



Driving the Circular Economy through Cultural Heritage: An Integrative Framework for Indonesian Green Festivals

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Abstract. Recently, there has been growing expectation that festivals will reduce their environmental footprint; however, the sociocultural conditions that enable the implementation of a circular economy in the context of such events have not yet been adequately addressed in theoretical terms, particularly in developing countries. This study focuses on cultural heritage that supports the implementation and legitimacy of circular practices especially in the eco-friendly festival in Indonesia. This research uses qualitative methods with the method of comparative analysis of 4 cases of festivals that are believed to represent the types of festival organization in Indonesia based on the theory of institutions and socio-cultural attachment, namely: BaliSpirit Festival, Joyland, Jazz Gunung, and Trail of the Kings. This research analysis is based on documentary evidence on local economic participation, involvement of cultural element, environment friendly practices, community engagement, mobility management and festival governance mechanisms. The findings show that cultural heritage is used as a means to develop legitimacy that underpins projects to implement sustainability based on collective identity, locally significant ethical systems and place-based values rather than solely a branding capital or thematic content. This validity effect strengthens the trust of all stakeholders and can encourage the involvement of all people involved in the festival to implement circular practices, such as using local raw material sources, minimising waste consumption, reusing available materials, using renewable energy, and community-based management. However, there are still several obstacles that hinder the implementation of circular practices in green festivals in Indonesia, namely fragmented institutional governance, cost pressure, uneven environmental literacy, and reliance on limited infrastructure.. Based on these findings, this study proposes a framework for a culturally embedded circular festival that links cultural heritage, legitimacy, stakeholder participation, circular operations, and regional sustainability outcomes. This study contributes to the literature on sustainable event management by demonstrating that the circular transition in a festival context is not merely a technical challenge related to resource efficiency, but also a cultural and institutional process shaped by meaning, legitimacy, and relational coordination.

Keywords: Circular Economy, Cultural Heritage, Green Festivals, Sustainable Event Management, Indonesia

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1 Introduction

Festivals have become an increasingly important platform for tourism development, cultural representation, creative economy expansion, and local economy revitalization. In many destinations, festivals serve not only as entertainment events but also as temporary infrastructure that shapes mobility, consumption, sense of place, and public culture. Simultaneously, hosting festivals places significant environmental pressure through waste generation, resource-intensive infrastructure, the use of temporary materials, and transportation-related emissions. The pressure on organizers and destination managers to adopt more sustainable forms of event planning and execution is also increasing as the event-based economy continues to grow. (Getz & Page, 2019; Laing et al., 2021).

Sustainability is not only about reducing environmental impact in event studies, but the concept has been extended to include procurement, accessibility, stakeholder coordination, community benefits and the long term impact on the host location. Many festivals still engage in symbolic or partial “greening”. Such interventions are visible, such as the addition of trash bins, eco-friendly slogans or isolated plastic reduction campaigns, often introduced without a substantial redesign of the underlying systems of the event. However, the institutionalization of festival sustainability in practice proves to be challenging because of the reliance of these events on various stakeholders, short planning cycles, attendees’ behavior and local support systems (Dodds et al., 2020; Celuch K., 2020; Wondirad et al., 2020).

The circular economy offers a useful framework to address these limitations. The principle of circularity is about keeping resources, about avoiding waste, reuse, regenerate and create value within a closed loop, not the linear logic of extract, use and dispose. Event management may include reusable food and beverage systems, refill stations, modular stages, local sourcing of raw material, renewable energy, reuse of material and community-based waste recovery. The application of the principles of in festivals is conceptually and operationally patchy. Festivals are not merely logistical systems but are also public, symbolic environments and experiences, which in their realization are shaped by behavioral norms and social meanings (Merli et al., 2018; Raj & Musgrave, 2020).

This raises a problem that has not been much studied in the literature, the role of cultural heritage in enabling the transition to sustainability. Festivals are embedded in local stories, in spiritual values, artistic practices, meanings of landscape and collective identities. The cultural heritage gives these festivals a social depth and a symbolic coherence. Cultural heritage is generally perceived as thematic content, a source of authenticity or a tourism asset and not as a mechanism that influences the legitimacy of environmental practices. Sustainability initiatives are more likely to be successful when they are culturally understandable, socially accepted and meaningful to the local communities (Yang et al., 2020; Duxbury et al., 2021). A highly relevant empirical setting for studying this relationship is Indonesia. The country has a rich cultural diversity, strong region-based identities, a growing festival-based economy and increasing sustainability pressure. But the environmental governance, infrastructure support, and pub-

lic environmental literacy are still uneven across the regions. The conditions in Indonesia provide a fertile ground to explore how circular economy principles might be integrated, not only through formal systems, but also through local culture, community participation and the building of legitimacy.

