

Spotlight on Festival Travelers: Profiles, Motivations, and Experiences of Dieng Culture Festival Travellers, Indonesia

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Abstract

This study aims to identify the memorable experiences of visitors related to tourist attractions at the Dieng Culture Festival. The research was conducted using a mixed quantitative-interpretative approach. The sample consisted of 398 respondents and five key informants. The data were collected through online surveys and in-depth interviews with key informants. The research results include the following: The respondents were predominantly aged over 20 years, with the majority of respondents citing their visit to the Dieng Culture Festival as being to follow, see, and be directly involved in jazz music performed above the clouds. The most common professional background was that of private employees, with 143 respondents (38%) falling into this category. Most respondents (5.5%) indicated they had followed the event online, while 23.1% were students. 80.5% of respondents indicated that they had learned about the event online. Finally, the gender distribution of visitors revealed that 44.4% of respondents were male, while 55.6% were female. The jazz music program, performed above the clouds, was deemed a memorable event by respondents, as it met visitors' needs.

Keywords: *Dieng Culture, Experience, Festival, Travellers*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi pengalaman yang berkesan pengunjung terkait atraksi wisata pada Dieng Culture Festival. Penelitian dilakukan dengan pendekatan campuran kuantitatif-interpretatif. Sampel sebanyak 398 responden dan 5 informan kunci. Pengumpulan data melalui survei online dan wawancara mendalam terhadap informan kunci. Hasil penelitian diantaranya. Karakteristik Responden berdasarkan usia yang lebih banyak berkunjung di Dieng culture festival yaitu > 20 tahun; Tujuan responden mengunjungi Dieng Culture Festival mayoritas untuk mengikuti, melihat dan terlibat secara langsung pada musik jazz di atas awan memiliki frekuensi jawaban 271 dengan presentase (67,9%); latar belakang profesi mayoritas adalah karyawan swasta sebanyak 143 (38,5 %) responden disusul oleh mahasiswa sebanyak 92 (23,1 %); Mengetahui acara Dieng Culture Festival dari Internet yakni sebanyak 321 (80,5 %) responden; Serta jenis kelamin pengunjung didominasi oleh perempuan, dengan jumlah responden laki-laki sebanyak 177 (44,4 %), sedangkan jumlah responden perempuan sebanyak 222 (55,6 %). Musik jazz di atas awan sebagai program yang berkesan karena merepresentasikan kebutuhan pengunjung.

Kata kunci: *Dieng Culture, Pengalaman, Festival, Wisatawan*

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INTRODUCTION

According to (Richards, 2020), tourist movements have become more generalized and fragmented, leading to changes in the behavior of festival visitors. Tourism experts recommend that cultural festival organizers adapt to festival visitors' changing nature and motivations. Therefore, adjustments are needed to explore cultural attractions through festivals. In this case, tourist movements have become fragmented, no longer following a single pattern or centering on one direction or destination. Instead, they are spread across different destinations or activities. According to (Annevelin Naibaho et al., 2023), this shift has transformed tourism from a somewhat elite position to a more authentic 'local' experience. Similarly, (Richards, 2018) argues that cultural tourism involves visiting cultural heritage sites, engaging with local communities, and seeking unique and creative experiences. In general, (UNWTO, 2019) highlights cultural tourism as a type of tourism activity where the primary motivation of visitors is to learn, discover, experience, and consume tangible and intangible cultural attractions/products in a tourist destination. Therefore, creating cultural attractions through festivals or events must be related to everyday life practices, including daily habits and rituals.

Segmentation and typology in cultural tourism are transforming due to global changes. The types of activities, personal characteristics of tourists (such as gender, age, tenure, and lifestyle), and the depth and type of experience also play a significant role. The motivation to visit cultural festivals is not only driven by learning needs but also influenced by dimensions of entertainment, relaxation, novelty, and refreshment, according to (Douglas et al., 2024). It is important to note that this information is presented objectively and without bias. (Ardelean & Badulescu, 2022) I propose that individuals and groups be motivated to seek diverse experiences, particularly in visual arts, entertainment, architecture, culinary arts, and handicrafts. Additionally, cultural festivals have become an increasingly popular form of tourism, offering a wide range of activities. Cultural festivals feature events such as theatre, musicals, and operas that differ from the local culture (Hilmiyatun et al., 2022). (Pulido-Fernández et al., 2019) describe two types of cultural festivals: those that combine special and general interests (rural, natural, and cultural) and those that focus on the ecological environment. (Cheng et al., 2022) argue that cultural festivals can contribute to environmental ecology by internalizing cognitive, emotional, and cultural experiences that shape visitors' environmentally responsible behavior.

