

Development of the concept of the Sinabung Art Festival event in improving the economy of the people of Kuta Gulang Village, Karo Regency

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the contribution of the Sinabung Art Festival in improving the economy and strengthening the social capacity of the people of Kuta Gulang Village after the eruption of Mount Sinabung. This festival plays an important role in economic recovery through the empowerment of local Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and increases community participation in culture-based activities. This study combines in-depth interviews with MSME actors, community leaders, and visitors to identify the impact of festivals on income increase, social strengthening, and disaster education. The results showed that festivals significantly increased MSME revenue, with business actors reporting a surge in turnover of up to 200-300%. The festival also strengthens social solidarity, with the community actively involved in the planning and execution of events, as well as raising awareness about disaster mitigation. In addition, the festival has succeeded in becoming a disaster education event for visitors and the local community. However, the study also found challenges in terms of festival sustainability, with event planning and management needing to be more professional, as well as strengthening the use of digital technology for promotion and marketing. For this reason, this study recommends digital training for MSMEs, strengthening multisectoral collaboration, and preparing an annual event calendar as strategic steps to ensure the sustainability of the festival. The Sinabung Art Festival has great potential to become a model for community-based tourism development in disaster-prone areas.

Keywords: *Sinabung Art Festival, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), Disaster Education, Social Strengthening, Festival Sustainability.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kontribusi Festival Seni Sinabung dalam meningkatkan perekonomian dan memperkuat kapasitas sosial masyarakat Desa Kuta Gulang pasca erupsi Gunung Sinabung. Festival ini berperan penting dalam pemulihan ekonomi melalui pemberdayaan Usaha Mikro, Kecil, dan Menengah (UMKM) lokal serta meningkatkan partisipasi masyarakat dalam kegiatan berbasis budaya. Penelitian ini menggabungkan wawancara mendalam dengan pelaku UMKM, tokoh masyarakat, dan pengunjung untuk mengidentifikasi dampak festival terhadap peningkatan pendapatan, penguatan sosial, dan edukasi bencana. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa festival secara signifikan meningkatkan pendapatan UMKM, dengan pelaku usaha melaporkan lonjakan omzet hingga 200-300%. Festival juga memperkuat solidaritas sosial, dengan masyarakat aktif terlibat dalam perencanaan dan pelaksanaan acara, serta meningkatkan kesadaran tentang mitigasi bencana. Selain itu, festival berhasil menjadi ajang edukasi bencana bagi pengunjung dan masyarakat lokal. Namun, penelitian ini juga menemukan tantangan dalam hal keberlanjutan festival, dengan perencanaan dan pengelolaan acara yang perlu lebih profesional, serta penguatan penggunaan teknologi digital untuk promosi dan pemasaran. Untuk itu, penelitian ini merekomendasikan pelatihan digital bagi UMKM, penguatan kolaborasi multisektoral, dan penyusunan kalender acara tahunan sebagai langkah strategis untuk memastikan keberlanjutan festival. Festival Seni Sinabung memiliki potensi besar untuk menjadi model pengembangan pariwisata berbasis komunitas di daerah rawan bencana.

Kata kunci: Festival Seni Sinabung, Usaha Mikro, Kecil, dan Menengah (UMKM), Pendidikan Bencana, Penguatan Sosial, Keberlanjutan Festival.

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A. INTRODUCTION

Kuta Gugung Village, which is located on the slopes of Mount Sinabung, Karo Regency, North Sumatra, is an area that has been severely affected by Sinabung eruption activities since 2013. The prolonged volcanic activity of Mount Sinabung not only brings physical threats in the form of eruptions and hot clouds, but also causes complex economic and social impacts on the surrounding community, especially in the tourism and agricultural sectors which are the backbone of the local economy (Saragih et al., 2020, p. 214). As depicted in the graph above, tourist visits to Karo Regency experienced a drastic decline after 2013. From 120,000 visitors in 2013, this number decreased to only about 45,000 visitors in 2016. This decline has a direct impact on the income of local business actors, such as homestay managers, cultural arts actors, and MSMEs in the culinary and handicraft sectors.

Although in the last five years the trend of tourist visits has begun to show recovery, the increase has not fully had a significant effect on the economic recovery of the community in areas such as Kuta Gugung. This is due to the lack of new tourist attractions that are able to replace tourists' interest in the direct panorama of the active mountains which are now considered high-risk (Brata, 2022, p. 92).

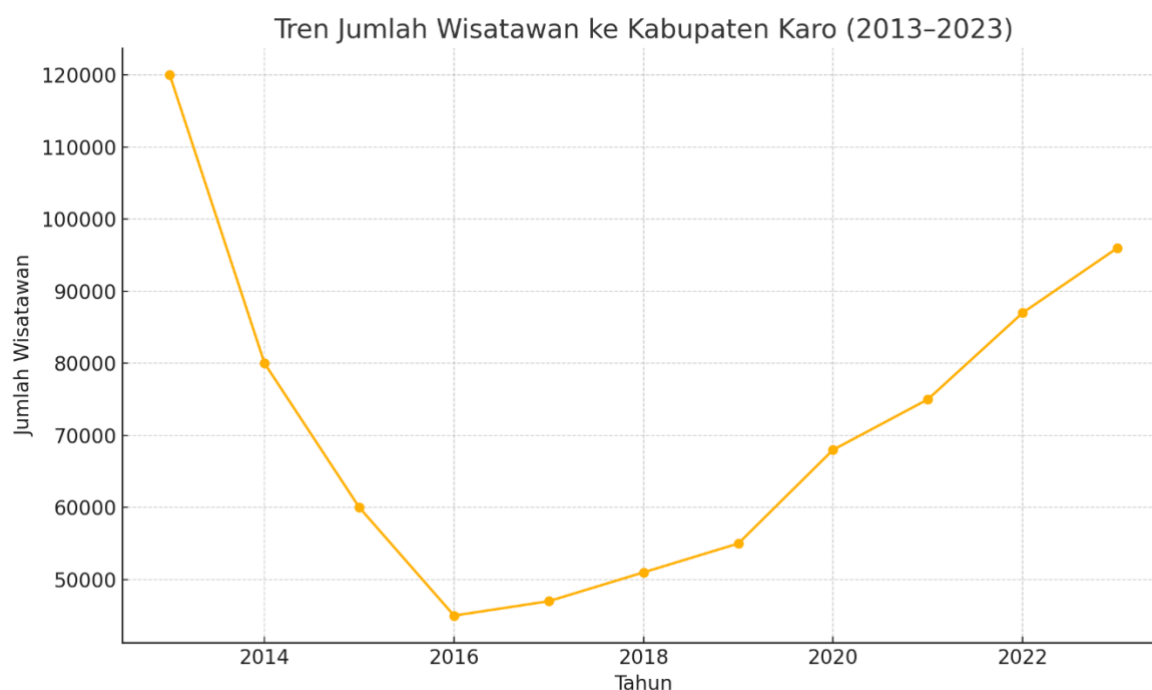


Figure 1

The number of tourists is sourced from *the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) of Karo Regency*
Source: *Central Statistics Agency (BPS) Karo Regency*

The graph above illustrates the number of tourists who visited Karo Regency from 2013 to 2016. Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) of Karo Regency, there has been a drastic decrease in the number of tourists visiting this area, from around 120,000 visitors in 2013 to only around 45,000 visitors in 2016. This decline is related to the impact of the eruption of Mount Sinabung that occurred during the period, which led to fear and reduced interest in tourists to visit the disaster-prone area. This data is important to illustrate the difficult situation faced by the tourism sector in Karo Regency, which requires strategic interventions such as the Sinabung Arts Festival to restore the local economy through tourism and cultural promotion.

In this context, creative and participatory efforts through the development of arts and culture-based tourism events are a very potential strategy. The Sinabung Arts Festival, as a concept, is designed to re-elevate the values of local wisdom, traditional Karo art, as well as historical narratives and post-disaster community resilience. This festival is not only a cultural attraction, but also a forum for community economic empowerment through the involvement of local MSME actors, village artists, as well as tourism actors and disaster educators. The Sinabung Arts Festival is expected to become a routine agenda that attracts domestic and international tourists, as well as open up space for collaboration between the community, the government, and the private sector (Manalu & Napitupulu, 2021, p. 90). By strengthening community-based appeal and expanding the reach of digital promotion, the festival has great potential to become a new locomotive for the sustainable economic recovery of Kuta Gulang Village.

Although the Sinabung Art Festival has shown the potential to improve the economy and strengthen the social capacity of the people of Kuta Gulang Village, there are still some gaps that need to be addressed. One of them is the lack of a deep understanding of how much the festival's long-term impact will be on sustainable economic recovery for MSME actors and local communities as a whole. Previous research, such as those conducted by Prastyo et al. (2025) and Hidayat & Wulandari (2022), has highlighted the importance of community-based events in post-disaster recovery, but they focus more on short-term economic impacts and have not touched deeply on how events such as the Sinabung Arts Festival can be integrated with sustainable and inclusive economic development models. In addition, although public participation in the festival is very high, there are still challenges in terms of event management and planning that can support the sustainability of the festival in the future. In this context, it is important to dig deeper into how the festival can optimize the role of the private sector and government in supporting long-term development. Therefore, this research focuses on identifying and analyzing the factors that affect the success and sustainability of the Sinabung Art Festival as a post-disaster economic and social empowerment tool, with the hope of making a practical and theoretical contribution to the development of community-based tourism in disaster-prone areas.