This paper examines the role of cultural heritage in the application of circular economy in eco-friendly festivals in Indonesia. This study compares four festival case studies: the BaliSpirit Festival, the Joyland Festival, Jazz Gunung, and Trail of the Kings. This study is based on three fundamental research questions:

1. How does cultural heritage influence the legitimacy of circular economy practices in Indonesian festivals?
2. What forms of circular practices are implemented at these various eco-friendly festivals? How are these practices implemented?
3. What institutional barriers hinder the long-term application of circular economy principles in festival governance?

This study contributes in four main ways. First, this study enriches the literature on sustainable event management by demonstrating that the principle of circularity in festivals depends not only on operational design but also on symbolic legitimacy. Second, this study expands institutional theory by showing that place-based values and cultural narratives shape the normative and cultural-cognitive conditions that underpin sustainability acceptance. Third, this study contributes to the literature on circular economy by viewing festivals as meaning-laden systems, where resource management practices are openly manifested and mediated through behavior. Fourth, this study offers empirical insights from Indonesia, where the international research on the relationship between cultural heritage and the circular transition remains underexplored.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Sustainable Event Management (SEM)

Sustainable event management has evolved into a well-established field of tourism and event studies. This field has moved beyond a narrow focus on environmental mitigation toward a broader approach that encompasses stakeholders coordination, supply chains, accessibility, social value, and place-based heritage (Getz & Page, 2019). Festivals hold particular significance because they condense large-scale material, spatial, and social activities into a short and limited timeframe. The sustainability performance of a festival is not only determined by the organizers' aims but also by the behavior of the suppliers, visitors, governmental institutions and the local communities in which the festival is held. Festivals have been widely acknowledged and discussed in sustainability research as platforms which can contribute to a larger transition towards sustainability, particularly when local communities participate actively and long-term development and collaborative governance are established (Laing et al., 2021; Dewi, M., 2025).

Sustainability is thus created through interaction of many actors, and not by administrative control from the top; This is in line with previous research that highlights the significance of successful cooperation between stakeholders, sustained community engagement, and participatory decision-making in the implementation of sustainability

measures in festivals (Aquino et al., 2018; Wondirad et al., 2020). However, efforts to enhance environmental performance are usually hampered by practical barriers, such as fragmented cooperation between stakeholders and restrictive implementation processes. Results suggest that many festivals are still focused on high visibility environment projects, but fundamental change such as behavioral change, procurement and resource circulation receive relatively less attention (Dodds et al., 2020).

2.2. Circular Economy in the Festival Contexts

The circular economy has become a major sustainability paradigm in many sectors. The basic idea is that production and consumption systems should generate less waste, extend the life of materials, preserve value and allow regenerative cycles instead of linear extraction and disposal (Merli et al., 2018). Circularity can encompass the procurement of local raw materials, refill stations, reusable containers, renewable energy, modular design, material reuse, and community-based resource recovery (Merli et al., 2018; Werner et al., 2019). However, the events sector presents unique challenges in implementing circularity. Festivals are temporary, highly visible environments involving many stakeholders, with fluctuating audience numbers and a significant reliance on convenience. Organizers may have limited control over attendee behavior, vendor compliance, or post-event waste management. Consequently, circularity in festivals is not only a technical issue related to material design but also a social issue concerning coordination, legitimacy, and participation. Further research on sustainable music festivals indicates that the creation of shared value among organizers, attendees, vendors, the government, and local stakeholders is crucial for embedding sustainability into event management practices (Werner et al., 2019).

2.3. Cultural Heritage and Sustainability

Cultural heritage is generally discussed in relation to authenticity, identity, preservation, tourism development, and a place's image. Cultural heritage can be expressed through rituals, performances, local cuisine, handicraft production, traditional esthetics, spatial symbolism, and community memory in a festival. Cultural heritage generally has a governance dimension. This dimension shapes the types of practices considered appropriate, credible, and meaningful within a specific social context.