Regarding cultural festivals, travelers' preferences, interests, and experiences can be influenced by gender, age, and lifestyle factors. (Montgomery & Robinson, 2010) noted a decrease in male attendance and an increase in female attendance at art and music performances. Additionally, (Akbar, 2022; Harmer & Rogerson, 2017) found that young people seek more creative and experiential forms of culture in unfamiliar areas. According to (Kurniawan, 2023; Roque and Guerreiro 2021 and Zoya and Chitrao, 2021), Generation Z spends their free time visiting local festivals to create content for social media. (Siryayasa et al., 2024) Argue that unique tourist attractions are Gen Z's preferred target for social media posts.

Travelers are influenced by the 'depth' and 'type' of experience when choosing tourist destinations and activities and the type of tourism festival or performance (Kruger et al., 2019). The tourist experience is formed by the destination's character and intention, resulting in an emotional experience (Yang et al., 2020). In the digital era, the quality of travel services, including accessibility, accommodation, and information, determines the

tourist experience. (Taecharunroj, 2022) Suggests that indicators of accessibility services, such as tickets, directions, communication, architecture, networks, performance, security, crowds, connectivity, and traffic, impact the tourist experience. (Teoh et al., 2023) suggest that digital-based services are necessary to enhance the travel experience, a significant consideration for travelers.

The challenge faced by many destinations is to establish a distinctive identity to remain competitive. (Kah et al., 2022; Siryayasa et al., 2022) Suggests that creating a destination identity can be achieved by offering memorable tourism experiences to visitors. Such experiences can be provided through music festivals, art performances, and concerts. Similarly, (Skandalis et al., 2024) argue that memorable tourism experiences are created by engaging tourists with existing regional features to create a panorama of spatial authenticity. The ultimate goal of creating a festival experience is to increase future tourist visits. This statement aligns with the findings of (Richards and King, 2022), which suggest that incorporating regional features into festival packaging leads to higher tourist satisfaction. This, in turn, increases the likelihood of repeat visits and can even encourage tourists to promote the festival. Therefore, developing festivals based on spatial features in destination areas can enhance the image of tourist areas.

Dieng Culture Festival is a tourism festival event featuring cultural attractions in the Dieng plateau, Central Java, Indonesia. The Dieng Culture Festival is essential for cultural understanding and sustainable tourism development. This latter objective has the potential to have a positive impact on local communities and tourists alike. The festival attracts local and foreign tourists (Haryanto et al., 2023; Rosilawati et al., 2021). Its primary purpose is to introduce the cultural diversity of Indonesia through tourism-themed activities. According to (Harmawati et al., 2016; and Kusumastuti and Priliantini, 2017), the Dieng Culture Festival communicates Javanese culture by integrating the unique local wisdom of the Dieng community. Meanwhile, the promotion strategy utilizes the area's characteristics for place branding. (Destiani & Pamungkas, 2021) Revealed that the Dieng plateau area in Banjarnegara was chosen as a place branding strategy through the Dieng Culture Festival event. The Dieng Culture Festival encourages cultural understanding and sustainable tourism development and promotes Javanese culture through tourism-themed activities, enhancing local communities and attracting local and foreign tourists.

The Dieng Culture Festival faces challenges in terms of the sustainability of tourism. It was not held in 2023 and was not held in 2024. The annual Dieng Culture Festival in 2023 was not held due to a national strategic project (PSN) on the arrangement of the Dieng area (Adhik Kurniawan, 2023). While in 2024, it was confirmed that the Dieng Culture Festival would be included in the Central Java Calendar of Events 2024 (Solopos, 2024). In addition, the challenges faced, according to (Haryanto et al., 2023), are that aspects of sustainable tourism have not met environmental aspects. (Puspita et al., 2021) Specifically stated that problems at the Dieng Culture Festival, such as garbage, inadequate support facilities (toilets) on open trips, and the indiscipline of tourists who do not follow the rules of the committee so that the rules interfere with the comfort of visitors. (Mandalia, 2023) As an industry, sustainable tourism emphasizes the balance between environmental protection, community involvement, and visitor experiences packaged into tourism products.

