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JEMBRANA REGENCY'S LIVELY FESTIVAL AS A REPRESENTATION OF LOCAL ARTS, CULTURE AND TOURISM IN COMMEMORATION OF THE 130TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CITY OF NEGARA

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Abstract

The Jembrana Regency Semarak Festival, held to commemorate the 130th anniversary of Negara City, serves as an important platform for showcasing traditional arts, strengthening local identity, and encouraging the development of culture-based tourism. This study aims to analyze the festival's role in representing the arts and culture of the Jembrana community and its role in strengthening local tourism. A qualitative method was used, with interviews conducted with ten informants from the committee, artists, MSMEs, community leaders, and tourists. The data obtained were analyzed through stages of reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing to obtain a comprehensive picture of the festival's meaning. The results show that the festival plays a role in preserving traditional arts through performances of Jegog, a traditional dance, and Makepung, a symbol of regional identity. Community involvement significantly contributes to maintaining the continuity of traditions while demonstrating a sense of ownership of local culture. Artistic innovation combined with modern elements also provides space for traditions to remain relevant amidst changing times. Furthermore, the festival offers educational value by involving the younger generation in the cultural heritage process. From a tourism perspective, the Semarak Festival has a positive impact on strengthening the destination's image and improving the local economy. Craft exhibitions, culinary bazaars, and the involvement of MSMEs open up new market opportunities while enriching the tourist experience. The 130th anniversary of Kota Negara adds a historical dimension that reinforces the festival's value, giving it the potential to expand the promotion of culture-based tourism at the local and regional levels. The implications of this research lie in the importance of integrating arts and culture with tourism development strategies, which can serve as a reference in designing similar festival models in other regions.

Keywords: Vibrant Festival, Arts and Culture, Local Tourism, Negara City, Jembrana

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a strategic sector that plays a role in economic development, cultural preservation, and strengthening regional identity. In addition to contributing to local income, tourism also encourages communities to showcase their artistic heritage, traditions, and social values to visitors (Kurniati et al. 2023). Tourism approaches that emphasize authenticity, sustainability, and community involvement are gaining

popularity, as they provide authentic experiences while maintaining a balance between economic development and cultural preservation (Wulung 2021). In Indonesia, each region has unique potential that can be developed through tourism. One example is Jembrana Regency in Bali, which boasts a rich, distinctive culture and diverse local traditions.

Jembrana Regency in Bali has a unique cultural richness that distinguishes it from other areas on the Island of the Gods (Megawan and Suryawan 2019). One of the most prominent traditions is Makepung, a buffalo race that originated from the local agricultural community. This tradition has evolved into a cultural attraction full of social significance, demonstrating the community's togetherness, cooperation, and sportsmanship (Negara, Pramana, and Raharjo 2021). In the long history of Kota Negara, now 130 years old, the Jembrana Regency Festival Semarak serves as a platform to showcase Makepung, along with various local arts and culture. This festival serves as both a celebration and a representation of regional identity, which is crucial to maintain and promote.

Tourist arrivals in Bali are still heavily concentrated in areas like Kuta, Ubud, and Nusa Dua. This leaves areas like Jembrana often less well-known to both international and domestic tourists (Murtono 2024). Jembrana boasts strong cultural tourism potential through its agricultural traditions, jegog music, traditional dances, and lively folk festivals. The Semarak Kota Negara Festival could be a new strategy for promoting regional tourism, while also opening up opportunities for equitable distribution of tourism destinations in Bali. With Kota Negara celebrating its 130th anniversary, Jembrana has the opportunity to assert its position as an authentic and engaging cultural destination.

Makepung as a cultural icon of Jembrana is not just a spectacle for the local community, but also a tradition with strong values (Anggariyana, Arya Sunu, and Bagus Sanjaya 2019). Murtono et al. (2024) highlight in their study on sports tourism that Makepung possesses strong potential to evolve into a prominent tourist attraction, as it uniquely blends the tradition of buffalo racing with rich local cultural values. The Semarak Festival provides a broader platform for this tradition to be introduced to the public, both through live performances and cultural documentation. Makepung has great potential to become a tourist attraction that entertains and educates tourists about the cultural values of the Jembrana community.