Recent research indicates that festivals can serve as integrative spaces where cultural heritage and sustainability agendas intersect (Yang et al., 2020). This means that cultural heritage can support sustainability by not only enriching festival content but also legitimizing environmental practices. When eco-friendly practices are framed through local values or ethical systems, organizers, communities, vendors, and participants tend to accept them more readily. This is particularly relevant in settings where spirituality, cultural identity and local creative traditions remain central to the practices of tourism and event management (Duxbury et al., 2021).

2.4. Sociocultural Embeddedness and Institutional Theory

The notion of "embeddedness" proposes that organizations and economic actions are influenced by social relationships, cultural norms, and meanings attributed to a certain place rather than being the sole result of instrumental rationality. Sustainability practices tend to be interpreted through the event's symbolic identity in the context of festivals. This helps explain why similar eco-friendly measures can yield different results in various contexts. Research on sustainable tourism also shows that sustainability is

further strengthened when stakeholders jointly create value through participatory processes, rather than merely receiving top-down instructions (Font et al., 2021).

Institutional theory complements this perspective by emphasizing that regulatory, normative, and cultural-cognitive pressures shape organizational practices. This pressures may include environmental regulations, sponsor expectations, professional norms, public legitimacy, and local values in the context of festival (Pasamar et al., 2023). Furthermore, communication plays a crucial role in this process, as sustainability perspectives influence how stakeholders interpret and respond to environmental initiatives (Tölkes, 2020; Tölkes et al., 2018). Overall, socio-cultural embeddedness and institutional theory provide a robust framework for understanding the acceptance, implementation, or rejection of circular practices.

2.5. Research Gap

Although efforts in the areas of eco-friendly events, the circular economy, and cultural heritage-based tourism have increase, three gaps remain. First, the literature on sustainable event management does not sufficiently explain how cultural legitimacy influences the implementation of circular practices in festival organizations. Second, research on the circular economy has not sufficiently explored cultural events as systems embedded in social contexts. Third, studies of cultural heritage rarely examine how cultural heritage shapes a festival's operational sustainability and governance. This study addresses these gaps by conceptualizing cultural heritage as a mechanism that enables and legitimizes the circular transition in eco-friendly festivals in Indonesia.

3. Method

3.1. Research Design

This study employs a qualitative comparative case study design. Its objective is not only predictive but also explanatory. This study seeks to understand how cultural heritage shapes the legitimacy and implementation of circular practices in various festival contexts. A qualitative design is considered appropriate because this study focuses on meaning, legitimacy, governance logic, and stakeholder alignment. However, the qualitative approach has several methodological limitations that must be acknowledged. These limitations include the potential for subjectivity in the researcher's interpretation, the limited ability to generalize findings to contexts outside the studied cases, and a significant reliance on the availability and quality of data from interviews with a limited number of informants and documentary sources. Furthermore, the lack of triangulation with primary data sources through direct field observation may narrow the analytical perspective. Therefore, the results of this study should be understood within the framework of the limitations of the analyzed case study and are not intended to yield universal conclusions.

3.2. Case Selection

This study analyzes four festivals in Indonesia selected from the attached "Sustainable Event" collection: the BaliSpirit Festival, the Joyland Festival, Jazz Gunung, and Trail of the Kings. These case studies were chosen because each possesses distinct festival characteristics, demonstrated a clear connection between sustainability and cultural or

place-based identity, and provided documentary evidence of environmentally friendly or circular practices.

Table 1. Case Study Overview.

Festival	Main Orientation	Key sustainability practices	Cultural/Heritage Basis	Analytical Value
Jazz Gunung	Outdoor cultural music festival	Local vendors, local workforce, eco-friendly positioning, bamboo stage, green recognition	Ethno-jazz identity, mountain landscape, and integration of local community	Strong case study of local circulation and place-based legitimacy
Joyland Festival	Contemporary Arts and Music Festival	Public transport, cycling support, local suppliers, local artisans, refill stations, plastic reduction, recycled art installations, solar panels	A creative ecosystem rooted in community and locality	A Strong case of operational circularity in a modern creative setting
Trails of the Kings	Eco-oriented event	Sustainability commitment, involvement of local community, inclusivity, and eco-friendly practices	historical narratives, mythology, and cultural heritage	A useful comparative case for framing inclusivity and sustainability
BaliSpirit Festival	Regenerative Spiritual Festival	Zero waste, compost toilet, Bali ReGreen, Karma Outreach, Desa Adat's governance role	Tri Hita Karana	Strongest case of heritage-based regenerative sustainability

3.3. Data Source

This study is based on documentary evidence consisting of four festival documents found in the Sustainable Events collection, as well as in-depth interviews with the organizers of these four festivals and several stakeholders involved in their organization. The case materials provide evidence regarding environmental practices, local economic participation, community engagement, cultural frameworks, mobility planning, and governance mechanisms.

