Melampaui Hiburan: Rekonstruksi Pariwisata Event melalui Festival Berbasis Pengetahuan dan Inovasi Kolaboratif

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ABSTRACT
This study reconstructs event tourism by positioning knowledge-based festivals as a new paradigm that extends beyond entertainment. Using a qualitative case study approach through interviews and literature analysis, the research reveals that traditional entertainment-oriented festivals limit tourists to passive consumers. In contrast, knowledge-based festivals create interactive platforms where diverse stakeholders engage in dialogue, learning, and shared value creation. Through resource integration, dialogic interaction, and outcome institutionalization, festivals transform into dynamic learning ecosystems. This shift requires redefining success metrics beyond economic impact to include social and intellectual outcomes, shifting experience design toward participatory interventions, and transitioning governance to collaborative frameworks. Ultimately, knowledge-based festivals drive collective learning, collaborative innovation, and sustainable destination development.

ABSTRAK
Penelitian ini merekonstruksi pariwisata event dengan menempatkan festival berbasis pengetahuan sebagai paradigma baru yang melampaui orientasi hiburan. Menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif melalui wawancara dan analisis literatur, studi ini menunjukkan bahwa festival konvensional membatasi wisatawan sebagai konsumen pasif. Sebaliknya, festival berbasis pengetahuan menciptakan platform interaktif bagi pemangku kepentingan untuk berdialog, belajar, dan menciptakan nilai bersama. Melalui integrasi sumber daya, interaksi dialogis, dan pelembagaan hasil, festival bertransformasi menjadi ekosistem pembelajaran yang dinamis. Perubahan ini menuntut redefinisi metrik keberhasilan dari sekadar dampak ekonomi menjadi dampak sosial dan intelektual, pergeseran desain pengalaman menuju intervensi partisipatif, serta transisi tata kelola ke arah kolaboratif. Pada akhirnya, festival berbasis pengetahuan mendorong pembelajaran kolektif, inovasi kolaboratif, dan pembangunan destinasi berkelanjutan.

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INTRODUCTION

Event tourism has become one of the most dynamic segments in the global tourism industry. Traditionally, festivals, as the backbone of event tourism, are promoted as a means to attract tourists, increase regional revenue, and shape a positive image of the destination (Akhundova, 2024). Governments and destination managers in various countries, including Indonesia, often compete to organize large-scale festivals with the hope of creating significant direct economic impacts, such as increased hotel occupancy, local consumption, and the creation of temporary employment (Sardi *et al.*, 2025; Rusiawan & Wijayanti, 2024). Within this

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framework, festivals are understood as tourism products attractively packaged for tourists, where success is measured through quantitative metrics such as the number of visitors and economic transaction value.

However, the narrative that positions festivals merely as engines of economic growth has begun to attract criticism for neglecting broader social, cultural, and environmental dimensions (Richards & Leal Londono, 2022). Various contemporary studies indicate that festivals have undergone a fundamental shift in function, so that they are no longer merely stages for entertainment performances but have evolved into spaces for social interaction increasingly oriented toward learning, self-development, and the search for meaning by their visitors (Rosetti & Quinn, 2022; Blazi, 2025). This shift aligns with changes in tourist behavior, with travelers increasingly seeking immersive and participatory experiences rather than mere passive consumption of entertainment (Yen, 2022; Lee, 2022). This phenomenon underscores the need to redefine the role of festivals within the contemporary tourism ecosystem.

However, academic studies on the transformation of this festival remain fragmented. The majority of previous research has still focused on aspects such as tourists' motivation to seek entertainment (Rivetti & Lucadamo, 2022), visitor loyalty (Van-Dunem *et al.*, 2023), or the economic impact of events (Sardi *et al.*, 2025). Meanwhile, the potential of festivals as spaces for knowledge production and social innovation has relatively received little serious attention in the event tourism literature (Martinez-Martinez *et al.*, 2023). In fact, in various parts of the world, festival models have emerged that are explicitly designed as platforms for the exchange of ideas, public discussions, workshops, and multi-stakeholder collaboration, which can be referred to as 'knowledge-based festivals' (Fung & Hon, 2021). The absence of an adequate conceptual framework to understand this phenomenon results in the role of festivals as ecosystems for learning and social innovation often being overlooked by policymakers and tourism planners.

To address this theoretical gap, this article integrates relevant perspectives, namely value co-creation, collaborative governance, and sustainable tourism. The value co-creation perspective emphasizes that value is not created unilaterally by providers, but rather emerges through interactions among all stakeholders, including tourists, local communities, the private sector, and the government (Font *et al.*, 2021; Dang & Nguyen, 2023). Meanwhile, the collaborative governance perspective highlights the importance of cross-sector partnerships in managing resources and inclusive decision-making processes (Bianchi *et al.*, 2021; Valderrama & Polanco, 2022). These aspects are then connected to the sustainable tourism development framework, which not only pursues economic growth but also ecological balance and social equity (Khan *et al.*, 2021; Kharbanda *et al.*, 2025). The integration of these three perspectives allows for a more holistic analysis of festival transformation.