Apart from Makepung, Jembrana is also rich in other arts and cultural traditions that have the potential to strengthen the festival's appeal (Ardianti 2017). For instance, the jegog musical art, which features large bamboo instruments, has long served as a distinctive musical identity of Jembrana and offers a unique attraction for tourists (Utama and Murtono 2024). Likewise, traditional dance, local cuisine, and handicrafts can be incorporated into a cohesive and integrated cultural festival. Through these diverse attractions, the Semarak Festival can serve as a cultural showcase, showcasing Jembrana's uniqueness while strengthening the region's tourism brand. This potential will be even greater if linked to historical commemorations, allowing the festival to reflect the historical journey of Kota Negara.

Cultural festivals play a vital role in tourism development as a means of promoting regional identity and empowering the community's economy (Murtono et al. 2025). Research on the development of cultural tourism attractions shows that festivals designed with community participation have a greater chance of success and sustainability. The Semarak Festival in Jembrana can be designed as a space for interaction between the community, tourists, and tourism stakeholders. This festival can provide authentic

experiences for visitors while preserving traditions for the younger generation. The role of the community as key actors will further strengthen the festival's significance as part of everyday life.

The positive impact of tourism events is also evident in various studies on sports tourism in Bali. For example, the Maybank Marathon has been shown to attract thousands of tourists, increase hotel occupancy, and stimulate local economic growth (Murtono et al. 2024). This phenomenon provides valuable lessons for Jembrana in designing the Semarak Festival, which is expected to provide similar benefits. If the festival is professionally packaged and properly promoted, the potential for increased tourist visits will be even greater. This can also open new job opportunities and foster a creative economy sector based on local culture.

The Jembrana Regency Semarak Festival is highly urgent to develop because it serves as a key opportunity to revive local cultural potential amidst the dominance of other Balinese tourist destinations. Jembrana requires a promotional strategy that emphasizes its uniqueness to avoid being marginalized by more popular tourist destinations. This festival, which combines art, culture, and tourism, can serve as a catalyst for regional development, both socially, culturally, and economically. Furthermore, the festival serves as a means of preserving traditions to ensure their relevance to current developments.

Previous research has extensively discussed the potential of Makepung and cultural tourism in Jembrana, but rarely has it been linked to festivals as a promotional strategy and a way to commemorate the city's history. Therefore, this study aims to explain the role of the Jembrana Regency Semarak Festival as a representation of arts and culture and an instrument for local tourism development in commemorating the 130th anniversary of the city. This research is expected to fill the gap in academic research and provide practical benefits for tourism development in Jembrana.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Cultural Festival

A cultural festival is essentially a form of social event designed to bring people together in a celebration of values, traditions, and creative expressions passed down across generations Getz & Page (2015). Festivals play a crucial role in strengthening a destination's image while also providing a space for cross-cultural interaction that can expand collective knowledge. In practice, festivals typically feature a variety of activities, such as art performances, traditional rituals, craft exhibitions, and various forms of traditional attractions. These activities serve as entertainment and reflect the representation of social identity, demonstrating the distinctive characteristics of a community.

Quinn (2025) emphasizes that festivals play a strategic role as a means of intergenerational cultural transfer, a place where values, norms, and symbols are passed down through performances and shared activities. This function makes festivals more than just public entertainment, but also a vehicle for cultural education that introduces noble values to the wider community. The celebratory process, which involves various social elements, also creates a sense of togetherness and strengthens solidarity. This demonstrates that festivals have a dual function: preserving traditions while facilitating harmonious social interaction among community groups.

Gómez-Ullate & Saraiva (2024) highlight that festivals can showcase a region's unique character through its artistic heritage, traditions, and distinctive cultural

expressions. Festivals are a medium that can elevate local riches to a broader audience and enrich the diversity of tourism attractions. Festivals also create opportunities to strengthen the collective identity that distinguishes one community from another (Saputra and Suparta 2023). Therefore, cultural festivals can be understood as social phenomena that reflect everyday life while articulating the historical and symbolic values inherent in community life.

