

Leveraging Cultural Events for Destination Branding: Assessing the Impact of the Radin Jambat Festival on the Image of Way Kanan Regency, Indonesia

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Abstract

This study investigates the strategic role of cultural festivals in shaping destination image within the context of emerging tourism regions in Indonesia. Specifically, it examines the influence of the Radin Jambat Festival on the destination image of Way Kanan Regency, Lampung Province. Utilizing a quantitative approach, this research surveyed 95 respondents who attended the festival. Data were analyzed using Simple Linear Regression via SPSS. The findings reveal a significant positive correlation, where the festival contributes 57.5% to the variance in the destination's image ($R^2=0.575, \beta=0.758, p<0.05$). This study analyzes the Radin Jambat Festival as a strategic tool for enhancing Way Kanan's destination image and brand equity. The research demonstrates that the festival functions as a unique cultural catalyst, shifting the region's identity from administrative to experiential. While the festival successfully bolsters affective imagery and behavioral intentions, a critical gap remains regarding cognitive attributes like infrastructure. Findings suggest that sustainable tourism loyalty requires balancing high-quality event management with improvements in physical accessibility to ensure long-term destination attractiveness. These results empirically validate that authentic cultural events are potent drivers for enhancing regional competitiveness. The study concludes that while the festival successfully elevates the region's cognitive and affective image, improvements in supporting infrastructure are necessary to maximize tourism potential.

Keywords: Destination Image; Cultural Festival; City Branding; Radin Jambat; Way Kanan Tourism

A. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary landscape of global tourism, the competition between cities and regions has shifted from merely offering natural endowments to the strategic management of destination image. A destination according to Cooper (2005) is a place in which there is attraction and hospitality, while according to Jayswal (2008) "is an area, city or place that has one or more attractions for tourists". Whether in the form of scenery, culture, recreational activities, food, shopping, and others (Boniface & Cooper, 2005; Jayswal, 2008).

According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO, 2009) the image of a destination represents the richness of a destination and how potential visitors perceive it ("UNWTO Tourism Highlights, 2009 Edition," 2009). It is therefore clear that the visitor's perspective must be considered as fundamental in triggering the process of imagery and image of a destination (Beerli & Martin, 2004; Park & Petrick, 2006). There is a synergistic correlation between destinations, events and tourist visits, when an event at a destination is well received, it has the potential to contribute to making the destination unique and even popular for potential visitors.

There must have been many tourism destinations around the world that built a portfolio of events as a strategic initiative to attract visitors and develop their own brands (Blain, Levy, & Ritchie, 2005). Kavaratzis notes that culture provides consumable experiences that act as sources of economic activity.

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Received: Month 11 February, 2026; Revised: 11 June, 2026; Accepted: September 25, 2026

Consequently, cultural events and festivals have become integral components of destination image strategies globally. They serve not only as attractions but as catalysts for "placing" a destination on the mental map of potential visitors (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2015). This phenomenon is evident in Indonesia, where regions increasingly leverage local wisdom and traditional rituals to enhance their tourism appeal.

Way Kanan Regency in Lampung Province exemplifies this trend through the organization of the Radin Jambat Festival. Held annually to commemorate the regency's anniversary, this festival celebrates the legendary figure of Radin Jambat—a mythological hero known for his wisdom, bravery, and ability to unite diverse clans. Despite the festival's regular occurrence and its central role in the local government's tourism policy, empirical evidence regarding its actual impact on the destination's image remains limited.

Problem Statement and Objectives

While the theoretical link between events and destination image is well-established in tourism literature (Getz, 2008; Richards & Wilson, 2004), the specific magnitude of this relationship in the context of rural or emerging destinations like Way Kanan is not yet quantified. The local government utilizes the festival as a branding tool, yet it is unclear to what extent this event directly influences tourists' cognitive and affective perceptions of the regency.

Therefore, this study aims to: 1). Measure the perception of the Radin Jambat Festival among attendees; 2). Analyze the current destination image of Way Kanan Regency; 3). Quantify the influence of the Radin Jambat Festival on the destination image of Way Kanan Regency using regression analysis.