Based on the synthesis of these thoughts, this article aims to reconstruct the understanding of event tourism by positioning knowledge-based festivals as a new paradigm for event organization. This reconstruction demonstrates that festivals are no longer mere products of passive consumption, but rather learning ecosystems that foster knowledge exchange, collaborative innovation, and citizen engagement. This conceptual offer explicitly fills a gap in the literature that has so far overlooked the role of festivals as a means of knowledge production and social innovation. By bridging the theoretical gap between event economic studies and social learning, this article provides new guidance for policymakers in designing festivals that support destination sustainability. This new interpretation affirms the fundamental contribution of festivals to collective learning and social resilience in the era of global transformation.

METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study method. Data were obtained by conducting interviews with three individuals who usually attend events such as the Jakarta Culture Festival, Surabaya's anniversary, and other periodically held events, as well as two organizing committee members. Secondary data were also needed to strengthen the research results, obtained from various scholarly articles discussing festival topics, event tourism, and sustainable tourism. The analysis process was conducted by mapping the findings from the interviews and collecting relevant literature, reviewing its content, noting important findings, and connecting various perspectives from the available sources. The purpose of this process is as part of data triangulation to ensure alignment with the research framework and to maintain an appropriate level of validity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Deconstruction of the Traditional Festival Role: From Entertainment to a Space of Knowledge

Historically, festivals have developed within the framework of event tourism as a venue for mass entertainment and an instrument of economic growth. Governments and destination managers around the

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world position festivals as strategic tools to attract tourists, encourage local consumption, and build a positive image of the destination (Akhundova, 2024). This orientation places festivals as a stage presenting artistic, cultural, and entertainment attractions, while tourists act as passive consumers who come to enjoy offerings curated by the organizers. The success of festivals is measured through quantitative metrics such as the number of visitors, hotel occupancy rates, economic transaction volumes, and the value of media exposure obtained (Sardi *et al.*, 2025; Rusiawan & Wijayanti, 2024). In this logic, a festival is a tourism product that is complete in itself, rather than an ongoing social process.

However, this dominant narrative actually harbors several fundamental limitations. First, it reduces festivals to mere economic transactions and ignores the fact that festivals are complex social spaces where cultural interactions occur, meanings are negotiated, and community bonds are strengthened (Richards & Leal Londono, 2022). Second, it places tourists in a passive position, while recent studies show that contemporary tourists increasingly seek deep engagement and meaningful experiences (Blazi, 2025). Third, it overlooks the potential of festivals as public learning arenas, where local knowledge is exchanged, new ideas are tested, and solutions to social issues are discussed (Rossetti & Quinn, 2022). These limitations indicate that the traditional paradigm is no longer adequate to capture the complexity of the role of festivals in contemporary society.

The deconstruction of the traditional role of festivals finds its urgency precisely when we observe shifts in tourist preferences and increasingly complex social demands. Rivetti and Lucadamo (2022) found that tourists' motivations for attending cultural festivals are no longer passive, but rather encompass drives to acquire new knowledge, gain a deep understanding of culture, and build meaningful social connections. This aligns with Yen's (2022) findings, which indicate that sustainable festival experience designs can evoke cultural emotions and motivate tourist engagement beyond momentary entertainment consumption. Furthermore, Lorincz et al. (2023) even emphasize that a festival industry that is overly focused on economic growth is actually vulnerable to crises because it neglects the sustainability dimension. These findings affirm that the role of festivals is undergoing a fundamental shift that demands conceptual redefinition.

Thus, this deconstruction paves the way for a new understanding that positions festivals as spaces of knowledge. Knowledge spaces here are not narrowly understood as classrooms or formal seminars, but rather as social spaces where the exchange of ideas, informal learning, and the production of collective knowledge occur (Fung & Hon, 2021). Martinez-Martinez *et al.* (2023) emphasize that knowledge management in tourism remains a relatively unexplored area, even though it is highly relevant to the dynamics of contemporary festivals. The shift from "festival as an entertainment product" to "festival as a knowledge space" serves as the foundation for a reconstruction of event tourism that is more relevant and sustainable.