2.2 Local Tourism

Local tourism conceptually refers to tourism activities that are rooted in the cultural potential, traditions, and resources originating from the local community. Ivona (2021) states that local tourism is developing with an emphasis on sustainability, authenticity, and community involvement in organizing tourism activities. This form of tourism emerged as a response to tourists' need for authentic experiences, differing from mass tourism, which tends to be uniform and consumption-oriented. Local tourism focuses solely on recreation and the creation of values that reflect the community's identity and heritage.

According to Aquino et al. (2018), local tourism plays a strategic role as a mechanism for strengthening collective identity and distributing economic benefits more equitably. This type of tourism typically emphasizes the active involvement of local communities, whether through the provision of attractions, services, or direct interaction with tourists. The authenticity and diversity of traditions are the primary attractions offered, allowing tourists to experience a more personalized experience. This distinguishes local tourism from mass tourism, which generally offers uniform attractions without regard for traditional and social values. Local tourism can create a multi-layered experience, encompassing social, economic, and cultural dimensions within a single activity.

Meanwhile, Yanan et al. (2024) explains that local tourism contributes to maintaining the continuity of traditions while strengthening cultural appreciation. Locally-based tourism facilitates economic activities and maintains the social values inherent in a community. This model contributes to the preservation of cultural heritage and strengthens collective awareness of local identity. Theoretically, local tourism is seen as an alternative form of tourism that prioritizes a balance between economic needs, cultural preservation, and environmental sustainability (Widyastuty and Dwiarta 2021).

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive design, which allows researchers to explore social phenomena in depth through the experiences, perspectives, and interactions of participants. As explained by Cresswell (2017), qualitative research emphasizes the interpretation and understanding of meanings constructed by individuals and communities within particular social contexts. In line with this, the present study seeks to capture the lived experiences and cultural expressions surrounding the Semarak Festival in Jembrana Regency.

The research was conducted during the Semarak Festival, located in Jembrana Regency, Bali. The participants consisted of ten informants selected through purposive sampling, based on their relevance and direct involvement in the festival. These informants included two members of the organizing committee, two local artists, two micro-entrepreneurs, two community leaders, and two festival visitors. This number was

considered adequate to obtain comprehensive information consistent with the focus of the study.

Data were collected through three main techniques, namely interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. Semi-structured interviews guided by open-ended questions were used to explore the informants' perspectives, experiences, and interpretations regarding the role of local arts, culture, and tourism in the festival. Participatory observation was carried out by attending various festival events to record activities, social interactions, and artistic performances. These observations were conducted systematically to provide a holistic understanding of the event's dynamics. In addition, documentation such as; archives, photographs, event posters, and relevant notes was analyzed to complement and strengthen the data obtained from interviews and observations.

Data analysis followed the interactive model of (Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña 2019), which involves three interconnected stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction entailed sorting, simplifying, and focusing field information to retain only the most relevant data. The reduced data were then presented in descriptive narratives, tables, and field notes to facilitate understanding. Finally, conclusions were drawn by identifying recurring patterns, relationships, and key themes emerging from the data, which were then interpreted to answer the research focus.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, data triangulation techniques were employed. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from different informants to check consistency. Method triangulation involved integrating interview, observation, and documentation results to enhance credibility. Meanwhile, data triangulation was implemented by verifying field findings with related literature and secondary sources. In addition, member checking was performed by confirming interview summaries with the respective informants to ensure the accuracy and authenticity of the data collected.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Research Result

a. Description of Research Results

Qualitative interviews were conducted with ten informants selected based on their involvement in the festival. The informants included organizers, artists, small businesses, community leaders, and visitors. The information obtained provided a diverse picture of the meaning, experiences, and impact of the Semarak Kota Negara Festival, as outlined in the following table.