In this study, the main focus is to examine how the development of the concept of the Sinabung Art Festival event can contribute to improving the economy of the people of Kuta Gulang Village, Karo Regency, as well as strengthening the social, cultural, and educational capacity of the community after the disaster. This festival, which was initiated as a response to the impact of the eruption of Mount Sinabung, is expected to be not only an entertainment event, but also a means of economic empowerment through the involvement of local MSMEs, artists, and local communities. In addition, this festival also has the potential to introduce authentic local Karo culture to visitors, as well as provide space for disaster education that is very important in disaster-prone areas such as Kuta Gulang. Therefore, this study aims to understand in depth how the festival functions as an instrument to restore the community's economy, build stronger social participation, and support cultural preservation and increased awareness of disaster mitigation.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the last decade, the theoretical approach to event tourism has undergone significant changes, from being just a destination promotion instrument to an integral part of local community development and sustainability strategies. Event-based tourism is now understood as a complex form of social, cultural, and economic intervention, which, when designed collaboratively and rooted in the community, is able to facilitate structural transformation at the local level. Therefore, in compiling the scientific foundation of event tourism, it is important to integrate theories that are not only sourced from tourism studies, but also from sociological studies, community psychology, regional planning, and sustainable development. One of the most relevant and cutting-edge theoretical approaches is the Community-Based Event Tourism Model (CBETM). In this model, events are not only seen as the end product, but as social processes that place society as the main actor. A study by Hayati (2025) shows that the active participation of villagers in the process of planning and evaluating events has a direct impact on building collective capacity, feeling of belonging to events, and institutionalizing local values. In the context of the Sinabung Arts Festival, this approach is very relevant considering the history of disaster trauma experienced by the Karo people. The festival is not only a place of entertainment, but also a space for reconciliation, symbolic reconstruction and psychosocial recovery of the community.

Meanwhile, in the post-disaster context, the Event-Community-Resilience Framework as developed by Holladay et al. (2025) provides an interesting perspective on how events contribute to community resilience. Their research in Puerto Rico proves that festivals that are designed sensitively to collective trauma are capable of being an adaptive mechanism that integrates the economic (through agrotourism), social (solidarity and new networks), and psychological (symbolic recovery) dimensions. The framework emphasizes that events can serve as "safe spaces" for emotional expression, cultural preservation, and post-crisis renewal of hope. On the other hand, Lee & Shim (2024) introduced the integration of organizational justice theory in event tourism, specifically to explain how a sense of justice in the sharing of roles, benefits, and recognition in events can affect people's commitment to event sustainability. Their study in Korea found that citizens who felt sufficiently engaged had higher satisfaction, a stronger sense of belonging, and a tendency to stay engaged in the future. This is particularly relevant to the context of community-based tourism in Indonesia, where social relations and informal power structures often influence the internal dynamics of events.

Furthermore, Pereira et al. (2023) refined the event evaluation framework by developing a Participatory Evaluation Model that places citizens as the main arbiter of festival success. This model goes beyond conventional economic paradigms and emphasizes the importance of long-term social impacts, such as upskilling citizens, cross-generational collaboration, and the emergence of new collective identities. This participatory evaluation also facilitates learning-based reflection, where event experiences are used to improve local institutional structures, strengthen social networks, and create culture-based innovations. No less important is Sharma's (2024) contribution which connects event tourism with transformative learning theory. Within this framework, the festival is understood as a "social learning platform", a place where citizens not only absorb new information, but also reshape their identity and self-perception through active involvement in collective activities. This is in line with the context of empowerment, where the learning process does not only occur in formal spaces, but also in the field through hands-on practice, decision-making, and interaction with visitors.

The above approach is also strengthened by the concept of events as a medium for rebranding and repositioning destination identity, as shown by Iskandar & Mayor (2025) in a study of the Salo Karajae Festival. Events are seen as strategic mediums to shape a new narrative about a city or village, elevate previously hidden or marginalized local values, and create an image of authentic yet progressive destination. This is important in the midst of competition between tourist destinations in the digital age, where authentic narratives and experiences are the main attractions. From all of the above frameworks, it is clear that contemporary theories of event tourism have shifted from an instrumentalist approach to a transformative approach. Events are no longer only seen as a tool to attract tourists, but rather as a catalyst for social change that can touch the economic, cultural, psychological, and institutional layers of society. The development of event tourism theory in the future will be more cross-disciplinary, participatory, and contextual, with strong alignment with local communities as the center of the entire destination transformation process.

Social Development through Events

Social development through the organization of events is now the main highlight in contemporary tourism literature. Community-based events, in particular, have been shown to make a significant contribution in strengthening social cohesion, community empowerment, and building the social capacity of local residents. More than just entertainment activities or destination promotion events, events serve as meeting spaces between individuals and between generations that encourage the growth of a sense of togetherness, solidarity, and a collective identity that strengthens the social foundations of society. Recent research by Fauzi, Yulfi, and Indriani (2024) shows how events in tourist areas such as Pasir Padi Beach, Pangkalpinang, are able to optimize community involvement in economic, art, and public service activities. The results are not only seen in the increase in the number of tourist visits, but also in the increase in citizen participation in social activities and mutual cooperation, which strengthens relationships between individuals and expands social networks across groups. The event in this case is a social adhesive tool that strengthens cohesion between citizens, including marginalized groups that are usually marginalized in development planning.

Meanwhile, the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach as used by Hidayat et al. (2025) also emphasizes the importance of strengthening human capacity through events. In this context, local festivals or art performances are not only a stage for expression, but also a place for education and reflection on society. Events become informal social training forums, strengthening citizens' ability to organize, manage resources, and build a sense of collective responsibility for their socio-cultural environment. Residents' participation in events creates a sense of belonging in their area, which in turn encourages the emergence of grassroots leadership. Furthermore, the study of Wibowo, Choiri, and Aminuddin (2025) regarding the development of tourist destinations based on religious events in Ramadan Jogokariyan Village shows that event activities designed in accordance with local values and aspirations are able to produce deeper social transformation. In such cases, events not only encourage the economic growth of citizens through religious tourism, but also encourage the practice of transparency, social solidarity, and equitable sharing of roles in society. With participatory management, events become a means to build trust between stakeholders and strengthen informal social institutions that already exist in the community.

In a broader dimension, social development through events also has an impact on strengthening local identity. Cultural festivals, traditional art performances, and village competitions become symbolic spaces for people to celebrate their local values. Through this process, the event creates cultural regeneration and becomes an intergenerational medium that allows for the exchange of values between parents and the younger generation. The collective experience of organizing and celebrating events encourages people to recognize, appreciate, and preserve their heritage, both in material (such as crafts and culinary) and non-material (such as folklore, language, and religious practices). Theoretically, social development through events can be explained using the social capital approach, where social interactions built through events facilitate the creation of trust, solidarity, and sustainable cooperation. Events are strategic spaces to expand bond capital and bridge capital, which is essential for building inclusive and adaptive communities. Thus, tourism events are not only a tool for economic growth, but also a mechanism of profound social development, touching on aspects of human relations, social structures, and values that live in society.

Continuous and Collaborative Event Management

In the context of community-based festivals, event management is not only understood as a technical activity such as scheduling, logistics, or stage setting, but has evolved into a strategic process that touches on the dimensions of sustainability, empowerment, and collaboration. Festivals managed with a sustainability approach are able to create long-term impacts, both socially, economically, and institutionally. According to Jones (2022), the concept of *sustainable event management* includes three main pillars, namely environmental, social, and economic sustainability. This includes environmentally friendly practices in organizing events, inclusive community involvement without discrimination, and equitable distribution of economic benefits, especially for local MSME actors. This approach is very relevant to be applied in post-disaster festivals such as the Sinabung Art Festival. In the festival, the management of the event does not only rely on a professional committee, but also involves villagers through a community-based committee structure. This model is in line with the findings of Hayati (2025), which shows that collaboration between academics and local communities in event management can strengthen managerial capacity, expand digital access, and form a sustainable training ecosystem. Through an *academic-community partnership* approach, citizens are not only technical implementers, but also knowledge holders and decision-makers.