Literature Review

Destination image is defined as the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a person holds about a place (Kotler, Haider, & Rein, 1993). It is a multidimensional construct comprising cognitive (knowledge/beliefs), affective (feelings), and conative (behavioral intent) components (Beerli & Martin, 2004). Cognitive image relates to the tangible attributes of the destination, such as scenery, infrastructure, and cultural attractions. Affective image relates to the emotional response triggered by the destination (e.g., exciting, relaxing). Conative Image, the likelihood of visiting or recommending the destination.

The World Tourism Organization (2009) emphasizes that destination image represents the richness of a destination as perceived by potential visitors, making it a fundamental factor in the decision-making process.

Festivals are "spatially temporal planned phenomena" that play a crucial role in destination progress (Getz, 2008). They act as primary elements of attraction (Harvey, 1991) and are instrumental in marketing cities by using culture to promote distinctiveness (Waitt, 2000).

McCartney and Osti highlight that cultural festivals have grown rapidly in the last decade, becoming major tourist magnets. Attributes of a successful festival include organization, promotion, facilities, safety, and the "atmosphere" or environmental vibe (McCartney & Osti, 2007). When a festival is well-received, it creates a synergistic correlation between the event and the destination, potentially making the location unique and popular (Blain et al., 2005).

The Radin Jambat Festival is deeply rooted in the folklore of Way Kanan. Radin Jambat is depicted as a Sufi-like figure who achieved wisdom through meditation and united the five clans (*Buay*) of the region. The festival includes cultural parades, traditional "Warahan" (oral storytelling), and exhibitions of local SMEs. It represents an effort to preserve regional culture while simultaneously generating economic income and improving community welfare.

From the literature study, the researchers obtained nine variables of carnival festival service quality to be analyzed. Nine variables were conceptualized as attributes of the cultural festival image. Variables include event organization (event planning and coordination, event management, band composition, band costume, dance, music and theme); promotion (creation of awareness about the event in national and

international media); facilities (telephone service, transportation, computer service, accommodation); friendly residents; shopping (availability of shopping malls for participants during the event); leisure and food venues (availability of restaurants and fast food venues); environmental atmosphere (signage, cleanliness, greenery and orderliness of the city hosting the festival); and safety and security (absence or lack of criminal or illegal activities). These variables are set as the attributes of the image of the cultural festival.

Hypothesis Development

Previous studies by Bassey (2009) and Piva et al. (2017) suggest that cultural festivals significantly aid in city branding and image strengthening (Bassey, 2009; Piva, Cerutti, Prats, & Raj, 2017). Based on this theoretical framework, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H0: The implementation of the Radin Jambat Festival has a negative and no significant influence on the destination image of Way Kanan Regency.

H1: The implementation of the Radin Jambat Festival has a positive and significant influence on the destination image of Way Kanan Regency.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study employs a quantitative research design using a descriptive and verification approach. The primary goal is to explain the causal relationship between the independent variable (Radin Jambat Festival) and the dependent variable (Destination Image).

Table 1. Operational Definitions of Variables

Variable	Definition	Indicator	Measuring Instruments & Research Methods	Scaled	Sources Of Theory
		Based on the research conducted, there are several indicators that are usually used to hold a festival :			
Radin Jambat Festival (X)	A cultural event held in commemoration of the anniversary of Way Kanan district	- Event organization - Promotion - Amenities - Where to shop - Recreation area - Restaurants - Hospitality - atmosphere - safety and security	Questionnaire Engaged Observation Literature review	Likert Scale 5 points	Getz (Getz, 1990, 2005)
Image Of Way Kanan Regency (Y)	Image built by the government with the aim of developing and enlarging the name of Way Kanan district	Based on the research conducted, there are several indicators that are usually used in the formation of destination image:	Questionnaire Engaged Observation Literature review	Likert Scale 5 points	Prayag, Belhassen, Konecnik & Gartner, Styliadis, Shani. (Styliadis, Shani, &

