteria for Creative City development.

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