These materials show that the BaliSpirit Festival was designed as a regenerative event grounded in Tri Hita Karana, featuring practices such as zero waste, composting toilet systems, Bali ReGreen, Karma Outreach, and the traditional village's governance (Desa Adat). The Joyland Festival documents the promotion of public transportation, bike-friendly access, local suppliers and artisans, curated local markets, workshop programs, the reduction of single-use plastics, refill stations, art installations made from recycled plastic, and the use of solar panels. Jazz Gunung documents a strong reliance

on local raw materials and labor integration, including contributions from approximately 75% of local vendors and SMEs, as well as approximately 80% local workforce participation, along with its eco-friendly positioning and recognition as the Green Event of the Year 2025. Additionally, data from Trail of the Kings highlight the involvement of the local community in supporting activities, eco-friendly practices aligned with international festival standards, the use of participants' natural waste for composting, and inclusivity.

3.4. Data Analysis

The analysis was conducted in four stages. First, all case study materials were read repeatedly to comprehensively identify the initial themes related to sustainability, stakeholder roles, cultural references, and organizational patterns. Second, an open-coding process was conducted, in which data segments were coded based on predefined categories such as cultural heritage, legitimacy, local raw material sourcing, low-waste systems, mobility, renewable energy, governance, participation, and community values. This coding procedure aimed to capture the diversity of the data and accommodate new categories that might emerge during the document review. Third, the coding results were systematically grouped into overarching themes directly related to the research questions, namely: cultural heritage as an infrastructure of legitimacy; circular operations and resource-conscious design; stakeholder participation and the creation of local value; and institutional barriers and vulnerabilities. Fourth, a cross-case comparative analysis was conducted to identify common mechanisms or patterns as well as significant differences among the four festivals, thereby providing a deeper understanding of the dynamics of implementing a circular economy based on cultural heritage.

3.5. Trustworthiness

The research rigor of the research is strengthened through repeated readings, cross-case comparisons, and a close alignment between the theoretical framework and empirical evidence. This study places greater emphasis on interpretive consistency and transparency than on direct operational verification because it is based on documents and face-to-face interviews.

4. Findings

4.1. Cultural Heritage as a Legitimacy Source of Sustainability

A critical finding of this study is that cultural heritage serves as a source of legitimacy for sustainability. In all four cases, environmental practices gained meaning and acceptance when they aligned with festival's cultural logic and social identity. This is most evident at the BaliSpirit Festival, which is regenerative event grounded in Tri Hita Karana. The festival integrates environmental regeneration, social justice, and cultural integrity through a local moral framework, rather than merely through a purely managerial sustainability narrative. The role of the traditional village (Desa Adat) and social heritage initiatives such as Karma Outreach further strengthen this legitimacy (Dewi, M., 2025). In this case, sustainability is represented by culturally grounded management and, not by compliance with external environmental regulations.

Legitimacy is established at the Jazz Gunung through a connection to local roots, an ethno-jazz identity, an orientation toward the mountainous landscape, and integration with the local community. Environmental concern emerges as an extension of respect for the place and local cultural values, not as an external intervention. The involvement of local vendors and workers further reinforces the impression that the event is part of the host community and flows naturally within it (Jazz Gunung Indonesia, 2026).



Fig. 1 . Jazz Gunung highlights natural scenery as part of sustainability.

Cultural validity at Joyland Festival comes from a larger creative ecology of music, community and local participation. This ecosystem incorporates sustainable practices through regional crafts, workshops, carefully selected markets, and aesthetically significant environmental improvements. Joyland's sustainability relies on a locally intelligible cultural logic, but not in explicitly traditional philosophical language (Joyland Festival, 2026). This agrees with the Trail of the Kings, which also demonstrates that environmental friendliness, local community involvement, and inclusivity are part of the event's identity. Therefore, cultural heritage is not merely esthetic content in all these cases. Cultural heritage serves as a mechanism that helps sustainability appear authentic and appropriate (Ginting, A., 2026).