Cognitive	Belhassen, 2017)
- Natural/Environmental characteristics	
- Infrastructure	
- Tourism Attractions	
- Social environment	
- Accessibility	
Affective	
- <i>Distressing-relaxing</i>	
- <i>Unpleasant-pleasant</i>	
- <i>Boring-exciting</i>	
- <i>Sleepy-lively</i>	
Conative :	
Intending to revisit	
- Intend to recommend	
- Intend to spread positive	
WOM	
Overall Image :	
- image of the destination	
as a whole	

Thus, this study at table 1 above will describe the facts and explain the state of the research object based on the facts and explain the state of the research object based on the facts and try to analyze the truth based on the data obtained, and analyzed quantitatively with statistical tools regarding the relationship between two independent variables and the dependent variable (Basaran, 2018).

The source of data used in this study are primary data and secondary data. Primary data were obtained from participatory research with the distribution of questionnaires to Radin Jambat Festival visitors, while secondary data were sourced from previous research and other relevant documentation.

Population and Sample

The population for this study comprises visitors who attended the Radin Jambat Festival held in April 2024. Sampling Technique non-probability sampling using convenience sampling, selecting respondents based on their availability during the festival event. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with a 10% margin of error, yielding 95 respondents from an estimated population of 2,000 visitors. Sample Size (N) the final valid sample used for regression analysis consisted of 95 respondents.

Data Collection

Researchers used a differential semantic scale in distributing questionnaires for data collection. Differential semantics are used to measure attitudes, only the form is not multiple choice or checklist, but is arranged in a continuum line where the answer is "very positive" located on the right side of the line, and the answer is "very negative" located on the left side of the line, or vice versa. The data obtained are interval data, and usually this scale is used to measure certain attitudes/characteristics possessed by a person (Sugiyono, 2013).

Primary data were collected via a structured questionnaire using a Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

Variable X (Radin Jambat Festival): Measured through indicators such as event organization, promotion, facilities, atmosphere, and safety.

Variable Y (Destination Image): Measured through cognitive, affective, and overall image dimensions (infrastructure, natural tourism, accessibility, friendliness).

Primary Data is data obtained based on participatory research taken using sampling procedures. The sampling technique used in this study used saturated sampling to determine how much effect the Radin Jambat festival had on the image of Way Kanan district as a tourist destination in Lampung province, this is related to the number of visitors to the Radin Jambat festival.

Secondary data were used to support the primary data obtained based on field research. Secondary data were obtained from literature studies. The data obtained from the literature study were taken from books, journals and research reports related to the topic of this final project. This is also done to obtain the necessary data or materials, and also to obtain related theories. The involvement of researchers in the Festival when visiting the site before the event was carried out greatly helped the collection of much-needed secondary data. Secondary data are supporting data obtained from this study as follows: 1). Way Kanan Regency Regional Government Archives; 2). Books related to research variables; 3). Journals and results of previous research; 4). Articles from the *website*.

Population and Sample

Population is a generalization area consisting of objects or subjects that have certain qualities and characteristics set by the researcher to be studied and drawn conclusions. In this study, the number of visitors to the Radin Jambat festival. The population of this study were visitors and observers of the Radin Jambat Festival, the Government as the organizer and the organizing committee, which in total was estimated to be 2000 people. The sampling technique used is *convenience sampling, which is a sampling technique based on the availability of elements and the ease of obtaining them, due to the high homogeneity of the population and the demand for ease in terms of the operationalization of sampling*. The sample calculation method used in this study is the Slovin method with the following formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N (e)^2}$$

Thus the number of samples is as follows :

$$n = \frac{2000}{1 + 2000 (0.1)^2} = \frac{2000}{1 + 20} = \frac{2000}{21} = 95.238$$

Validity and Reliability Test

Validity test is used to find out how valid the question or statement is in the questionnaire. The validity test is carried out on the *Statistical Package for Social Science* (SPSS) application provided that, if the results of the *component matrix* are below the *cut off value* (at least 0.4), then the item is invalid and must be re-analyzed (Baxter & Jack, 2015; Creswell J.W., 2007; Given, 2008)

Reliability test is used to determine how strong or accurate the answers given by respondents to the questions or statements in the questionnaire are. Judging from the results of data processing using *Statistical Package for Social Science* (SPSS) if the results of cronbac's *alpha* are more than 0.6, it is said to be reliable (Creswell J.W., 2007).