In addition, the organizational structure of participatory events provides space for all elements of society—youth, women, artists, and indigenous leaders—to actively contribute. Tambunan (2023) states that participatory leadership in community-based festivals increases a sense of belonging and a long-term commitment to the sustainability of the event. In practice, the committee is divided into sub-divisions such as logistics, documentation, promotion, and finance which are all managed by locals with technical assistance from professional partners. Participatory evaluation and monitoring are critical components to ensure continuous improvement from year to year. As stated by Pereira et al. (2023), *participatory monitoring and evaluation (PME) methods* allow communities to reflect together, identify the strengths and weaknesses of festivals, and design innovations based on hands-on learning. In the context of the

Sinabung Art Festival, the evaluation was carried out through post-event citizen forums, visitor surveys, and financial reporting that was open to the public. This approach strengthens accountability while building a culture of transparency in event governance. Technology also plays an important role in supporting the sustainability of festival management. In the digital era, the use of social media, marketplaces, visitor registration systems, and online documentation are all part of the essential infrastructure in event promotion and management. Prastyo et al. (2025) found that digitally connected community festivals experienced a two-fold increase in visits compared to festivals that relied solely on conventional promotions. Therefore, digital promotion training and social media literacy need to be a routine agenda in developing the capacity of organizers.

In addition to the technical aspects, post-disaster festivals also demand attention to risk management and contingency systems. In geographically vulnerable conditions, such as Kuta Gulang Village, it is important to include evacuation simulations, safety guidance, and cooperation with local disaster response teams in the festival's operational structure. Hidayat and Wulandari (2022) emphasize that successful festivals in disaster-prone areas are those that not only enjoy, but also educate visitors and residents in terms of real risk mitigation. By integrating these aspects, community-based festival management can be seen as a dynamic ecosystem that not only generates annual ceremonial activities, but also forms strong social, economic, and institutional capital at the local level. Therefore, the success of a festival is not determined by the scale or number of visitors alone, but by its ability to create a sustainable, inclusive, and collaborative process in the long run.

In the last two decades, the development of community-based events has become one of the strategic approaches in inclusive and sustainable tourism development. Recent studies show that local events developed with active community participation have great potential in strengthening the local economy, preserving culture, and increasing the attractiveness of destinations (Lubis et al., 2020; Nasution, 2021).

Local Culture as an Attraction of the Event

Local culture is not only an identity asset, but also an economic force that can be mobilized through tourism events. In the context of the Sinabung Arts Festival, the culture of the Karo people has a strategic position as the main content that distinguishes this festival from other events in Indonesia. The three main components of interesting local culture are: performing arts, traditional crafts, and Karo cuisine.

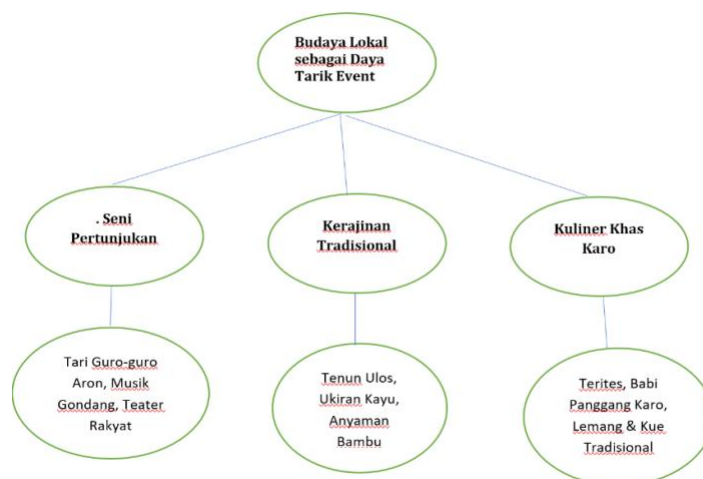


Figure 2
The Three Main Components of Interesting Local Culture
Source: Manalu & Napitupulu (2021)

The concept of local culture as the attraction of the event, which illustrates how the typical cultural elements of the Karo people, such as performing arts, handicrafts, and traditional culinary, can be used as the main attraction in the Sinabung Art Festival. This local culture plays an important role in introducing the identity and richness of the region's culture to tourists, as well as encouraging the participation of local communities in economic activities. Performing arts, such as traditional dance and sabangunan gondang, as well as handicrafts such as Karo ulos and bamboo carvings, provide an authentic experience that not only attracts tourists but also raises awareness about local wisdom. In addition, Karo culinary specialties, such as *terites* and Karo roast pork, add a dimension to the cultural experience that captivates tourists. This concept is supported by research from Manalu & Napitupulu (2021) which emphasizes that these elements of local culture can increase the attractiveness of events and support tourism-based economic development, while strengthening the identity and pride of the local community.

1. Performing Arts

Performing arts is an expressive element that is able to attract tourists because it is rich in aesthetic and spiritual value it contains. Traditional Karo dances such as *the Landek Dance*, *the Piso Surit Dance*, and *the Guro-Guro Aron Dance* illustrate the value of mutual cooperation and respect for nature. The music of sabangunan gondang, with a combination of *taganing* and *garantung*, strengthens the sacred and festive atmosphere of each cultural performance (Nasution, 2021, p. 143). In tourism events, performing arts are not only a spectacle, but also a vehicle for tourists to participate in the form of interactive dance or music workshops, which enrich their cultural experience (Manalu & Napitupulu, 2021, p. 91).

2. Traditional Crafts

Handicrafts such as *ulos Karo* (a typical woven fabric) and traditional carvings made of wood or bamboo have become symbols of the visual identity of the Karo people. This product has high economic value when packaged in a modern manner and marketed to festival-goers. Bamboo weaving for food containers, accessories, and traditional home decorations also shows local expertise that can be used as a superior product for MSMEs (Lubis et al., 2020, p. 125). The festival provides showrooms and direct transactions between artisans and tourists, thus opening up a shorter and fairer distribution channel than sales through third parties.

3. Culinary Specialties With

Culinary is the emotional appeal of an event. Karo cuisine such as *terites*, *Karo roast pork*, and traditional snacks such as *lemang* and *brown rice cake* are important elements that cannot be separated from the cultural experience of tourists. This food is not only for consumption, but also for educational media—because it contains historical stories, social values, and local wisdom in processing food from the surrounding nature (Silalahi, 2022, p. 115).

Creative Economy and MSMEs

The event is a promotional space as well as a transaction for creative economy actors. Lubis et al. (2020) stated that the involvement of MSMEs in cultural events can increase income by up to 35% compared to ordinary days. A well-designed festival is able to facilitate a bazaar of local products, regional cuisine, and supporting services such as transportation and lodging, all of which have an economic multiplier effect at the village level (Silalahi, 2022). Creative economy is a form of economy that is based on ideas, creativity, and innovation rooted in local culture, art, and knowledge (Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, 2020). In the context of post-disaster communities such as Kuta Gunung Village, this sector is an economic recovery strategy that is not only fast, but also sustainable.

Creative Products as Tourism Added Value

Creative products are the result of a combination of art, culture, and local innovation that not only functions as an object of consumption, but also as a representation of regional identity

(UNESCO, 2020). In the context of community-based festivals such as *the Sinabung Art Festival*, creative products play a dual role: as an economic commodity and as a tool for cultural promotion.

The Meaning of Creative Products in Culture-Based Tourism

Creative products in tourism include all forms of community work that have aesthetic, historical, and functional value. These products, such as Karo ulos weaving, bamboo crafts, traditional wood carvings, and culinary specialties such as *terite* and *lemang*, are a unique attraction for tourists because of their authenticity that cannot be found anywhere else. According to Nasution (2021), tourists tend to be looking for authentic experiences that are not only entertaining but also meaningful. The creative products featured in the festival allow tourists to experience, understand, and take home a part of the local culture.

Creative Products as a Storytelling Tool

Creative products are not only skilled handicrafts, but narrative media that carry stories about ancestors, life philosophies, and local wisdom values of the Karo people. In festivals, this storytelling can be realized in the form of:

- Packaging design with Ulos Karo historical narrative.
- Interactive exhibition stand with weavers or craftsmen explaining the production process.
- The presentation of typical food is accompanied by a philosophical explanation of the ingredients and the tradition of its presentation.

According to Hidayat & Wulandari (2022), this narrative approach increases *tourist* engagement and creates a deeper travel experience.

Creative Product Innovation for Millennial Travelers

The current tourism trend is dominated by the digital-native generation who are looking for products that can be collected, consumed, and shared. Therefore, innovation in creative products is a must:

- Make the product in a portable version (miniature head, keychain from local wicker).
 - Collaboration of traditional design with contemporary style.
 - The use of QR codes on products to access stories or videos of product creation.
- Tambunan (2023) stated that MSMEs that combine elements of tradition and digital trends have a greater chance of attracting tourists and increasing buyer loyalty.

The Impact of Creative Products on the Local Economy

Creative products that are successfully developed and marketed through the festival not only increase the income of MSMEs, but also:

- Encourage village economic diversification.
- Creating new job opportunities, especially for youth and women.
- Develop supporting industries such as packaging, branding, and product photography.

Saragih et al. (2020) found that the development of creative products directly contributes to an increase in family income in post-disaster areas by up to 20-35% per year.

Local MSME Actors as the Main Driver

This festival acts as a forum for collaboration between artists, artisans, culinary actors, and village youth. MSMEs not only benefit directly from sales, but also access to training, branding, and new market networks (Sembiring et al., 2023). For example, culinary actors who usually only sell locally, through festivals can introduce their products to a wider market even through an online pre-order system. Likewise with artisans, who can sell souvenirs in modern packaging that suits the tastes of tourists.