4.2. Circular Practices and Resource-Conscious Design

The second finding is related to the operational forms of circularity. **Local procurement** has a strong pattern across all cases. Joyland emphasizes the use of local suppliers, operators, content providers, and artisans. Jazz Gunung demonstrates an even stronger local circulation, with approximately 75% of the event's needs met by local vendors and MSMEs and approximately 80% of the workforce recruited locally, including the procurement of the stage and sound system used. These patterns indicate that circularity in festivals is related local economic cycles, community resilience, and the preservation of place-based values.

The second pattern is **low-waste practices**. Joyland's plastic policy replaces single-use plastics with sustainable alternatives and drinking water stations to encourage re-filling habits. Joyland also produces art installations made of recycled soft plastic, a combination of waste reduction and creative and visible reuse. This demonstrates how circular practices can be embedded into the operational and symbolic aesthetics of an event. The zero-waste system and composting toilets at the BaliSpirit Festival and

Trails of the Kings provide a more in-depth circular logic. These practices are seen as not just waste management techniques but as regenerative processes that derive ecological value from waste. The model is further expanded with the partnership with Bali ReGreen at the BaliSpirit Festival, moving beyond environmental mitigation to long-term environmental restoration.

The third pattern is **energy transition and mobility**. Solar panels are being trialed, and Joyland actively encourages the use of public transport, cycling and walking. These show that sustainability efforts could go beyond waste management to include mobility and energy systems, and thus widen the scope of circular festival design.



Fig. 2 . The circular practices at the Joyland festival.

These findings indicate that eco-friendly festivals in Indonesia are characterized by the use of local resources, refill stations, plastic reduction, reuse, artistic recycling, renewable energy, and low-impact mobility planning.

4.3. Stakeholder Participation and Community Value

The third finding is that when stakeholders actively participate in the event system, sustainability is strengthened. Joyland engages the local community through workshops, local market programs, local artisans involvement, and transportation guidelines. The BaliSpirit Festival fosters participation through an ethical framework that connects people, nature, and spirituality.



Fig. 3 . The circular practices at the Joyland festival.

Jazz Gunung institutionalizes local participation through the integration of local workers and vendors. Sustainability is not merely imposed from above in all three cases. It is realized through the community and stakeholders involvement. This pattern aligns with previous research showing that sustainability in festivals is strengthened when environmental practices are co-created by organizers, participants, and local actors, rather than treated as unilateral managerial directives (Werner et al., 2019; Font et al., 2021).

This is important because a circular system requires every stakeholder to engage in collective behavior. Recharging stations, local procurement, low-waste consumption, and inclusive mobility can only function effectively if the participants work together. Studies on events focused on sustainability and pro-environmental behavior show that the event environment can shape participants' willingness to adopt sustainable practices, especially when those practices are socially visible and supported through meaningful communication (Tölkes, 2020; Tölkes et al., 2018). Therefore, the findings of this study suggest that cultural legitimacy helps create conditions that foster such co-operation.

4.4. Institutional Constraints

The fourth finding is that the circular economy's ongoing institutionalization remains uneven. Several case studies demonstrate strong initiatives but also point to several external constraints, such as dependence on infrastructure, coordination burdens, cost pressures and uneven levels of environmental literacy among the public.

Festival can be a learning source on sustainable practices but they can-not fully support a circular system without broader enabling conditions. Long-term success still relies critically on access to transit, methods for trash recovery, competence of local governance and discipline of stakeholder. This means that the success of the circular festivals is a matter not only of innovation at the event level but also of the strength of the institutional ecosystem surrounding the event.

5. Discussion

5.1. The Role of Cultural Heritage as a Circular Mechanism of Legitimacy

This paper makes a major theoretical contribution in the idea that cultural legacy is a cyclical process of legitimation. Festivals do not run cyclical processes in a social vacuum. They do so in symbolic and institutional contexts shaped by local values, identities and moral hierarchies. This is clearly demonstrated in Tri Hita Karana of BaliSpirit Festival; but also Jazz Gunung and Joyland show that legitimacy can be manifested also through local artistic identity, community based production and location sensitive event design. This means that cultural heritage should be considered not only as material for festivals, but also as a governance resource that can help to accelerate the transition process towards sustainability. This view aligns with more general concepts in the scholarship of regenerative, community-based tourism which stresses the significance of local empowerment and cultural integrity for sustainable development in the long-term (Aquino et al., 2018; Duxbury et al., 2021).