This research investigates the experiences of respondents who attended the Dieng Culture Festival. The study explores visitors' profiles, motivations, and experiences and

examines the relationship between authenticity and tourist experience. As a tourism phenomenon, the Dieng Culture Festival was selected for this purpose. The study contributes to the existing literature by providing further insights into experiential approaches to cultural festival-based tourism. The study's findings support the development of a tourism resilience strategy for the Dieng Culture Festival, positioning it as a sustainable destination for future events. Creative strategies are necessary to create memorable experiences and ensure tourism resilience in the post-pandemic era (Nair & Sinha, 2020).

RESEARCH METHOD

The research followed a quantitative-interpretive approach and collected data from informal interactions with participants of the Dieng Culture Festival. Data was collected through field notes, photographs, video recordings, and interviews (Lexy J, 2019). The research was conducted in two stages. Stage I was conducted in 2022 through an online survey via WhatsApp and email, with addresses obtained from the organizer. The study surveyed 398 respondents and collected quantitative data on respondent profiles and motivation to visit the Dieng Culture Festival. Stage I was conducted between January and March 2024; five informants who had visited the festival in the last five years were interviewed individually in Bandung City, Central Java. The interviews ranged from 10 to 45 minutes and provided more in-depth information. Data was collected through interviews with participants of the Dieng Culture Festival (2021-2022) to enrich the information in this study. The focus of the questions was to achieve saturation of information (Lexy et al., 2019)) about the most memorable types of attractions at the festival. Definitions or Limitations in this study on Changes in Visitor Motivation and Visitor Memorable Experiences Related to Tourist Attractions.

The off-site interviews started with general questions about the Dieng Culture Festival (Fox et al., 2010). The researcher used a semi-structured interview style (Lexy J, 2019) to elaborate on the informants' experiences of the festival and their interest in cultural festivals in general. The researcher followed up on specific questions to better understand the research focus on the most memorable types of attractions at the Dieng Culture Festival.

The data analysis used an interpretive process (Lexy J, 2019). The online survey was analyzed using frequency analysis for categorical variables. This gives an idea of how often specific categories appear in the sample. This involved comparing the data with relevant literature, coding the material separately, taking notes, and going back and forth between the emerging data and relevant literature. To maintain the accuracy of the findings (James et al., 2006), the validity of the data underwent six steps: initial interpretation, identification of initial themes, review of thematic categories, defining and naming emerging themes, and finally, the creation of an analytical narrative as research findings. The online survey results were subjected to statistical analysis to identify trends in the data. The interview data was analyzed by cross-referencing the generated quotes to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. Finally, the findings were presented in the context of existing theories.

Table 1 Types of Attractions at Dieng Culture Festival (2021-2022) based on Tourism Resources

No	Types of Attractions	Tourism Resource Classification
1	Ruwatan, a procession of dreadlock cutting	Cultural
2	Jazz Music Above the Clouds	Cultural
3	Lantern festival and fireworks	Cultural
4	SME product exhibition	Creative Economy/ Cultural
5	The Cultural Kirab	Cultural
6	Research	Cultural
7	Traditional Art	Cultural
8	Panoramic	Landscapes
9	Plateau/Weather	Landscapes
10	Ecotourism/Farmer	Cultural and Landscapes

Sumber: *Type of Attraction, Researcher, 2024: Tourism Resource Classification* (LIU et al., 2022; Yangutova et al., 2022)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An overview of the profile of respondents who visited the Dieng Culture Festival was obtained through an online survey conducted via email and WhatsApp. Respondent profiles are commonly used in quantitative research to provide a demographic, social, and contextual overview of individuals or groups who are the subject of research. The respondents' profiles in this study include information on age, gender, education, occupation, cultural background, and other life experiences relevant to the research topic. To improve research on cultural tourism, such as festival performances, (Chen & Huang, 2018; Huang, 2022) suggested conducting segmentation and typology studies. (Chang et al., 2022) found that the main factors affecting customer satisfaction at a tourism festival are service attributes and performance quality as perceived by tourists. Table 2 presents the respondent profiles.