Integrated Market Access

The success of MSME development in the festival is highly determined by diversified market access, namely:

- Physical Market (Festival Booth): Direct interaction with visitors allows for instant feedback and quick transactions.
- Digital Marketplace (Online Marketplace & Social Media): Strengthen product exposure to a wider audience.
- Strategic Partnerships: With travel agencies, local hotels, and CSR agencies, local products can enter *the tourism industry's value chain* (Kurniawan & Nugroho, 2021).

This festival is also a product curation space, which can be a quality benchmark for further MSME development.

Disaster Education and Geotourism in the Festival

Festivals are not only an entertainment space, but can also be used as a medium for the public to learn about disasters. This education is important, especially in eruption-prone areas such as Kuta Gugung Village which is around Mount Sinabung.

Components of Disaster Education in the Festival:

- The Evacuation Simulation and Early Warning System Festival can be a moment to organize an integrated disaster simulation involving citizens, tourists, and volunteers. This increases the readiness of the community collectively (Hidayat & Wulandari, 2022).
- Community-Based Mitigation Workshop Training on risk maps, family evacuation plans, and the use of emergency communication tools can be carried out as a series of education that empowers the community.
- Sinabung Eruption Photo and Film Exhibition Visual documentation of the eruption process, its impact, and the story of citizen resilience has an emotional and educational effect, making the festival a space for collective reflection and learning (Saragih et al., 2020).

Geotourism: Making Disasters a Scientific and Natural Attraction

Geotourism is a type of geological heritage-based tourism that prioritizes educational experiences and appreciation of natural processes. The Sinabung area, which is rich in post-eruption geological phenomena, has extraordinary potential for geotourism development (Brata, 2022). Components of Geotourism in the Festival:

- Lava Trail and Red Zone Tourism Tourists are invited to visit former lava flow areas or red zones with expert supervision, while explaining how disasters affect landscapes and settlement patterns.
- Volcanic Educational Tour In collaboration with geologists and academics, it can present an interpretive tour of the structure of Mount Sinabung, the history of the eruption, and its impact on the ecosystem.
- Geotrails and Local Narratives Walking trails (geotrails) with narrative boards or local guides can introduce local myths, legends, and wisdom related to the mountains. This strengthens the tourist's emotional connection with the place.

Community-Based Festivals in Post-Disaster Recovery

The phenomenon of natural disasters not only causes physical damage, but also prolonged socio-economic crises in the affected areas. In this context, community-based festivals have emerged as an innovative strategy in the post-disaster recovery process. Festivals are not only seen as an entertainment medium, but also as a means of economic empowerment, cultural revitalization, and psychosocial strengthening of the community. According to Prastyo et al. (2025), the community event approach allows affected communities to take charge of their own recovery narratives through local cultural and economic expressions. In a study in Cempluk Village, the

involvement of residents in the planning and implementation of the festival was shown to increase the sense of ownership, pride of the community, and spark the emergence of new micro-enterprises that are sustainable even after the festival ends. Furthermore, Hayati (2025) emphasized that the form of partnership between academics, local communities, and local governments in the development of festivals is the key to long-term success. Participatory-run festivals will form a shared learning system, transfer event management skills, and strengthen local institutional structures. In the case of the Lanta Nice Beach Festival, the integration of training, digital promotion, and cross-sector collaboration became a catalyst for new economic growth after the impact of the pandemic and social crisis.

This approach is in line with the community-based disaster recovery (CBDR) framework, as described by Norris et al. (2008) and updated by Holladay et al. (2025) in the context of post-disaster agrotourism in Puerto Rico. They found that local festivals and events rebuilt social bonds, restored the rhythm of daily life, and created space for collective optimism in the midst of trauma. This means that cultural events can act as a non-medical healing mechanism (healing through culture), which unites the economic, psychological, and identity dimensions holistically. In Indonesia itself, this approach is relevant to the context of the eruption of Mount Sinabung. The Sinabung Art Festival, as discussed in this study, shows that the involvement of MSMEs, local artists, and villagers in the festival can be a community-based recovery strategy that has a real impact. More than 85% of actors are actively involved, and the festival recorded an increase in MSME turnover by 200-300% during implementation. From a theoretical perspective, this approach refers to the theory of event-led development, which states that events can be a driver of local socio-economic development (Getz, 2008). If managed with sustainability principles, post-disaster festivals can be a lever for the transformation of local economic structures, not just a leisure filler.

In addition, the success of post-disaster festivals is also closely related to community resilience. Biggs et al. (2012) explain that resilience is the capacity of a community to absorb disturbances, adapt, and transform in a more resilient direction. A festival that integrates disaster narratives, mitigation education, and cultural expression into a container to foster resilience in tangible form. A case study of the Salo Karajae Festival in the City of Parepare (Iskandar & Mayor, 2025) reinforces this view. The organization of festivals in areas experiencing environmental crises and social conflicts has become a medium for reconciliation and repositioning of the city as a cultural destination. Citizen participation is not only in the form of art performances, but also in the preparation of SOPs, fund management, and digitization of promotions.

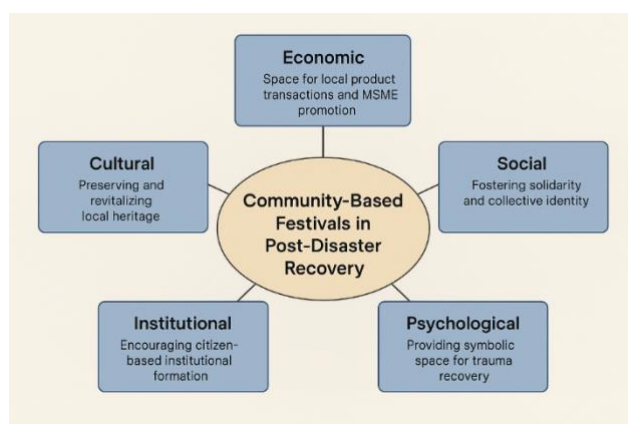


Figure 3.
Community-based festival in disaster recovery
Source: Prastyo et al. (2025)

How community-based cultural festivals can serve as a strategic tool in the post-disaster recovery process, especially in areas affected by natural disasters such as the eruption of Mount

Sinabung. The festival not only aims to restore the economic sector, but also plays an important role in restoring social cohesion and providing opportunities for people to express their experiences through cultural expression. For example, in the context of the Sinabung Art Festival, this event helped the people of Kuta Gulang Village to rebuild their identity and pride after the disaster tragedy. This festival is a means to strengthen community resilience by bringing together various elements of society ranging from youth, artists, to local entrepreneurs—in a joint effort based on local culture. In addition, the festival also provides a space for disaster education, which can help people better prepare for potential disasters in the future. This explanation refers to Prastyo et al. (2025) who emphasized that community-based festivals have great potential in post-disaster social and economic recovery, as well as Holladay et al. (2025) who developed a framework that shows how festivals designed sensitively to collective trauma can strengthen community resilience.

However, the application of this approach also requires attention to the challenges that often arise, such as limited managerial capacity of citizens, lack of sustainable funding, and the potential for excessive cultural commodification if not ethically controlled (Greenwood, 2021). Therefore, an adaptive and collaborative institutional design is needed to maintain the essence of community and the long-term sustainability of the festival.

Event Tourism and Community Resilience

Event tourism is not only one of the fastest-growing segments in the global tourism industry, but also proven to be an effective medium in strengthening community resilience, especially in the context of post-disaster recovery. Cultural festivals and events hosted by and for communities have the potential to create collective spaces that facilitate the emotional, social, and economic recovery of affected communities. In a modern tourism landscape that is increasingly driven by the need for authentic and meaningful experiences, local festivals are an important catalyst for rebuilding the narrative of destinations as well as the social capacity of communities. Theoretically, the concept of community resilience in tourism refers to the collective ability of communities to survive, adapt, and thrive in the midst of disruptions, including natural disasters and economic stresses. Biggs et al. (2012) underline that resilience is not only determined by the strength of physical infrastructure, but also by social cohesion, economic empowerment, and the ability to generate new narratives of hope and recovery. In this context, *event-based tourism* plays a strategic role, as it is able to bring together three main functions: symbolic, productive, and therapeutic.

Recent research by Holladay et al. (2025) in Puerto Rico highlights that post-disaster local festivals, such as culinary events, cultural performances, and educational tours, create regenerative spaces that help communities restore fragmented social structures. Not only does it provide economic opportunities for MSME actors and local artists, this festival is also a "*celebration of resilience*" that strengthens community pride and improves the image of destinations that had experienced negative stigma due to disasters. This approach is also very relevant in the Indonesian context, especially in disaster-prone areas such as Karo, Lombok, and Palu. The Sinabung Arts Festival, as a case study in this study, shows that the integration of disaster narratives, mitigation education, and local culture in community events directly contributes to strengthening the social capital of villagers. Activities such as lava trail tours, evacuation simulations, eruption photo exhibitions, and traditional Karo art performances not only enrich the tourist experience, but also strengthen the collective identity of the community that has been coexisting with the risk of volcanoes. Furthermore, community resilience through event tourism can be seen in three main dimensions:

1. **Economic Resilience:**

This festival allows for the diversification of the community's economy through the development of creative products, culinary services, handicrafts, and community-based tourism services. As reported by Prastyo et al. (2025), MSME actors who participated in the festival in Cempluk Village experienced an increase in income of up to 300% during the event period, as well as gaining a new market network.