Knowledge-Based Festival: Conceptual Redefinition and Key Characteristics

Knowledge-based festivals are a conceptual response to the limitations of traditional paradigms that have been previously outlined. By definition, a knowledge-based festival is an interactive platform deliberately designed to bring together diverse stakeholders in a process of dialogue, learning, and co-creation of knowledge, beyond the entertainment function that has historically dominated. Unlike conventional festivals, which position visitors as spectators, knowledge-based festivals position each participant as a valuable bearer of knowledge and, simultaneously, as an active learner. The programs are no longer centered on stage performances; instead, they include participatory workshops, panel discussions, innovation exhibitions, good practice sharing sessions, and multi-stakeholder collaborative forums that allow for cross-pollination of ideas (Fung & Hon, 2021; Rossetti & Quinn, 2022).

As a concept, knowledge-based festivals have several key characteristics that distinguish them from conventional festivals. The first characteristic is active participation, where visitors do not merely attend and watch, but also contribute to discussions, share experiences, and collectively produce outcomes. The second characteristic is multi-stakeholder involvement, marked by the engagement of actors from various sectors such as government, academia, business practitioners, local communities, and the general public in an equal forum. The third characteristic is learning-oriented, reflected in program designs that explicitly aim to enhance participants' intellectual capacity, skills, and awareness of specific issues. The fourth characteristic is collaboration-based, where knowledge is not delivered in a one-way manner, but rather co-produced through interaction and the integration of resources possessed by each actor. (Melis *et al.*, 2022; Alos-Simo *et al.*, 2023).

The redefinition of festivals as spaces of knowledge aligns with the principles of service-dominant logic, which emphasizes that value is not inherent in products but is created through interaction and usage. Font et al. (2021) apply this logic in the context of sustainable tourism and demonstrate that tourism value is genuinely

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co-created by all actors involved, rather than being produced by service providers and consumed by tourists. Dang and Nguyen (2023) reinforce this argument by highlighting how digital technology enables value co-creation to occur more inclusively, beyond the boundaries of festival time and space. Within this framework, knowledge-based festivals function as platforms that facilitate the meeting of resources possessed by actors, such as knowledge, skills, experience, and networks, to generate greater value than mere entertainment.

With these characteristics and conceptual foundations, knowledge-based festivals offer a way out of the limitations of traditional paradigms. Festivals are no longer understood as tourism products that are complete in themselves, but rather as ongoing social processes. The value generated goes beyond recreational satisfaction; it encompasses the enhancement of participants' intellectual capacity, the establishment of lasting collaborative networks, and the creation of innovative solutions to local problems (Hasanein *et al.*, 2026). Knowledge-based festivals, therefore, are not merely an addition to the event typology, but a representation of a new paradigm that redefines the relationship between festivals, knowledge, and society.

The Mechanism of Value Co-Creation and the Emergence of Collaborative Innovation in Festivals

Starting from the conceptualization of knowledge-based festivals discussed previously, this discussion examines the mechanisms of value co-creation that are formed through interactions among stakeholders, while also explaining how this process generates collaborative innovation as the foundation for the development of sustainable event tourism. Value co-creation in knowledge-based festivals occurs through three interrelated mechanisms: resource integration, dialogic interaction, and institutionalization of outcomes. The first mechanism, resource integration, occurs when each actor involved in the festival brings and combines the unique resources they possess, such as academic knowledge from researchers, local knowledge from the community, financial resources from the private sector, policy legitimacy from the government, and creative energy from civil society (Font *et al.*, 2021).

The second mechanism is dialogic interaction, which is at the heart of the value co-creation process. In knowledge-based festivals, interactions among actors are not transactional but dialogic and reflective. Melis *et al.* (2022) specifically identify that the process of collaboration and learning in tourism destinations forms a richer shared value through repeated interactions that build mutual understanding and trust. Sessions such as panel discussions, participatory workshops, and informal networking forums provide space for actors to listen to each other, engage in constructive debate, and build a shared vision. Dang and Nguyen (2023) add that digital platforms can expand the reach of these dialogic interactions, enabling participation from actors who cannot be physically present and extending the festival's lifecycle beyond its duration.

The third mechanism, institutionalization of results, is a stage that is often overlooked in conventional festivals. In knowledge-based festivals, the outcomes of integrated resources and dialogic interactions are not allowed to dissipate once the event concludes. These outcomes are aimed to be institutionalized in the form of new partnerships, continued collaborative projects, policy recommendation documents, or community platforms that remain active post-festival (Fung & Hon, 2021). This institutionalization process ensures that the value co-created during the festival is not temporary but sustainable and delivers long-term impact for the community and the destination.