Table 1. Summary of Informant Interview Results

Initials	Background	Main View	Impact Felt
BG	Committee	Festivals are a means of strengthening togetherness among residents	Increasing social solidarity
AM	Artist	Jegog performances and traditional dances strengthen cultural identity	Local art is better known to the younger generation
SR	MSMEs	Bazaars provide opportunities to promote local products	Sales turnover increases
DS	Public figure	The festival fosters a sense of pride in ancestral heritage.	Maintaining the preservation of traditions
LN	Traveler	A unique event with an authentic local feel	Different tourism experience compared to other areas

RK	Committee	The 130th anniversary gives historical significance to the festival	Strengthening the historical value of the City of Negara
YM	Artist	The combination of traditional and modern art creates a new attraction.	Local art is more flexible to be performed
FT	MSMEs	Festival participation helps business networks grow	Open opportunities for trade cooperation
WD	Public figure	Festivals become educational spaces for the younger generation	Children are more familiar with regional culture
HM	Traveler	Festivals are a reason to visit Jembrana	Increasing interest in returning to travel

Source: Researchers (2025)

Based on Table 1, the Semarak Festival is seen as a space for togetherness that provides social and historical significance for the people of Jembrana. Committee informants, such as BG and RK, emphasized that this event unites residents and provides special significance in commemorating the 130th anniversary of Kota Negara. For them, the festival's success demonstrates how a cultural activity can strengthen solidarity while preserving collective memory of the city's history. BG (Interview, 2025) expressed this sentiment, stating that *“we strive to ensure that all levels of society feel involved, because this festival belongs to everyone”*. This statement reflects the committee’s commitment to inclusivity and their view of the festival as a unifying social event that transcends community boundaries.

From the perspective of artists, AM and YM see the festival as a crucial platform for preserving and developing cultural works. Jegog performances, traditional dances, and artistic innovations combined with modern elements demonstrate that local culture remains relevant to current developments. The impact they feel is an increased appreciation of local arts among the younger generation, as well as the opening of opportunities for exploration, allowing regional arts to be performed more widely. As AM (Interview, 2025) noted, *“every year we come up with a new spirit so that the younger generation remains interested in Jegog,”* emphasizing the artists’ adaptive creativity in maintaining cultural continuity.

MSMEs and tourists also provided valuable perspectives. SR and FT considered the festival an effective way to expand their business networks and increase revenue through a local product bazaar. Meanwhile, LN and HM, as tourists, stated that the uniqueness of the event was the main reason they came and planned to return to Jembrana. DS and WD, as community leaders, emphasized the festival's educational value, especially for the younger generation, who are becoming more familiar with local traditions. As SR emphasized, sales of MSME products increased because many tourists were interested in trying local products. LN also added that he came to experience the traditions and found the event much more interesting than he had initially imagined.

b. Representation of Local Arts, Culture and Tourism in Commemoration of 130th Anniversary of Negara City

The Semarak Festival celebrations showcase local arts, culture, and tourism, reflecting the distinctive identity of Jembrana Regency. Various attractions, exhibitions, and creative economic activities are a key part of the event. Interviews with informants revealed that the festival is seen as a means of strengthening cultural values, promoting tourism, and empowering the community.

Table 2. Representation of Local Arts, Culture and Tourism in the Semarak Festival

No.	Main Aspects	Description of Findings
1.	Traditional Arts	The Jegog performance, a traditional Jembrana dance, and local performing arts are the main attractions.
2.	Artistic Innovation	The collaboration between traditional and modern arts creates a new nuance in the festival.
3.	Cultural Exhibition	Exhibitions of crafts, artifacts and local products showcase the region's overall identity.
4.	Empowerment of MSMEs	Culinary and creative product bazaars open up market opportunities for local entrepreneurs.
5.	Historical Value	The 130th anniversary of Kota Negara is associated with strengthening the region's cultural and historical identity.
6.	Educating the Younger Generation	Festivals are a means of cultural learning for children and teenagers.
7.	Destination Image	The festival strengthens Jembrana's identity as an arts and culture-based tourist destination.
8.	Travel Experience	Tourists experience authentic experiences that encourage repeat visits.

Source: Researchers (2025)

Based on Table 2, this festival features traditional arts as a core element representing Jembrana's identity. Jegog performances and traditional dances consistently represent regional culture. Furthermore, artistic innovations combine tradition with modern touches, allowing the festival to showcase cultural heritage while also creating a new atmosphere that attracts visitors from various backgrounds.

Another prominent aspect is the role of cultural exhibitions and local economic empowerment. Through exhibitions of crafts, artifacts, and traditional products, regional identity can be comprehensively showcased to the wider community. At the same time, the involvement of MSMEs in culinary and creative product bazaars provides opportunities for businesses to expand their markets. This makes festivals a powerful medium for connecting arts and culture with community economic empowerment.