2. Socio-Cultural Resilience:

The event became a meeting space between generations and across social groups. At the Sinabung Festival, the involvement of youth in the committee and the production of digital content proves the transfer of values and cultural regeneration. Iskandar & Mayor (2025) note that festivals in Parepare are even used as a strategy for post-conflict social consolidation through cultural narratives and folk performances.

3. Psychological Resilience:

This aspect is often overlooked, even though post-disaster festivals serve as *healing spaces*, which are symbolic spaces that allow people to process trauma collectively. Art performances that elevate the narrative of suffering and awakening into a form of social expression that strengthens the emotional recovery capacity of citizens (Hidayat & Wulandari, 2022).

However, the implementation of *event tourism* as a tool to build community resilience also has challenges. Lack of resources, lack of technical training in risk management, and reliance on external assistance often limit the sustainability of such initiatives. Therefore, integration is needed between *bottom-up innovation* from society and *top-down support* from the government and academia. Festivals should be managed with a cross-sectoral approach that combines local knowledge with structured technical, regulatory and promotional support. Building resilience through festivals also requires long-term sustainability. As revealed by UNDRR (2021), disaster risk reduction policies must be integrated into all aspects of village development planning, including in the tourism and cultural sectors. Resilience-oriented community festivals should include disaster education modules, emergency management training, and visitor safety protocols as integral parts of the content. Tourism is no longer just a seasonal entertainment event, but part of a sustainable adaptation and reconstruction strategy in disaster-affected areas. The success of the Sinabung Arts Festival in combining economic, social, cultural, and psychological dimensions through a participatory approach proves that community-based events are one of the most flexible, cheap, and long-term impact forms of social intervention in building village resilience.

Multisectoral Participation and Collaboration in Festival Development

The development of community-based cultural events such as *the Sinabung Art Festival* cannot run optimally without cross-sectoral cooperation. Multisectoral collaboration is an important foundation in forming an inclusive, sustainable, and community-empowerment-oriented tourism ecosystem (Tambunan, 2023; Sembiring et al., 2023).



Figure 4.

The Concept of Multisectoral Participation and Collaboration in Festival Development

Source: Sembiring et al. (2023)

The Role of Local Government

Local governments play the role of main facilitators in terms of:

- Support regulations and policies, including budgeting village funds, CSR funds, or technical assistance from tourism offices.
- The legality and licensing of the event are important for the smooth running of the activity.
- Synchronization with regional strategic programs, such as "Tourism Village" or "Proud Made in Indonesia Movement" (Nasution, 2021).

Government support provides legitimacy and legal security for the committee and opens up access to interagency networks.

Local Communities and Communities

Community is at the heart of the festival's success. They are involved in:

- Festival content design: such as art performances, MSME bazaars, to the provision of homestay accommodation.
- Implementing personnel: members of youth organizations, local artists, and volunteers from the village are the main actors on the ground.
- Owners of cultural narratives: local people have a collective memory that forms the basis of cultural storytelling in festivals (Manalu & Napitupulu, 2021).

The greater the public participation, the stronger the social legitimacy of the festival.

The Role of the Private Sector and Partner Institutions

Collaboration with the private sector and partner institutions such as the media, universities, or NGOs provides benefits in the form of:

- Funding (sponsorship) and logistical support.
- Digital promotion and media publications, expanding the reach of information to national and international audiences.
- Relevant CSR programs, such as MSME training, product brand workshops, and revitalization of public facilities.

According to Hidayat & Wulandari (2022), the success of post-disaster events is largely determined by the participation of this third sector.

Consistency of Promotion and Event Management

The long-term success of tourism events, including the *Sinabung Arts Festival*, is highly dependent on consistency of promotion and management governance. Strong promotion without reliable management can lead to visitor disappointment, while neat management without enough exposure will leave the festival largely unknown.

Integrated Promotion: Building the Festival's Image

Promotion is not only about the dissemination of information, but the formation of public perception of the identity and quality of the event. In the context of the digital era, promotional approaches must be integrated and cross-media.

Effective Promotion Strategies:

- **Social Media and Digital Campaigns: Platforms**
like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube are effective in reaching younger generations and millennial travelers. Visual content such as *behind-the-scenes*, testimonials, and performance teasers increase engagement (Lubis et al., 2020).
- **Partnerships with Travel Influencers and Bloggers: Local and national influencers**
can expand exposure to relevant tourism communities and build credibility (Kurniawan & Nugroho, 2021).
- **Offline Promotion:**
The use of outdoor media such as billboards, banners, and brochures is still effective in

reaching local communities and non-digital stakeholders, such as traditional leaders and village business actors.

Event Management: Structure, Evaluation, and Sustainability

Strong event management is a key pillar in ensuring that the festival runs smoothly, on time, and gives a professional impression. Principles of Sustainable Event Management:

- **Professional & Volunteer Committee Team:**
Mergers between professional event organizers and local residents (youth organizations, art actors, etc.) create a solid and participatory work system (Tambunan, 2023).
- **Evaluation and Tourist Database: After**
the event, visitor data, participant input, and financial reports become the basis for improvement in the following year. It also helps build long-term relationships with loyal travelers.
- **Event Calendar and Implementation SOPs:**
Consistency of the festival schedule (e.g. always in the 2nd week of August each year) will make it easier for tourists to plan their visit. SOPs ensure that the quality of implementation is maintained, even if the committee changes.

Unified Promotion and Management Results

Consistent promotion and organized management will create:

- The festival's trusted and professional image, attracts the interest of sponsors and partners.
- Increasing the number of visitors from year to year, as well as creating a domino effect for MSMEs and the local economy.

According to Hidayat & Wulandari (2022), festivals that have high consistency tend to experience an increase in participation of up to 30–40% per year compared to seasonal events without long-term management.

Event Contribution to Local Economic Independence

Community-based festivals have proven to make a significant contribution to the creation of local economic independence. In many cases, events serve not only as a vehicle for cultural promotion, but also as a *driving force for the microeconomy*, capable of driving the growth of local entrepreneurs, expanding market networks, and accelerating the economic turnaround of the village. Through the festival, small businesses gain wider market access, especially from domestic and foreign tourists, which ultimately creates a new circulation of the economy that is endogenous, not entirely dependent on outside actors. According to Getz & Page (2020), strategically designed events can be in the *form of event-based economic development*, which is a local development approach driven by event activities, both in the form of cultural festivals, culinary exhibitions, and thematic tourist attractions. This strategy is particularly effective in areas with limited access to conventional markets or those facing post-crisis recovery such as natural disasters or pandemics. In the Indonesian context, this approach is relevant in the villages around Mount Sinabung that have been affected by volcanic eruptions for many years and have lost their main source of income.

The Sinabung Art Festival is a concrete example of how the event is able to revive the pulse of the local economy. In organizing the festival, various economic actors from the informal sector such as artisans, food sellers, farmer groups, and homestay managers get space to interact directly with the market. Field data shows that during the festival, there was an increase in local MSME turnover by 200-300%, and in some cases even gave birth to new business that continued after the event. This increase is not only temporary, but also opens up partnership opportunities, strengthens local product branding, and triggers replication of similar activities by other community groups. In addition, the contribution of events to economic independence can also be seen from the *spillover effects* they produce. Sharma (2024) emphasizes that local events create a new economic ecosystem involving micro-supply chains such as raw material providers,

transportation services, local printers, community photographers, and village influencers. This strengthens *the local value chain*, making the village not only the venue for events, but also the main producer in the creative economy chain. In the case of the Sinabung Festival, the involvement of local farmers in the provision of flowers and produce for festival decorations shows how simple activities can create direct economic added value. This approach also contributes to *inclusive economic development*, where women, youth, and marginalized groups are given space to participate. A study by Hayati (2025) found that souvenir making training and festival stall management aimed at housewives has succeeded in creating a sustainable source of additional income. Meanwhile, the involvement of young people in the festival's production and documentation teams has encouraged the birth of *local start-ups* in the field of creative media and digital promotion. This reflects that the contribution of events to the economy is not only quantitative (income), but also qualitative (local capacity and skills development).

On the other hand, the event is also a medium for direct entrepreneurship education. Through the process of planning, executing, and evaluating the festival, villagers learn about business management, pricing, customer service, online promotions, and basic financial records. This model reinforces the theory of *learning by doing*, as proposed by Kolb (2015) in the context of experiential learning. In this sense, the festival is not just a place to buy and sell, but a collective learning space to build a work ethic, innovation, and social responsibility of citizens towards the local economy. However, for the event's contribution to economic independence to be truly sustainable, strong institutional support is needed. Village governments and BUMDes can take on the role of *anchor institutions* that bridge the relationship between business actors and the market and capital providers. In addition, the existence of supporting regulations such as priority policies for local product shopping, small business incentives, and advanced training are important factors in maintaining the village's creative economy ecosystem after the festival.