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS software. The analysis technique employed was Simple Linear Regression to test the hypothesis. The regression equation model used is:

$$Y = a + bX$$

Where:

Y = Response Variable or Dependent Variable

X = Predictor Variable or Causal Factor Variable (Independent)

a = Constant

b = regression coefficient (slope); the magnitude of the Response elicited by the Predictor.

The values of a and b can be calculated using the following formula:

$$a = \frac{(\sum y)(\sum x^2) - (\sum x)(\sum xy)}{n(\sum x^2) - (\sum x)^2}$$

$$b = \frac{n(\sum xy) - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{n(\sum x^2) - (\sum x)^2}$$

To create a complete modeling, it is necessary to perform the following steps:

1. Determine the Objective of performing a Simple Linear Regression Analysis
2. Identify Causal Factor Variables (Predictor) and Result Variables (Response)
3. Data collection
4. Calculate X^2 , Y^2 , XY and the total of each
5. Calculate a and b based on the formula above.
6. Create a Simple Linear Regression Equation Model.
7. Predict or Forecast the Variable of Causal Factors or Consequential Variables.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Profile

Demographic analysis of the respondents indicates a diverse participation base. The attendees included both local residents of Lampung and visitors from neighbouring regions. The age distribution varied, with a significant portion of respondents falling within the productive age range (24-38 years old), and education levels ranging from High School to Graduate programs. Income levels varied, with a notable segment earning between Rp 2,500,000 and Rp 4,000,000, suggesting the festival attracts middle-income domestic tourists.

Descriptive Analysis

In this study, descriptive analysis was used to provide an overview of the profile of research respondents in terms of gender, age, marital status, regional origin, education level and income per month. In addition to providing an overview of the respondents' profiles, a descriptive analysis in this study was also conducted to provide an overview of the Radin Jambat festival and the image of Way Kanan district after the festival.

Descriptive statistics reveal that the average value of indicators for the destination image of Way Kanan Regency tends to be high. Respondents generally agreed that the regency possesses attractive cultural assets. However, specific feedback indicated areas for improvement, particularly regarding infrastructure and road accessibility to the regency, which were noted as constraints.

Validity and Reliability Result

The validity test used in this study is the *Pearson Product Moment* validity test with the help of the SPSS program, while the reliability test used in this study is the *Cronbach's Alpha* reliability test conducted by looking at the *Cronbach's Alpha* value of each instrument.

In the *Pearson Product Moment* validity test, the correlation coefficient value hereinafter referred to as r count. In this test, if the value of r count > r table and the value is positive then the item or question or indicator is declared valid, while if r count < r table then the item or question or indicator is declared invalid. Because the number of samples in this study was 95 respondents, the R table value to be compared with the R count value of each question item was 0.168 (R table at n = 95 and a significant level of 0.05), thus the question item was declared valid if r count > 0.168 and the question item was declared invalid if

r count < 0.168. The following are the results of the validity and reliability tests of the research instruments to be used in this study:

Table 2. Results of the Validity and Reliability Test of the Variable Instrument for the Implementation of the Radin Jambat Festival

Item no.	R count	R table	Validity	Cronbachs Alpha	
1	0.631	.168	valid		
2	0.743	.168	valid		
3	0.824	.168	valid		
4	0.877	.168	valid		
5	0.801	.168	valid		
6	0.757	.168	valid	.838	Reliable
7	0.676	.168	valid		
8	0.774	.168	valid		
9	0.811	.168	valid		
10	0.837	.168	valid		
11	0.780	.168	valid		

In this study, the Radin Jambat festival at table 2 implementation variable was measured by 11 question items. Based on the results of the validity and reliability tests in the table above, the results of the analysis showed that all question items in the planning variable instrument had an R count exceeding the R table. This shows that all question items measuring the Radin Jambat festival implementation variable were valid in measuring the variable. Furthermore, based on the results of the reliability test, the cronbachs alpha value of the valid Radin Jambat festival organizing variable instrument is 0.838, because the alpha cronbachs value obtained is > 0.7, it can be stated that the valid Radin Jambat festival organizing variable instrument has been reliable and can be used as a research instrument.