From a tourism perspective, the festival showcases historical value relevant to the 130th anniversary of Kota Negara. This momentum adds to the festival's significance by linking arts and culture to the region's history. Furthermore, it includes an educational dimension aimed at the younger generation, enabling them to understand and appreciate cultural heritage. Ultimately, the festival contributes to shaping Jembrana's image as an arts-based tourism destination, while providing an authentic experience for visitors.

4.2 Discussion

a. Semarak Festival as a Representation of Arts and Culture

The Semarak Festival in Jembrana can be understood as a cultural celebration that has a dual function, namely as a means of public entertainment and a medium for representing traditional art. Getz & Page (2015) highlighted that festivals play a crucial role in strengthening a region's identity and serving as a vehicle for cross-cultural communication. The presence of attractions such as Jegog, traditional dance, and Makepung at the Semarak Festival demonstrates how cultural symbols are preserved through collective celebration. Jembrana's identity as a region with a rich and distinctive traditional arts heritage is reinforced through performances attended

by local residents and tourists, enabling the festival to serve as a vibrant cultural showcase in the public space.

The aspect of cultural heritage is also clearly visible in the organization of this festival. This is in line with the findings, Quinn (2025) stated that festivals are a medium for transmitting values, norms, and cultural symbols from older generations to younger ones. This phenomenon is reflected in the Semarak Festival, where children and teenagers participate as both performers and spectators. Through direct participation, the younger generation gains learning experiences about traditional arts that may be difficult to find in everyday life. This process demonstrates that festivals serve as a bridge, maintaining the continuity of traditions from the past to the future.

Besides being a means of inheritance, the festival also shows the unique character of Jembrana. Gómez-Ullate & Saraiva (2024) also explained that festivals can showcase local uniqueness while strengthening the differentiation of a tourist destination. In this case, Jegog and Makepung are not merely entertainment attractions, but symbols of identity that distinguish Jembrana from other areas in Bali. When these distinctive arts are performed on the festival stage, their authentic values leave a lasting impression on audiences and tourists alike, while also affirming Jembrana's place on the Balinese cultural map.

Community participation is a vital element that strengthens the representational function of arts and culture. This finding is consistent with the study of Murtono et al. (2025), who emphasized that the success of a festival is greatly influenced by community involvement as key actors. The Semarak Festival demonstrates this through the active participation of artists, MSMEs, cultural communities, and community groups. Their role extends beyond spectators to driving forces, maintaining the continuity of traditions. This kind of participation demonstrates a sense of collective ownership, making the festival a truly representative event for the Jembrana community.

Another unique feature of the Semarak Festival is the promotion of traditional Makepung sports as a cultural attraction. Similarly, Murtono et al. (2024) highlighted that Makepung is more than just a buffalo race, but a tradition steeped in the values of sportsmanship, solidarity, and togetherness of an agrarian community. By placing Makepung as part of the festival, organizers are creating a space for this tradition to remain familiar to the younger generation and tourists. Makepung's presence at the festival demonstrates that cultural arts represent more than just dance or music performances, but also expressions of community life embodied in sporting traditions.

Festivals are also a vital space for artistic innovation. According to Utama & Murtono (2024), Jegog has great potential for development through creative collaborations with modern music. At the Semarak Festival, this effort was evident through performances that combined traditional musical instruments with new performance styles. This form of innovation demonstrates that arts and culture can evolve with changing times without losing their traditional roots. Therefore, the festival serves both as a preservation and a creative space that maintains the relevance of Jembrana's arts and culture.

The representation of arts and culture through the Semarak Festival demonstrates how local heritage is preserved, cultural values are passed on, and innovation is developed. Its existence demonstrates the theory of cultural representation and cultural performance in practice, where local arts and traditions are promoted in the public sphere, involving all elements of society. This makes the

Semarak Festival a collective medium that reflects the strength of Jembrana's culture while demonstrating the community's active role in preserving regional identity.

b. The Semarak Festival as a Local Tourism Destination in Commemoration of the 130th Anniversary of Negara City

The Semarak Festival can also be seen as an instrument for strengthening local culture-based tourism. This is in line with findings of Yanan et al. (2024), who explained that local tourism emphasizes authenticity, sustainability, and community participation. The Semarak Festival showcases all of these dimensions through community involvement, preservation of traditions, and support for the creative economy. Festival activities, integrated with local life, provide an authentic experience for tourists, making this celebration an effective way to promote Jembrana as a unique tourist destination.