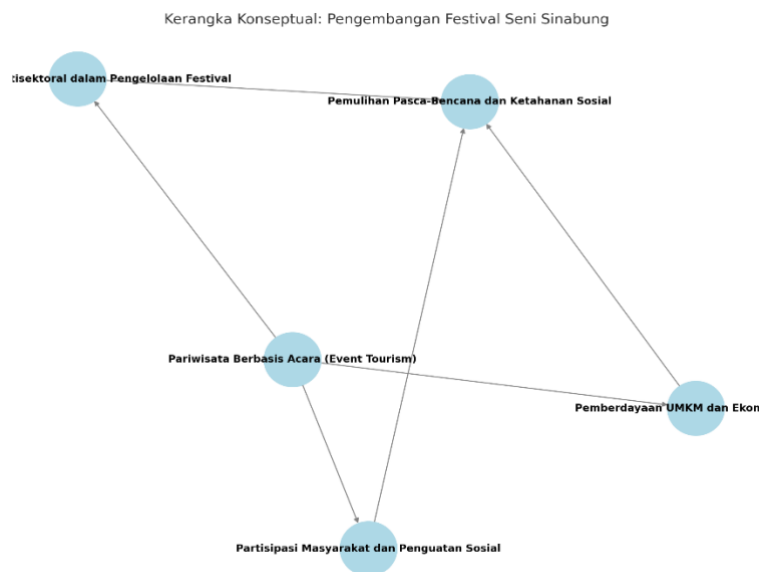


Figure 5
 Conceptual framework
 Source: Processed Researcher Data

This conceptual framework illustrates the relationship between various important elements that are interconnected in the development and impact of the Sinabung Art Festival on the economy and social resilience of the people of Kuta Gulang Village. At its center, Event-Based Tourism is the main element that drives the success of the festival as a tourist attraction that not only introduces local culture, but also contributes to the improvement of the economy through the arrival of tourists. The festival encourages MSME Empowerment and Local Economy by involving

MSME actors in various aspects of the event, which in turn increases their income and introduces local products to a wider market.

The community's active participation in the festival focuses not only on the economic aspect, but also on Community Participation and Social Empowerment, where villagers play a role in the planning and execution of the event, creating a sense of belonging and pride in their culture. This strengthens social solidarity and rebuilds relationships that were fragmented by disasters. In addition, the success of the festival relies heavily on Multisectoral Collaboration in Festival Management, which includes the role of governments, the private sector, and partner institutions in formulating strategies that involve various parties to support the festival to be sustainable, both financially and operationally. The festival plays an important role in Post-Disaster Recovery and Social Resilience, by providing a space for people to express their experiences, educate about disasters, and strengthen post-traumatic social resilience. All of these elements interact with each other, with the aim of creating a holistic economic, social, and cultural recovery—for the people of Kuta Gulang, who were affected by the eruption of Mount Sinabung. This framework will guide the analysis in this study to evaluate the impact of the Sinabung Arts Festival on sustainable development in disaster-prone areas.

C. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach that aims to describe in depth the development process of the *Sinabung Arts Festival* in encouraging community economic growth in Kuta Gleng Village, Karo Regency. This approach allows researchers to explore experiences, participation, and local dynamics that cannot be quantitatively measured (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The use of a descriptive qualitative approach in this study is based on the need to understand in depth and contextual complex social phenomena, especially related to the role of the Sinabung Arts Festival in improving the economy of the people of Kuta Gulang Village. This approach provides methodological flexibility for researchers to directly explore the experiences, perceptions, and meanings constructed by local communities in designing, organizing, and benefiting from community-based festival activities. Since the main focus of this study is not only to measure impact numerically, but to uncover the social and cultural dynamics behind citizen participation, a qualitative approach is the most relevant option.

Festivals as socio-cultural entities not only reflect ceremonial activities, but also represent the values, identity, solidarity, and capacity of citizens in building the local economy. Therefore, a descriptive qualitative approach allows researchers to capture social processes that are invisible but have a major influence on the success of the event. Through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and documentation, researchers can dive into citizens' experiences firsthand and interpret the meaning behind their actions and narratives. The advantage of this approach lies in its ability to depict social realities in a complete and naturalistic manner, according to a typical local context. In addition, this approach also allows for a more reflective analysis of the community empowerment process, interaction between village actors, and the collaboration model formed in organizing the event. Festivals are not only a tool for tourism promotion, but also a platform for social learning, cultural reconciliation, and local economic regeneration. All of these dimensions cannot be adequately explained through a quantitative approach. Therefore, the selection of a descriptive qualitative approach is an appropriate methodological effort to capture a complex, dynamic, and meaningful reality, as well as produce findings that are not only academically valid, but also practically relevant for the development of post-disaster tourism villages such as Kuta Guleng.

Research Subject and Location

The research location is centered on Kuta Gulang Village, one of the villages affected by the eruption of Mount Sinabung which is now actively rebuilding the economic sector through a culture and tourism-based approach. The determination of subjects uses purposive sampling, which is to

select informants based on their direct involvement in the festival, both as business actors, organizers, and supporters of activities.

The main informants consist of:

- Festival organizers and organizers (n=5),
- MSME actors in the fields of culinary, handicrafts, and performing arts (n=10),
- Community leaders and village youth (n=3),
- Representatives from the Tourism Office and village agencies (n=2),
- Local tourists as user triangulation respondents (n=5).

Research Implementation and Procedure

The research was conducted in the period from March to May 2024, including the pre-field stage, implementation in the field, and data processing. The procedure begins with administrative licensing to village heads and related agencies, followed by intensive field activities during the festival.

Each stage of implementation is regulated as follows:

1. Pre-field: Initial coordination, informant mapping, instrument preparation.
2. Field: Data collection through interviews, observations, documentation, and FGDs.
3. Post-field: Transcription, data coding, preparation of preliminary reports, and validation of results.

Instruments and Equipment

The research used the following instruments:

- Semi-structured interview guide for key informants,
- Participatory observation sheets to record activities in the field,
- Voice recorders, cameras, and field notebooks,
- Supporting documents such as brochures, promotional flyers, and photo festival documentation.

All data is stored in digital and physical field archives to guarantee replication and transparency.

Data Collection Techniques

Four main methods are used in data collection:

1. In-depth interviews were conducted with 20 informants with a duration of 30-60 minutes per session.
2. Participatory observations were conducted during the three days of the festival to observe interaction patterns, promotion dynamics, and community engagement.
3. Documentation includes a collection of activity photos, program scripts, and local media publications.
4. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with two groups (MSMEs and committees) to explore issues of management, promotion, and impact of the festival on the village economy.

All data was collected by the research team and validated by triangulation techniques.

This study selected 20 informants as a sample to obtain representative data on the impact of the Sinabung Art Festival on the economy and social resilience of the people of Kuta Gulang Village. The selection of this number is based on a purposive sampling approach, where informants are selected based on the criteria of relevance and direct involvement in the festival, such as MSME actors, community leaders, local artists, and festival visitors. Based on previous studies on community-based festivals and post-disaster recovery, a sample size of 20 informants was considered sufficient to obtain in-depth data on the perspectives of the communities directly involved in the festival. This number allows researchers to conduct in-depth interviews and focus groups that provide a comprehensive understanding, as well as allow for the triangulation of data from different groups of informants, such as business actors, festival organizers, and visitors. However, this research does not only rely on the number of samples, but also on the diversity of informants that will provide insight into the different dimensions of the festival's impact. The diversity in the selection of informants including groups involved in festival management, artisans,

culinary actors, and village communities will enrich the analysis and provide a more comprehensive picture of the impact of festivals on the economy and social of local communities.

This research focuses on a single festival cycle because the goal is to gain an in-depth understanding of the direct impact of festivals on the economy and social of the community in a more limited time. The festival cycle used as the object of the research is the 2024 Sinabung Art Festival, as this is the latest festival that provides the most relevant context for evaluation. Although only one festival cycle was studied, this study was designed to analyze the short-term impact and role of festivals as triggers of economic and social recovery after disasters. Therefore, the selection of one cycle is considered appropriate to evaluate the effectiveness of the festival in increasing MSME income and strengthening community participation. In addition, this research is exploratory, with the aim of providing an initial understanding of the role of festivals in the context of post-disaster recovery. Going forward, the results of this study can be used as a basis for further research involving multiple festival cycles to look at the long-term impacts and changes that occur over time. Taking these two reasons into account, the sample size used (20 informants) and the selection of one festival cycle have been adjusted to the research objectives that focus on the analysis of the direct impact and initial exploration of the success of the Sinabung Arts Festival in economic and social recovery.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) analysis model through three main stages:

1. Data reduction, i.e. selecting, focusing, and simplifying relevant information,
2. Data presentation, in the form of narrative summaries, informant quotes, and thematic category tables,
3. Draw conclusions and verify, based on recurring patterns, relationships, and important findings.