Table 3. The Results of the Validity and Reliability Test of Way Kanan Regency Image Variable Instrument

Item no.	R count	R table	Validity	Cronbachs Alpha	
12	0.634	.168	valid		
13	0.752	.168	valid		
14	0.674	.168	valid		
15	0.615	.168	valid		
16	0.646	.168	valid		
17	0.720	.168	valid		
18	0.731	.168	valid		
19	0.703	.168	valid		
20	0.182	.168	valid	0.928	Reliable
21	0.184	.168	valid		
22	0.638	.168	valid		
23	0.730	.168	valid		
24	0.254	.168	valid		
25	0.695	.168	valid		
26	0.635	.168	valid		
27	0.698	.168	valid		
28	0,659	.168	valid		

In this study, the Way Kanan Regency image at table 3 variable was measured by 17 question items. Based on the results of the validity and reliability tests in the table above, the results of the analysis showed that all question items in the Way Kanan Regency image variable instrument had an R count exceeding the R table. This shows that all question items measuring the Way Kanan Regency image variable were valid in measuring the variable. Furthermore, based on the results of the reliability test, the cronbachs alpha value of Way Kanan district image variable instrument is 0.928, because the cronbachs alpha value obtained is > 0.7 , it can be stated that the Way Kanan district image variable instrument is reliable and can be used as a research instrument.

Regression Analysis Result

The core of this study rests on the Simple Linear Regression analysis determining the effect of the festival on the destination's image. Before performing a simple linear regression analysis, the data were first analysed using classical assumption tests covering normality, heteroscedasticity and autocorrelation tests. After all the classical assumptions are met, the regression model is feasible to test the research hypothesis.

Table 4. Normality Test Results

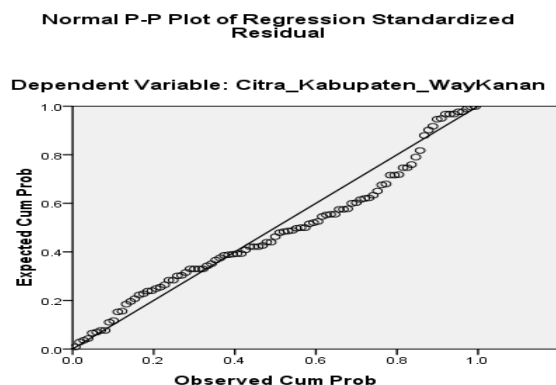
One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
		Unstandardized Residual
N		95
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	5.21569014
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.114
	Positive	.114
	Negative	-.063
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		1.110
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.170

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

The normality test results in table 4. show a significant value of the Kolmogorov Smirnov normality test result of 0.170. Because of the significant value of the normality test results > 0.05 , it can be concluded that the distribution of residual regression data has been normally distributed, thus the normality requirements are met. This is also supported by the form of PP Plot graph in Figure 1, based on the graph, the distribution of residual data from regression spreads in a straight line direction which shows that the regression residual is normally distributed:

Figure 1. PP Plot Chart



The heteroscedasticity at figure 1 test aims to test whether in the regression model there is an inequality of variance from one residual observation to another. The heteroscedasticity test was carried out statistically using the Glejser Test. In this test, the model is declared free from heteroscedasticity if the significance value of all independent variables is > 0.05 .

Table 5. Glejser Test Results

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	4.866	2.123		2.292	.024
X	-.024	.046	-.053	-.511	.611

a. Dependent Variable: ABS

Glejser test results in Table 5 above show that all independent variables have a significance value > 0.05 , which means that heteroscedasticity does not occur in the regression model.