Table 2 shows profile information, including age, occupation, source of information, purpose, and gender. Of the respondents, 44.1% were over 20 years old, 34.1% were between 26 and 30 years old, 13.8% were between 31 and 37 years old, 6.5% were between 45 and 51 years old, and less than 1% were over 51 years old. The data shows that visitors to the Dieng culture festival are mostly over 20 years old. Table 2 indicates that 271 respondents (67.9%) attended the festival for the jazz music above the clouds. Most participants were private employees (38.5%), followed by students (23.1%). Based on Table 2, 80.5% of the respondents learned about the Dieng Culture Festival through the Internet. Additionally, the data shows that 44.4% of the respondents were male and 55.6% were female, indicating that most visitors were women.

Table 2. Profile of Respondents Who Visited the Dieng Culture Festival (2021-2022)

Age	Percentages	Purpose	Percentages
>20	44,1	Cultural Kirab	4,3
26-30	34,1	Lanterns	17,8
31-37	13,8	Jazz Music above the Clouds	67,9
38-44	0,8	Research	0,8
45-52	6,5	Join a Friend	7,8

>51	0,5	Traditional Dreadlocks Shaving ritual	1,6
Total	100	Total	100
Professions		Information Source	Percentages
Culturist	0,8	The Internet	80,5
Private sector employee	35,8	Event Calendar	1,5
Student	23,1	The Family	2,3
Bank Employees	0,3	Teman A friend	15,8
Civil Servants	15	Total	100
Researcher	1	Gender	Percentages
Self-employed	20,3	Male	44,5
Others (housewife, trader, committee)	3,9	Female	55,6
Total	100	Total	100

Source: Processed data, 2024

During in-depth interviews with five respondents, the researcher focused on the 'depth' and 'type' of experience when visiting the Dieng Culture Festival. The interviews revealed several dominant themes. The researcher asked the informants to recall the festival and then inquired about the most memorable and enjoyable sequences. The author asked the informants about their reasons for attending the Dieng Culture Festival and how they obtained information about the event using the direct elicitation method. The question 'Why is the performance so important to you?' was asked repeatedly until the informants stopped responding. The laddering inquiry technique can establish connections between the studied attributes (Yeh & Lin, 2017). The interview results confirmed the online survey, showing that most visitors chose Jazz Above the Clouds as the most memorable attraction at the Dieng Culture Festival. When asked the question 'Which one do you think is the most memorable?' regarding the ten programs listed in Table 1, most informants answered in the following table.

Table 3. Results of Interviews with Informants

Informant	Professions	Question Option	Impressions	Labeling	Preliminary Categories
A1	Student	Jazz Music above the Clouds	<i>"It is more energizing in a crowd, like a music concert. The more crowded it is, the happier we are (me)."</i>	In the center of the crowd	Spatial locations
A2		Jazz Music above the Clouds	<i>"It was a band I admired; I pushed forward to get into the front row. I remember that I finally got to sit</i>	Favorite Band	idols

			<i>in the second row. That was so cool.)."</i>		
A3	Entrepreneurs	Jazz Music above the Clouds	<i>Watching a concert in the cold temperatures of the Dieng plateau was a memorable experience</i>	cold temperatures	
A4	Student	Jazz Music above the Clouds	<i>Watching Jazz concerts cheaply with a romantic mountain atmosphere</i>	Jazz concerts cheaply	Atmosphere
A5	Student /Content Creator	Lantern Lighting Release	<i>The release of thousands of lanterns into the Dieng sky creates a distinctive and romantic atmosphere. Very cool...</i>	A romantic atmosphere	