Triangulation of sources and methods is used to improve the validity of the findings. In addition, *members examine* key informants to ensure the accuracy of the researcher's interpretation.

D. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This research aims to understand how the development of the *Sinabung Arts Festival* contributes to improving the economy of the people of Kuta Gubung Village. Based on the results of interviews, observations, documentation, and FGDs, it was found that this festival has a positive impact on three main aspects: community participation, MSME-based economic growth, and the promotion of tourist destinations through cultural approaches and disaster education.

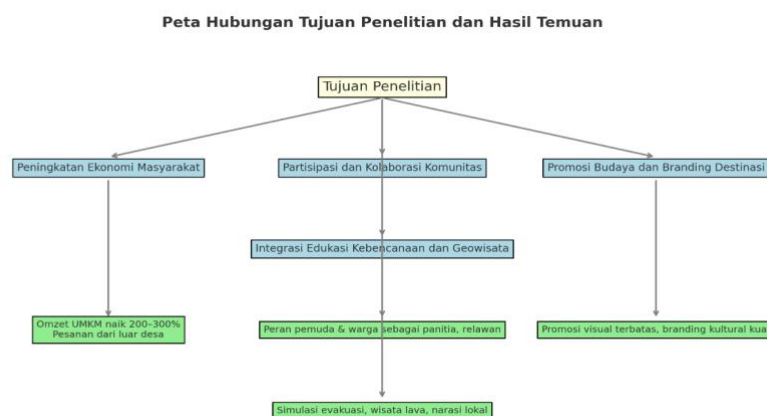


Figure 6
Mapping the relationship between goals and research outcomes

Source: Researcher data

Specifically, it shows how the Sinabung Art Festival functions as a tool to empower the local economy, where MSMEs experience a significant increase in income during the festival. In addition, this image also depicts social strengthening through the active involvement of the community in the festival, as well as the festival's contribution to cultural recovery and the recognition of the importance of disaster education to the community and visitors.

Level of Community Participation in Festival Development

The majority of informants, both from the public and the committee, reported a very high level of participation in the festival. The local community is actively involved in various aspects, ranging from event planning, organizing activities, to performing arts. Many participants stated that the festival has strengthened a sense of ownership of local culture and strengthened intergenerational ties. Most people also stated that festivals are a place to collaborate with each other and overcome post-disaster trauma.

Analysis

The festival serves as more than just a cultural event, but also as a means to strengthen social solidarity in the community. Strengthening social ties through active participation in the festival shows that this event has succeeded in improving relationships between individuals and groups that had been fragmented by disasters. However, the challenge faced is to ensure the sustainability of community participation, given the limited capacity and resources owned by the village community. Training in event management and local community empowerment is essential to maintain sustainable participation.

The results of the study show that the community shows high enthusiasm for the implementation of *the Sinabung Arts Festival*. Around 85% of MSME respondents and village leaders stated that their involvement in the festival gave a sense of ownership and pride in Karo culture.

Participation is not only limited to attendance, but includes active involvement in:

- Traditional art performances,
- Production and sales of typical foods,
- Provision of homestay-based lodging,
- Documentation and dissemination of information through personal social media.

These findings are consistent with the study of Tambunan (2023), which confirms that community-based events strengthen social cohesion and expand local economic opportunities.

Improving the Local Economy Through MSMEs and Creative Products

Interviews with MSME actors show that festivals have a significant impact on their income, with most MSME actors reporting a 200-300% increase in revenue during the festival. For example, local culinary vendors who usually only serve village visitors experience a surge in demand from tourists who come to enjoy Karo cuisine. The same is also found in local artisans, where sales of products such as ulos Karo and bamboo crafts have increased sharply.

Analysis

The Sinabung Art Festival serves as a platform that introduces local products to a wider market, both domestic and international. This increase in MSME income shows the great potential of the festival to restore the local economy which had been hit by the eruption of Mount Sinabung. However, some MSME players also stated that despite the increase in revenue, they are still heavily reliant on conventional promotions and need further training in digital marketing and e-commerce.

Festivals are the main transactional space for local economic actors. During the festival, more than 40 MSME units were involved. The results of observations show that the income of MSME actors has increased by an average of 200-300% compared to ordinary days. Best-selling products include:

- Typical foods such as terites, leman, and Karo roast pork,
- Handicrafts (mini heads, woven hangers, wood carvings).

This is in line with the results of research by Lubis, Siregar, and Marpaung (2020), which noted that the involvement of MSMEs in tourism events has a direct impact on increasing sales volume and expanding customer networks. The festival also encourages product diversification, where business actors begin to package their products in a more modern and portable form for tourists.

The Strategic Role of Festivals in the Promotion and Branding of Tourism Villages

In terms of promotion, *the Sinabung Art Festival* is an effective village branding tool. Documentation of the festival's activities was widely circulated on social media and covered by local media. The 2024 festival has managed to attract more than 1,200 visitors from the Karo area and its surroundings, including tourists from outside the region. This success shows that culture-based local narratives and disaster recovery have their own appeal. This is strengthened by the study of Hidayat and Wulandari (2022), who explain that the integration of disaster education in cultural events can increase the interest of tourists who want an authentic and educational experience.

Disaster Education and Geotourism as Innovative Tourism Objects

One aspect that visitors highly appreciated was the integration of disaster education within the festival, including activities such as lava tours, eruption photo exhibitions, and evacuation simulations. The interviewed visitors stated that in addition to enjoying the local arts and culture, they also gained important knowledge about disaster mitigation and preparedness for volcanic eruptions.

Analysis

The Sinabung Art Festival not only serves as a means of entertainment, but also as an effective educational medium to increase disaster awareness in the community. It also changed the festival's paradigm from just a cultural event to a multidimensional platform, combining elements of education with culture. This disaster education is very relevant to increase community resilience to the threat of future eruptions. However, to ensure long-term impact, it is advisable to integrate disaster education in the formal education curriculum and not rely solely on annual events.

One of the unique elements of this festival is the incorporation of disaster education content into festival activities. For example:

- Disaster mitigation workshop by Sinabung volunteers,
- Exhibition of photo and video documentary films of the eruption,
- Educational tours to the red zone with local narratives.

Most respondents (72%) stated that this approach adds to their insight into the condition of Mount Sinabung and builds empathy for the affected communities. According to Brata (2022), the geotourism and disaster education approach not only strengthens the educational value of a destination, but also increases the added value of tourism thematically and socially.

Additional Findings: Challenges in Management and Promotion

The level of collaboration between the government, the private sector, and local communities in the festival is quite high, although some informants suggest that this collaboration needs to be further strengthened in terms of logistical and funding support. Local governments are involved in the provision of permits, security arrangements, and festival promotion, while the private sector, such as hotels and restaurants, supports through sponsorships and ancillary services. However, some informants stated that the lack of coordination in terms of event management and the use of digital technology in promotion is still an obstacle.

Analysis

Multisectoral collaboration is key to the festival's success, as it involves various parties supporting each other to create a more organized and sustainable event. Nonetheless, the main challenge faced is optimizing the role of the private sector and partner institutions in terms of digital promotion and long-term funding. Therefore, strengthening relationships with the private sector through CSR programs and building closer partnerships with technology and social media companies will be important steps to increase the visibility and sustainability of the festival.

Although in general the festival went well, several obstacles were found, such as:

- Limited digital promotion capacity (only 30% of MSME actors are active on social media),
- There is no official calendar of annual events,
- Event management training is limited to local committees.

This issue reflects the importance of multisectoral collaboration between governments, communities, and the private sector to strengthen local institutional capacity. These findings support the statement of Sembiring, Ginting, & Peranginangin (2023) that weaknesses in long-term promotion and planning are still obstacles in the development of community-based tourism.

Many informants suggested that the festival be made an annual event that was consistent with more careful planning. Although the festival has succeeded in boosting the economy and community participation, they recognise that more systematic planning and more professional management are needed to ensure the sustainability of the event. This includes the preparation of the annual event calendar, the provision of an adequate budget, and the development of a digital platform for promotion.

Analysis

The sustainability of festivals can be achieved if there is a stronger institutional structure, such as the formation of a more professional and permanent festival committee. In addition, long-term planning involving a range of stakeholders, including government, the private sector, and the community, is essential to ensure the festival remains relevant and can continue to provide economic and social benefits to local communities. The use of digital platforms for the promotion and sale of local products can also increase the attraction of festivals for tourists, both domestic and international.