Autocorrelation test can be done by looking at the Watson durbin value. In this test, the regression model was stated to not contain autocorrelation if the Watson durbin value was in the range of $du < dw < 4-du$. In this study, the number of respondents in this study was 95 respondents ($n = 95$) with the number of independent variables as much as 1 independent variable ($k = 1$), so the dl table value obtained was 1.6447 and du table was 1.6872. Thus, the model is stated to not contain autocorrelation if the Watson durbin value is in the range of $1.6447 < dw < 2.3553$.

Table 6. Autocorrelation Results

↔	↔	↔	↔	↔
positive autocorrelation	no conclusion	no autocorrelation dw = 2.055	no conclusion	there is a negative autocorrelation

Regression Model

The results of simple linear regression at table 6 analysis include the results of the influence test (t test), model feasibility test (F test), and coefficient of determination (R square). The t-test results can be used to test the research hypothesis.

In simple linear regression analysis, a t-test was used to test the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. The test hypotheses used in this test are as follows:

Ho : the partial implementation of Radin Jambat festival has no effect on the image of Way Kanan Regency

H1 : the implementation of the Radin Jambat festival partially affects the image of Way Kanan district

With a 95% confidence level, Ho will be rejected if the value is significant < 0.05 and Ho will be accepted if the value is significant > 0.05.

Table 7. Partial Test Results

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	33.635	3.120		10.782	,000
Festival_Radin_Jambat	.758	.068	.758	11.207	,000

a. Dependent Variable: Citra_Kabupaten_WayKanan

Based on the t-test results in Table 7, the p-value of the effect of the Radin Jambat Festival on the destination image of Way Kanan Regency is 0.000, with a positive regression coefficient of 0.758. Because the significance value was < 0.05 and the regression coefficient was positive, H0 was rejected. It is therefore concluded that the Radin Jambat Festival has a positive and significant effect on the destination image of Way Kanan Regency. The higher the quality of the festival, the higher the destination image of Way Kanan Regency.

Based on the results of regression analysis in Table 7, the regression constant value was 33.635 and the regression coefficient of the Radin Jambat Festival variable was 0.758. Based on these values, the simple linear regression equation is obtained as follows:

$$Y = 33.635 + 0.758$$

Therefore,

Y = Radin Jambat festival

X = Image of Way Kanan Regency

The regression coefficient of 0.758 is statistically significant, indicating that for every 1-unit increase in the Radin Jambat Festival quality score (X), the destination image score of Way Kanan Regency (Y) will increase by 0.758 units, assuming other factors remain constant.

In simple linear regression analysis, testing of the feasibility of the regression model was carried out based on the results of the F test. The test hypotheses used in this test are as follows:

Ho : Model is not fit

Ha : Fit Model

With a 95% confidence level, Ho will be rejected if the value is significant < 0.05 and Ho will be accepted if the value is significant > 0.05

Table 8. Simultaneous Test Results

ANOVA^b

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	3453.362	1	3453.362	125.595	.000 ^a
Residual	2557.122	93	27.496		
Total	6010.484	94			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Festival_Radin_Jambat

b. Dependent Variable: Citra_Kabupaten_WayKanan

Based on the results of the regression analysis in Table 8, a significant F-test value of 0.000 was obtained. Because the significance value was < 0.05 , H_0 was rejected. It is concluded that the Radin Jambat Festival has a significant effect on the destination image of Way Kanan Regency. This confirms that the regression model is fit and can be used for predictive purposes.

In a simple linear regression analysis, the coefficient of determination shows the simultaneous effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. The coefficient of determination value is seen from the R Square value.

Table 9. Determination Coefficient

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.758 ^a	.575	.570	5.24366

a. Predictors: (Constant), Festival_Radin_Jambat

b. Dependent Variable: Citra_Kabupaten_WayKanan

The results of regression analysis in the table 9 above show that the R Square value of the regression model is 0.575. This shows that the contribution of the Radin Jambat festival to the improvement of the image of Way Kanan Regency was 57.5%, while the remaining 42.5% of the variance in the image of WayKanan Regency was influenced by other factors outside the festival.