It is from these three mechanisms that collaborative innovation emerges as a substantive output of knowledge-based festivals. Innovation in this context is not limited to technological innovation but also includes social innovation, process innovation, and institutional innovation. Alos-Simo *et al.* (2023) demonstrate that access to diverse knowledge sources significantly promotes eco-innovation in the tourism sector, as it enables tourism actors to combine knowledge from various sources to produce new, more sustainable solutions. Hasanein *et al.* (2026) complement this by emphasizing that knowledge sharing and organizational agility are key mediators bridging innovative leadership with innovation performance. Festivals, as neutral spaces that bring together actors who do not normally interact in daily life, create ideal conditions for the cross-pollination of ideas that form the genesis of collaborative innovation.

From Festivals to Learning Ecosystems: Implications for Policy and Sustainable Tourism

The transformation of festivals from entertainment stages into spaces of knowledge and innovation carries broad implications, not only at the conceptual level but also in terms of policy and tourism management practices. The first and most fundamental implication is the need to redefine the metrics of festival success. While success has traditionally been measured through economic indicators such as visitor numbers, direct revenue, and secondary economic impacts (Sardi *et al.*, 2025), the new paradigm demands the development of

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more holistic metrics. These metrics must be capable of capturing the social and intellectual impact of festivals, such as the number of ideas or innovations generated, the number of new partnerships formed, the improvement of public literacy on specific issues, and the strengthening of local community capacities (El Archi *et al.*, 2023). This shift in metrics is important because what is measured will be managed, so as long as the success of the festival is measured only by visitor numbers, the incentive for organizers to design festivals with social impact will remain weak.

The second implication relates to festival experience design. Curators and festival designers need to shift their focus from merely arranging stages and entertainment to designing interventions that encourage active participation, dialogue, and co-creation. Lee (2022) demonstrates how gamification can be used to enhance visitor engagement and create a festival experience that is both more immersive and educational. Yen (2022) shows that sustainable experience design can evoke cultural emotions and motivate tourists to change their behavior toward greater responsibility. Digital technology plays an important role as an enabler, allowing interaction and co-creation to occur more inclusively and sustainably, transcending the geographical and temporal boundaries of festival organization (Dang & Nguyen, 2023; Rausser *et al.*, 2021).

The third implication concerns the governance model of festivals and destinations. Knowledge-based festivals, with their multi-stakeholder and collaborative nature, naturally encourage a shift from top-down governance to collaborative governance. Bianchi *et al.* (2021) explain that effective collaborative governance models are often initiated through pilot projects and informal interaction spaces between government elements (public sector) and non-government actors, such as academics, local communities, and private sector business players—two cross-sector partnership elements that are precisely accommodated by knowledge-based festivals. Valderrama and Polanco (2022) emphasize that collaborative governance mediates the relationship between rural tourism and sustainable regional development, a finding that is highly relevant to be extended into the context of event tourism. Within this framework, the festival functions as a governance laboratory, a place where models of actor collaboration are tested, evaluated, and replicated on a larger scale of destination development.

Ultimately, the accumulation of these three implications ushers the festival towards its new role as a learning ecosystem. As a learning ecosystem, the festival no longer stands alone as a temporary event but becomes a node within a broader network of learning and innovation. Kharbanda *et al.* (2025) propose a conceptual framework that integrates knowledge and innovation into the core of sustainable tourism policy and practice, and knowledge-based festivals offer a concrete vehicle to realize this integration. Aman *et al.* (2024) emphasize that sustainable destination branding in the future must be built on a foundation of authentic collaboration, rather than mere image-making. Lorincz *et al.* (2023) complement this by showing that the resilience of the festival industry itself can be enhanced through the adoption of participatory risk management models. Thus, knowledge-based festivals not only contribute to the sustainability of destinations but also to the fundamental transformation of the event tourism industry towards a more resilient, inclusive, and relevant model in the era of global transformation.

CONCLUSIONS

This article has reconstructed the understanding of event tourism by positioning knowledge-based festivals as a new paradigm that goes beyond mere entertainment orientation. The analysis results indicate that the conventional paradigm, which considers festivals as entertainment attractions and economic instruments, has fundamental limitations, particularly in reducing the role of tourists to passive consumers and overlooking the potential of festivals as spaces for knowledge production and social innovation. Knowledge-based festivals emerge as interactive platforms that bring together stakeholders in processes of dialogue, learning, and co-creation of value. Through mechanisms of resource integration, dialogical interaction, and institutionalization of outcomes, festivals transform from tourism products consumed passively into learning ecosystems that promote knowledge exchange and collaborative innovation.

This transformation carries strategic implications for event tourism policies and practices, including the need to redefine festival success metrics from purely economic indicators to more holistic metrics encompassing social and intellectual impacts, a shift in experience design from performance curation to participatory intervention design, and a transition in modern governance from a top-down model to more inclusive collaborative governance. Thus, knowledge-based festivals not only offer an alternative in event typology but also represent a new face of event tourism that meaningfully contributes to collective learning, collaborative innovation, and sustainable destination development in the era of global transformation.

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