Analysis of the Relationship with Research Objectives

The main purpose of this study is to analyze how the development of the *Sinabung Arts Festival* contributes to improving the community's economy in Kuta Gulang Village, as well as to examine the role of community participation, cultural promotion, and integration of disaster education in the context of local tourism-based development. Based on the results of qualitative findings and thematic analysis, the relationship between research results and objectives can be explained in the following points:

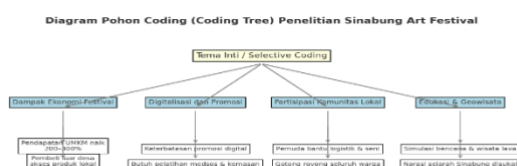


Figure 7
 Coding Tree Diagram
 Source: researcher data

Improving the Community's Economy Through Festivals

One of the main objectives of this study is to assess the extent to which festivals can be a means of economic empowerment of the community. The findings show that MSME actors experienced an increase in turnover of 200-300% during the festival, even some business actors got new customers from outside the village (MSME-01). This shows that festivals serve as a

temporary economic platform, which encourages direct distribution of creative products and expands business networks. This is in line with the results of research by Lubis et al. (2020) who stated that cultural events play a role as a "local-based microeconomic hub" in rural tourism.

Strengthening Community Participation and Collaboration

Another purpose of this research is to uncover how the community is involved in the development and implementation of the festival. From the field data, it was found that the festival succeeded in encouraging equal participation from various elements of society: youth, artists, housewives, and indigenous leaders. Volunteers even took part in evacuation simulations and lava tour guides (KOM-03). This active participation shows that the festival is not just an entertainment event, but a symbol of social cohesion and a collaborative space between citizens. This supports the results of research by Tambunan (2023), who states that the success of community events is highly dependent on the extent to which the community is involved in the creative and managerial process.

Festivals as a Medium for Cultural Promotion and Destination Branding

One of the research questions is related to the effectiveness of promotion and the role of festivals in shaping the image of tourism villages. The findings show that the promotion is still limited digitally (PAN-02), but culturally, the festival has succeeded in introducing Karo's identity to tourists. Information dissemination through cultural, culinary, and disaster narrative performances is a form of narrative branding that is inherent in the minds of visitors. This is in line with the opinion of Kurniawan and Nugroho (2021), that the cultural identity packaged in the festival plays a role as a "natural and organic promotional tool" in community-based tourism.

Merger of Disaster Education and Geotourism

Another goal of this study is to identify the added value of education in the organization of festivals, especially in the post-disaster context. Data shows that activities such as evacuation simulations, photo exhibitions of the Sinabung eruption, and lava tours provide real learning experiences for visitors (KOM-03, WIS-04). Visitors not only enjoy entertainment, but also gain an understanding of eruption history, disaster mitigation, and local resilience. This supports Brata's (2022) idea that educational geotourism strengthens the intellectual and emotional dimensions in tourism activities.

Analytical Conclusions

The relationship between the results of the study and the objectives can be concluded as follows:

- All empirical findings support and answer research questions consistently.
- Each component of *the Sinabung Art Festival* has been proven to have a multifunctional function: economic, social, cultural, and educational.
- This research has succeeded in showing that festivals are not just ceremonial activities, but are a strategic tool in the development of a culture-based post-disaster society.

E. CONCLUSION/CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the *Sinabung Arts Festival* is an innovative form of community-based development strategy that contributes significantly to the recovery and strengthening of the local economy of the people of Kuta Gulang Village. The results of the analysis show that this festival not only has an economic impact through increasing the turnover of MSMEs, but also strengthens social participation, expands the existence of local culture, and introduces a tourism-based disaster education approach.

Festivals as an Instrument of Community Economic Empowerment

Field findings confirm that during the festival, the income of MSME actors increased up to three times, and local products managed to penetrate markets outside the village. This proves that locally-based tourism events are able to open up new economic access and strengthen the existence of creative products as a driver of the microeconomy (Lubis et al., 2020; Tambunan, 2023). This

festival also functions as a local storefront that brings together producers (MSMEs) and consumers (tourists) in a space of direct interaction with economic and cultural values.

Community Participation as a Success Factor

The active involvement of communities—from youth, housewives, local artists to indigenous leaders—is an indicator of the success of grassroots-based events. The community's role in management, cultural content production, and disaster mitigation education creates a sense of collective ownership over the festival. This is in accordance with the opinion of Miles et al. (2014) and Tambunan (2023) that the level of participation of local communities determines the sustainability of a community event.

Integration of Cultural Promotion and Disaster Education

This festival also shows potential as a medium for cultural promotion and disaster mitigation education. Through traditional art performances, exhibitions of the history of the Sinabung eruption, and lava tourism with local narratives, the festival promotes tourism experiences that are not only recreative but also transformative educational (Brata, 2022; Hidayat & Wulandari, 2022). The characteristics of this educational geotourism make the Sinabung Arts Festival unique compared to ordinary cultural events, and relevant to the context of disaster affected area recovery.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretically, this research adds insight that cultural events can act as multidimensional catalysts: economic, social, cultural, and educational, especially in the context of post-disaster regions. Practically, the results of the research can be used as a reference in:

- Policy formulation for the development of a community-based regional event calendar,
- Planning of digital promotion training and event management for tourist villages,
- A replication model of similar events in other disaster-affected areas in Indonesia.

Strategic proposal for further development of the *Sinabung Arts Festival* based on the findings and conclusions of the research:

Gambar Konsep Rekomendasi dari Hasil Penelitian



Picture. Concept of recommendations from research results

Source. Researcher's data processing

Digital Training for Local MSMEs

More focused digital training is very important to support the capacity building of local MSME actors in marketing their products more widely. More focused suggestions include:

Digital Marketing Training (Social Media and E-commerce):

The training will cover how to use social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok to promote local products and attract tourists. MSME actors need to understand product photography techniques, creating engaging visual content, and using relevant hashtags to increase reach. Digital Tools That Can Be Used: Social media platforms (Instagram, Facebook), graphic

design tools like Canva to create engaging visual content, as well as e-commerce platforms like Tokopedia, Bukalapak, or Shopify to sell products online.

Digital Financial Management Training:

MSMEs can be trained to use simple accounting applications such as BukuWarung or Jurnal to help them manage their finances more efficiently. This will allow businesses to manage revenue and expenses more transparently and accurately.

Preparation of the Annual Event Calendar for Festival Sustainability

To ensure the Sinabung Arts Festival can become a consistent annual agenda, it is advisable to work with local governments on:

- **Compiling a Calendar of Regular Events:**
Draw up an annual event calendar that ensures the festival is held at the same time each year, for example the second week of August. The calendar of this event must be prepared in advance and socialized to MSME actors and tourists, so that they can plan their visit and involvement in advance.
- **Synergy with Government Tourism Programs:**
Festivals can be integrated in local government programs, such as "Desa Wisata" or "Gerakan Bangsa Madean Indonesia", which can increase the visibility of festivals and encourage financial and logistical support.

Development of Community-Based Disaster Learning Centers

To support the integration of disaster education within festivals, it is recommended to establish community-based disaster learning centers that can function year-round, not just during festivals:

- **Disaster Mitigation Training and Workshop:**
Provide training to local communities on disaster mitigation and evacuation procedures that can be accessed digitally through an application or online platform. This training can include how to use early warning tools, as well as evacuation simulations involving all villagers and tourists. It can also be organized in the form of **interactive workshops** during festivals.
- **Disaster Education Application:**
Develop a mobile application that provides information about disasters, mitigation measures, and safety procedures. The app is accessible to tourists and local communities, and provides a map of risk zones and evacuation tips.

Strengthening Partnerships with the Private Sector

The private sector can play an important role in improving the quality and reach of festivals, especially in terms of promotion and financial support. Therefore, it is important to build strategic partnerships that can provide long-term benefits for villages and festivals:

- **Partnerships with Technology and Social Media Companies:**
Work with local technology or social media companies to provide training related to digital marketing and e-commerce. For example, partnering with tech startups that have experience in festival management and digital marketing will help increase festival competitiveness in the broader market.
- **CSR Program for Training and Infrastructure:**
Invite large companies or private institutions to contribute in the form of CSR to provide training and improve digital infrastructure (such as stable internet, the use of digital payment systems, and improving the quality of promotion through social media).

Introducing Participatory Event Management

To ensure the sustainability of the festival and provide more space for local communities to get involved, it is recommended to develop a more participatory event management model:

- **Establishment of a Village-Based Festival Committee:**
Forming a standing committee consisting of government representatives, traditional leaders, MSMEs, and village communities who are responsible for planning and implementing the festival every year. This committee will ensure that the festival runs in accordance with the needs and aspirations of the community, and can minimize dependence on outside parties.
- **Event Management Training for the Community:**
Provide event management training to local communities, including logistics planning, team coordination, budget management, and digital promotion. This training can involve event performers from the community who have previous experience in organizing similar festivals.

Hints and suggestions for further research

This research is a qualitative exploration and focuses on one location and one cycle of festival implementation. To reinforce generalizations, further research is recommended for:

- Involve more event cycles (multi-year),
- Using a quantitative approach to measure economic impact statistically,
- Develop community festival sustainability indicators that include social, cultural, economic, and environmental aspects.

In addition, it is necessary to conduct in-depth research on tourism village-based digital media management strategies, to strengthen the promotion and competitiveness aspects of festivals to the national and even international levels.

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