5.2. Implications for the Circular Economy Theory

These findings contribute to the study of the circular economy by demonstrating that festivals are meaningful environments for circularity. In this context, public resource management practices are visible and dependent on behavior; thus, circularity cannot be reduced to mere technical optimization of the behind-the-scenes. Circularity must be interpreted through culture, participation, and experience. This argument is supported by various studies showing that pro-environmental behavior in the context of events is shaped not only by infrastructure but also by communication, social norms, and participatory design (Tölkes, 2020; Tölkes et al., 2018). Festival circularity depends on how operational systems are translated into meaningful forms of collective action

5.3. Institutionalization Requires Multilevel Support

This research also expands institutional theory by demonstrating that legitimacy alone is insufficient to ensure sustainability. Circular practices become more stable when cultural legitimacy is supported by infrastructure, governance coordination, cost-effectiveness, and environmental literacy. Thus, sustainable festivals should be regarded as multidimensional institutional efforts, not only as the result of individual organizations. This conclusion is consistent with earlier studies that underscore the festivals' potential to contribute to a broader sustainability transition, provided however that they are supported by collaborative networks and an enabling institutional setting (Laing et al., 2021; Wondirad et al., 2020).

5.4. Practical Implications

The practical consequences to be implemented by the people involved in the organization of the festival are:

1. **For Event Organizers:** The findings suggest that sustainability should be embedded in the identity of the event and the relations with the local supply chain, as well as the design of mobility and the experience of the audience, rather than restricted to separate eco-friendly initiatives. Organizers should strive to align their environmental plans with local values, communicate sustainability in culturally meaningful ways and make circular systems visible and accessible to participants.
2. **For Policymakers:** Festivals can serve as pilot projects for implementing the circular economy. However, such efforts require supporting infrastructure, integrated public transportation, waste management systems, and governance coordination that extend beyond the event's scope. Support is not limited to policy support in the form of permits for organizing festivals.
3. **For Sponsors and Partners:** These cases demonstrate that environmental collaboration is more credible than merely symbolic involvement when it supports substantial operational changes. Tangible contributions have a greater impact on festival implementation of the circular economy.
4. **For Host Communities:** This finding reaffirms the importance of community collaboration, local knowledge, and cultural heritage-rooted legitimacy in shaping sustainable event management practices. The community can significantly incorporate circular practices into their daily lives after the festival has concluded.

5.5. Proposed Framework

Based on our empirical synthesis, we propose a Culturally Embedded Circular Festival Framework (CECFF), illustrating how cultural heritage acts as an ethical foundation, legitimacy drives stakeholder participation, and participation powers circular operations.

Table 2. A Culturally Embedded Circular Festival Framework.

Dimension	Function	Analytical Value
Cultural heritage and meaning of place	Provides an ethical and symbolic grounding	Tri Hita Karana, ethno-jazz identity, local creative ecosystem
Legitimacy and resonance	Makes sustainability socially appropriate	Desa Adat Governance, Local Markets, and Local Labor Integration
Stakeholder participation	Enables the collective enactment of circularity	Refill participation, local sourcing, workshops, and local workforce
Circular and Regenerative Practices	Operational sustainability expression	Zero waste, compost toilet, solar panels, plastic reduction, public transport, and recycled installations are all examples
Sustainability outcomes	Ecological, economic, and reputational value	Local income circulation, green recognition, and restoration narratives
Institutional moderators	Support or constrain scaling	Infrastructure, cost, governance coordination, and eco-literacy

6. Conclusion

This research shows that cultural heritage plays a very significant and crucial role in promoting circular economy practices at eco-friendly festivals in Indonesia. Through a comparative analysis of the BaliSpirit Festival, Joyland Festival, Jazz Gunung, and Trail of the Kings, this study demonstrates that sustainability in the context of festivals is not merely a technical issue related to waste reduction, mobility, or energy use, but also involves cultural and institutional processes.

The results suggest that cultural heritage increases the validity of circular activities by being linked to place-based meanings, social values and ethical systems that are recognized locally. This legitimacy underlies participation in local raw material sourcing, refill systems, plastic reduction, renewable energy, community-based governance and regenerative resource management practice. However, the long-term institutionalization of these activities depends on wider support, including infrastructure, policy, coordination, and public environmental awareness.

This study advances the fields of sustainable event management, circular economy, and institutional theory by providing an understanding of how meaning and legitimacy impact sustainability of ephemeral cultural events. This study also provides empirical insights from Indonesia where cultural heritage and local participation still form the

heart of many festival systems. Future research should extend this study with interviews with all stakeholders, direct observation and longitudinal assessments of circular performance throughout the festival cycle.

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