Source: Processed data, 2024

Table 3 shows that some informants' experiences or impressions are related to "Jazz Music above the Clouds" and "Lantern Lighting Release." Four of the five informants were impressed with Jazz Music above the Clouds. This phenomenon is a picture that confirms the experience of participation in the Dieng Culture Festival that influenced the informants' perceptions and emotions. Initial labels and categories have been included to organize and analyze the interview data to answer the research focus. This research aims to identify changes in visitors' motivations for the Dieng Culture Festival, held between 2020 and 2022. Additionally, the study aims to explore visitors' memorable experiences related to the festival's attractions. The research encompasses two main aspects: changes in visitor motivation and visitor experience. It is possible to gain a more profound comprehension of the festival's dynamics by grasping these two aspects. This, in turn, allows for the identification of potential alterations that may be required in the festival's planning and implementation in the future. Furthermore, the insights gained can be of value to tourism and cultural stakeholders, who can use them to enhance the visitor experience and promote the festival's sustainability.

Personality is the element that most influences individual behavior. Visitors to the Dieng Culture Festival enjoy expressing themselves when attending Jazz on Clouds. Music preferences are very personal. Although the Dieng Culture Festival has a cultural purpose, namely the cultural kirab and Traditional Dreadlocks Shaving ritual, the presence of invited bands, such as Group Band Letto (2020), Denny Caknan, Budi Doremi, Andien, Marcel Souljah (in 2022) confirms that festival visitors are impressed and motivated to watch the

performance of their favorite bands, tourists tend to fully invest emotionally. As informant A1 said:

"It is more energizing in a crowd, like a music concert. The more crowded it is, the happier we are (me).", as well as informant A2: "It was a band I admired; I pushed forward to get into the front row. I remember I finally got to sit in the second row. That was so cool.)"

Other informants support the favorite band expressed by A1, so it is confirmed that seeing a favorite band is factor no. 1. As revealed by informant A2:

"Being surrounded by a lively crowd, akin to the atmosphere of a music concert, brings a surge of energy. The greater the crowd, the greater the joy it brings. I vividly recall eagerly maneuvering to the front row to catch my favorite band's performance. Finally, securing a seat in the second row was an exhilarating experience."

The second individual factor is Dieng Plateau's environmental atmosphere. The informants were more impressed with the "cold and fresh atmosphere," as informant A3 said,

"Watching a concert in the cold temperatures of the Dieng plateau, a memorable experience."

Watching a concert in the chilly temperatures of Dieng Plateau is an unforgettable experience for visitors. The cold and fresh atmosphere adds to the event's uniqueness, creating enchanting memories for visitors. The analysis results are expected to align with the domicile of the respondents who filled out the questionnaire; the majority are from Jakarta, and out of 398 informants, 130 (32.7%) are domiciled in DKI Jakarta. The hot atmosphere of Jakarta causes people to want to enjoy leisure time by traveling to destinations that provide a relaxed and cold atmosphere; The Dieng Plateau is one of the choices. In addition, there is also an impression from informant A5:

"The release of thousands of lanterns into the Dieng sky creates a distinctive and romantic atmosphere. Very cool"

The informant chose the "Lantern Lighting Release" show for its romantic atmosphere.

Preferences for the Jazz Above the Clouds festival are essential in the Dieng Plateau. The natural atmosphere and interaction between visitors are critical factors according to the deepening of information from visitors. Music festivals are service attributes and performance quality perceived by tourists (Chang et al., 2022). Music festival organizers at the Dieng Culture Festival have strategic directions for the organizing committee in the future. (Skvortsova, 2020) suggest making innovations such as music band brand services that are hits in the community.

There is a growing reference to the Dieng Culture Festival. A review of the historical development of the festival reveals that it was initiated by local wisdom through the ritual of cutting dreadlocks, which served as the main attraction. However, the results of interviews with informants indicate that the primary motivation for attending the Dieng Culture Festival is to enjoy a jazz concert. The atmosphere of a concert held in the highlands presenting an idol artist holds particular significance for informants. This finding

is consistent with an online survey of 388 visitors, which revealed that 67.9% of respondents selected the option to attend a jazz concert.