Hypothesis Testing

Based on the results of a simple linear regression analysis, it was found that the p-value of the influence of the Radin Jambat Festival variable on the destination image of Way Kanan Regency was 0.000, with a positive regression coefficient of 0.758. Because the significance value was < 0.05 and the regression coefficient was positive, H_0 was rejected. It is therefore concluded that the implementation of the Radin Jambat Festival had a positive and significant effect on the destination image of Way Kanan Regency. The better the quality of the festival, the higher the destination image of Way Kanan Regency. The results of this analysis support the hypothesis; thus, the hypothesis of this study is proven.

Based on the results:

Significance: The p-value of 0.000 confirms a statistically significant relationship.

Direction: The positive coefficient (0.758) indicates that for every 1-unit increase in the quality of the Radin Jambat Festival, the Destination Image of Way Kanan improves by 0.758 units.

Thus, H0 is rejected and H1 is accepted. The implementation of the Radin Jambat Festival has a positive and significant effect on the image of Way Kanan Regency.

The findings of this study provide empirical support for the premise that cultural events are vital drivers of destination branding. The R² value of 57.5% is substantial, suggesting that for Way Kanan—a region perhaps less known for mass tourism compared to Bali or Yogyakarta—the festival acts as a primary vehicle for image formation.

The positive correlation aligns with the "Penta Helix" concept of tourism development involving the government, community, and media. The Radin Jambat Festival, by incorporating the legend of a unifying figure, successfully projects an image of harmony, culture, and history. This confirms the theory by Richards and Wilson (2004) that cultural events serve as platforms to generate positive media coverage and identify cities in a global society.

Discussion

The intersection of festival management and destination imagery has been extensively examined by scholars such as Bassey (2009), Stamenkovic et al. (2013), and Piva et al. (2017). A foundational study by Bassey (2009) utilized a sample of 500 attendees at the Calabar Carnival Festival to propose a normative model for cultural festival branding as a primary destination driver (Bassey, 2009). Similarly, Stamenkovic et al. (2013) investigated the Tragacevo Trumpet Festival in Guca, validating 300 out of 450 respondent profiles to refine festival branding strategies (Stamenković, Pivac, Blešić, & Besermenji, 2013).

Furthering this discourse, Piva et al. (2017) conducted a digital survey of 220 participants focusing on Italy's Stresa Festival, emphasizing how organized cultural events serve to reinforce a destination's overarching image (Piva et al., 2017).

Research regarding destination image components specifically cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions is well-documented across diverse geographical contexts:

Belitung, Indonesia: Dewi (2013) surveyed 100 tourists and applied statistical analysis to determine that "unique image" exerts the strongest influence on post-purchase behavior (13.61%), surpassing affective (9.97%) and cognitive (3.09%) impacts (Dewi, 2013).

Poland: Johann (2014) evaluated 461 tourists by categorizing attributes into "controllable" (e.g., hospitality services, pricing) and "uncontrollable" (e.g., weather, local kindness). The findings revealed a lack of broad awareness, suggesting that personal networks currently outweigh formal communication media (Johann, 2014).

Bandung, Indonesia: Novianti (2014) employed cluster sampling on 100 Malaysian tourists to conclude that Customer-Based Brand Equity for Tourism Destinations (CBBETD)—encompassing awareness, image, quality, and loyalty—significantly dictates the visit decision-making process (Novianti, Ernawadi, Ekonomi dan Bisnis, & Jenderal Achmad Yani, 2024).

Makassar, Indonesia: Ahmad et al (2015) utilized mean analysis to identify a generally positive perception of Makassar; however, the study highlighted critical infrastructure gaps in cleanliness, transportation, and security that temper the city's image (Ahmad, Payangan, Hamid, & Nursyamsi, 2015)

Bali, Indonesia: Utama (2017) focused on the resilient demographic of elderly Australian travelers. Utilizing quantitative survey methods, the study confirmed that internal travel motivations and the perceived strength of Bali's natural and cultural identity are the primary drivers of its enduring destination image (Utama, 2017).

Eilat: Styliadis et al. (2016) analyzed 440 valid responses, discovering that the affective component holds greater predictive power than the cognitive component regarding a tourist's overall value perception and future behavioral intentions (Styliadis et al., 2017).