The aspect of authenticity in cultural tourism is given primary emphasis through the Semarak Festival. Aquino et al. (2018) stated that authentic traditions are the main attraction of culture-based tourism. At this festival, tourists have the opportunity to witness Jegog art, dance performances, and Makepung, a symbol of Jembrana. Furthermore, exhibitions of local handicrafts and culinary delights reinforce the impression that the festival truly represents the region's identity. Through these firsthand experiences, tourists gain a deeper understanding of Jembrana's unique character.

Ivona (2021) emphasized that local tourism plays a role in preserving traditions and strengthening public awareness. The Semarak Festival demonstrates this by presenting a series of events that connect art, culture, and regional history. The 130th anniversary of Kota Negara provides a historical dimension that adds to the festival's significance. This celebration is not merely entertainment, but also a platform to celebrate the region's long history, providing a unique experience for both residents and tourists.

Event tourism theory, explained by Getz & Page (2015) that festivals can build a destination's image while simultaneously distributing economic benefits to the community. The Semarak Festival demonstrates this by opening significant opportunities for MSMEs through bazaars and local product exhibitions. Tourists come not only to enjoy cultural attractions but also to consume products that represent local character. Therefore, festivals provide direct economic benefits that are felt by the community.

Meanwhile, Murtono et al. (2024) explained that this demonstrates that holding cultural events can have a positive impact on the local economy. A similar phenomenon was seen at the Semarak Festival, where MSMEs' turnover increased due to high demand for local products from tourists. Furthermore, the festival created new job opportunities in supporting sectors such as transportation, accommodation, and other tourism services. This demonstrates how culture-based tourism contributes to strengthening the creative economy in the region.

The Semarak Festival also demonstrates the close relationship between history and tourism. The 130th anniversary of Kota Negara provides a historical narrative that enriches the tourist experience. This aligns with the findings of Quinn (2025), who stated that heritage-based tourism can provide added value for visitors by combining entertainment with historical knowledge. At this festival, visitors not only enjoy the

artistic performances but also understand the historical significance behind the celebration.

The Semarak Festival showcases the dimensions of local tourism, encompassing cultural authenticity, sustainable activities, and community engagement. Drawing on theories of sustainable tourism, heritage tourism, and event tourism, the festival serves as a platform to strengthen Jembrana's image as an arts-based tourism destination. The festival's combination of art, the creative economy, and historical values demonstrates how collective celebrations can serve as meaningful tourism instruments for both the community and tourists.

5. CONCLUSION

The Jembrana Regency Festival, commemorating the 130th anniversary of Negara City, represents local arts and culture and serves as an instrument for community-based tourism development. Jegog and Makepung performances, traditional dances, craft exhibitions, and a bazaar showcasing the diversity of cultural expressions that are preserved and developing. The festival provides a platform for preserving traditions, passing on values to the younger generation, fostering artistic innovation, and enhancing the destination's image. Furthermore, the festival contributes to the local tourism sector through promotion, increasing MSME revenue, and strengthening Jembrana's identity as a destination based on arts, culture, and history.

Future Semarak Festival initiatives can focus on strengthening management quality, expanding promotional networks, and enhancing the role of the community as key actors. A collaborative approach between local governments, cultural communities, businesses, and academics can enrich the festival's content and strengthen its sustainability. Furthermore, the integration of education, cultural preservation, and community economic empowerment can be maintained to further strengthen Jembrana's position as a region with a strong identity and a sustainable tourist attraction.

Future research could expand the scope by using a quantitative or mixed methods approach to more comprehensively measure the economic, social, and cultural impacts of the Semarak Festival. A more comprehensive study of international tourist perceptions, destination branding strategies, and the effectiveness of collaboration between stakeholders could also be a focus of this research. A comparative approach with similar festivals in other regions would provide a broader picture of the Semarak Festival's strategic position in the development of culture-based tourism in Indonesia.

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