In addition to musical performances, the most popular activity for attendees at the Dieng Culture Festival is the Lantern Release; visitors tend to listen to jazz music above the clouds and lanterns as a consideration in the Dieng Culture Festival. Previous research states that the identity of the Dieng Culture Festival was initiated by the tradition of cutting dreadlocks on children in the Dieng Plateau. However, research findings conducted through online surveys and in-depth interviews prove that most visitors are impressed with the Jazz Music Festival, Lanterns, and the natural atmosphere on the Dieng Plateau. In this context (Ramineni et al., 2023) stated the need to revitalize cultural tourism through the placement approach in terms of spatial analysis of ritual landscapes and visitor paths, mapping the activities of residents and tourists. The active role of local BUMDes (Village Enterprise) is revitalizing the area, especially in conducting inventory and planning for revitalizing cultural tourism areas (Muhamad et al., 2022; Widjaja et al., 2021). Cultural festivals are essentially aimed at exploring and clarifying the role of local traditions through tourism to foster national identity (Deng et al., 2023). Dieng Culture Festival must consider digital innovation an authentic Dieng Cultural Festival, especially in the cultural and traditional Dreadlocks Shaving ritual procession. (Salvador & Pedersen, 2022) The digital revolution, new audience development, and educational agenda are crucial to valuing local cultural traditions, heritage, and social well-being.

In this context, the main program at the Dieng Culture Festival is the digital and technological configuration of Ruwatan, which involves the Traditional Dreadlocks Shaving ritual. It is important to note that Ruwatan is considered a sacred tradition (Ayu et al., 2019). Technology plays a significant role in tourism, particularly in managing large events and festivals. According to (Osman, 2022), it offers various benefits to the event industry, such as facilitating event promotion and management. (Tamitiadini et al., 2021) Discuss the maintenance of destination branding activities to preserve the sacredness of a location, including physical entities such as areas, buildings, locations, and artifacts, both tangible and intangible. The authors emphasize the importance of maintaining the sacredness of the Ruwatan through the Traditional Dreadlocks Shaving ritual at the Dieng Culture Festival.

The implications of this phenomenon underscore the necessity to highlight the role of cultural festivals as platforms for cultural understanding and as catalysts for sustainable tourism development, particularly when aligned with evolving visitor preferences. With the movement of tourists becoming increasingly fragmented, festivals must offer diverse and authentic experiences that align with the interests and desires of the modern traveler. This necessitates a shift towards creating cultural attractions integrated into daily life practices and rituals, enhancing the overall visitor experience.

This research focuses solely on visitor experience and motivation. However, (Aguado et al., 2021) suggest that Further research is needed to identify factors related to the local context that influence the valuation of festivals. Such research could contribute to creating income and employment for the venue, as well as cultural enrichment and enjoyment of the festival plan. Additionally, it is necessary to research the development of the Ruwatan procession to cut dreadlocks in line with global tourism industry trends.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examined visitors' profiles, motivations, and experiences at the Dieng Culture Festival from 2020 to 2022. Table 2 lists the visitor profiles, while Table 3 describes the motivations and experiences of visitors and the results of informant interviews. The research employed a quantitative-interpretive approach and included 398 respondents as a population sample and five key informants who had attended the festival. Data was collected through online surveys using participant emails and in-depth interviews with key informants. The research results reveal visitor profile information, including age, occupation, source of information, purpose, and gender. Based on the respondents' characteristics, most visitors to the Dieng Culture Festival are over 20 years old. The primary purpose of respondents visiting the festival is to experience and participate in jazz music on the clouds, with a frequency of 271 and a percentage of 67%. It is important to note that these findings are objective and based solely on the data collected. Of the total respondents, 37.4% were government employees, 38.5% were private employees, and 23.1% were students. Most respondents (80.5%) found out about the Dieng Culture Festival event online. Regarding gender, female visitors (55.6%) outnumbered male visitors (44.4%). While the following finding is related to visitor motivation and experience, the results of in-depth interviews indicate that Jazz music played above the clouds is a memorable program because it caters to visitors' needs. The procession of the Ruwatan Traditional Dreadlocks Shaving ritual needs to be commodified to enhance the impression for visitors and strengthen the image of the Dieng Culture Festival as an agenda for introducing local culture. The role of Village Enterprise, related governments, and event managers is necessary through technological innovation.

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