The collective evidence suggests that while cognitive attributes provide the structural basis for destination image, affective and unique imagery often serve as the primary catalysts for behavioral intention and long-term loyalty. The theoretical framework established by Bassey (2009) and Piva et al. (2017) regarding cultural festivals as destination branding tools provides a robust basis for analyzing the Radin Jambat Festival in Way Kanan Regency. Just as the Calabar Carnival and Stresa Festival serve as primary attractions, the Radin Jambat Festival acts as a strategic vehicle to transform Way Kanan's cultural identity into a tangible destination brand.

Strengthening the Cognitive and Unique Image

In alignment with Dewi's (2013) findings—where "unique image" was the most significant driver of tourist behavior (13.61%)—the Radin Jambat Festival serves as the "unique attribute" for Way Kanan. By showcasing specific local folklore and traditional heritage, the festival shifts the destination's image from a generic administrative region to a culturally distinct destination. This aligns with Utama's (2016) assertion that strong cultural identity is a primary driver for destination image stability.

Enhancing Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBETD)

Following the model by Novianti (2014), the success of Way Kanan as a tourism destination depends on *destination awareness* and *perceived quality*. The Radin Jambat Festival functions as a communication catalyst—addressing the "awareness gap" identified by Johan (2014)—by using the event as a media hook to attract national and international attention, thereby influencing the visit decision process of potential tourists.

Affective and Conative Impact

As Belhassen et al. (2016) and Thian (2017) suggested, the affective (emotional) experience of a festival often outweighs purely cognitive information. The Radin Jambat Festival creates an emotional bond between the visitor and the regency. If the festival successfully delivers a positive experience, it improves the overall image of Way Kanan, leading to:

Positive Word-of-Mouth: Similar to the family-based awareness seen in Poland (Johann, 2014).

Behavioral Intentions: Increasing the likelihood of repeat visits and longer stays.

Addressing Infrastructure through Event Management

However, mirroring Ahmad's (2015) critique of Makassar, the festive image of Way Kanan must be supported by "controllable attributes." The influx of tourists during the Radin Jambat Festival necessitates improvements in public transportation, cleanliness, and security. Without these, the positive image generated by the festival could be undermined by negative perceptions of the regency's daily infrastructure.

Furthermore, the results echo the findings of Bassey (2009) regarding the Calabar Carnival, where festival branding directly correlated with destination attractiveness. In the case of Way Kanan, the festival transforms the "static" image of the regency into a "dynamic" experience involving distinct rituals (Warahan) and community engagement.

However, the descriptive analysis highlighted a gap between the *event experience* (which was rated highly) and the *physical accessibility* (infrastructure). While the festival boosts the "Affective" image (visitors feel good about the culture), the "Cognitive" image regarding infrastructure remains a challenge. As noted in the results, respondents indicated that road access to the regency needs improvement. This supports the argument by Getz (2008) that even the right strategy can fail if implemented without support from other factors, such as basic tourism infrastructure.

D. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Radin Jambat Festival is a significant determinant of Way Kanan Regency's tourism image. With a 57.5% influence contribution, the festival is not merely a celebration but a strategic branding tool that effectively communicates the region's cultural values, unity, and tourism potential. The statistical evidence ($p < 0.05$) confirms that improving the quality of the festival directly enhances the destination's image.

This study focused solely on the Radin Jambat Festival's impact on image. Future research should consider mediating variables such as "Tourist Satisfaction" or "Revisit Intention" and expand the sample size to include a broader demographic of non-local tourists to validate the generalizability of the findings.

Based on the findings, several recommendations are proposed:

Infrastructure Integration: The local government must prioritize the improvement of road access and physical facilities leading to the festival venue. A high-quality festival cannot fully compensate for poor accessibility.

Content Innovation: To maintain the high engagement levels, the festival should continue to diversify its content, perhaps by integrating more interactive elements of the *Warahan* storytelling to engage younger audiences.

Expanded Promotion: Given the proven impact on image, marketing efforts should be expanded beyond the province to attract national and international tourists, utilizing digital media as a catalyst in the Penta Helix model.

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