Sport Tourism Development and Its Socioeconomic Impact in West Lombok Regency, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT:
West Lombok Regency, with its coastal destinations of Sekotong and Senggigi, holds remarkable potential as a sport tourism hub in Indonesia. Yet despite its natural richness, empirical evidence on how participants actually experience and evaluate sport tourism in this region remains scarce. This study aims to assess participant perceptions of sport tourism development quality and its perceived socioeconomic impacts on local communities, as well as to examine whether these two dimensions are meaningfully related. Data were collected from 224 respondents who had confirmed direct experience participating in sport tourism activities in West Lombok. A structured questionnaire was used, covering fifteen indicators organized into two areas: the quality of sport tourism development spanning infrastructure, facilities, accommodation, information access, government support, community involvement, safety, and overall satisfaction and the socioeconomic impacts of sport tourism, including its contributions to environmental awareness, public health, local employment, economic opportunity, and cultural preservation.

Findings reveal that participants hold strongly positive views across all aspects of both development and impact. The natural scenic beauty of West Lombok stands out as the destination's most celebrated strength, earning near-universal appreciation among respondents. Participants also broadly agree that sport tourism generates meaningful benefits for local communities, particularly in preserving local culture and fostering environmental stewardship. Notably, a strong relationship was found between development quality and perceived community impact suggesting that improving the sport tourism experience directly translates into greater community benefit. Government support and infrastructure, while still rated positively, emerged as the areas most in need of improvement. This study concludes that West Lombok possesses genuine and significant competitive advantages for sport tourism development, anchored by its exceptional natural environment. To fully realize its potential, the local government is encouraged to prioritize infrastructure development, strengthen community-based planning, establish a regular sport event calendar, and integrate

environmental conservation principles into all tourism activities. These steps will not only enhance the visitor experience but also ensure that sport tourism delivers lasting, inclusive benefits for the people of West Lombok.

Keywords: sport tourism; West Lombok; socioeconomic impact; sustainable tourism; community development.

1. INTRODUCTION

Sport tourism has become one of the most dynamic and rapidly expanding segments of the global tourism industry. Driven by increasing public interest in active lifestyles, growing demand for experiential and adventure-based travel, and the strategic deployment of sporting events as tools for destination branding and economic development, sport tourism now represents a multi-billion-dollar sector with far-reaching implications for host communities worldwide (Gibson, 1998; Weed & Bull, 2012). Unlike conventional leisure tourism, sport tourism actively engages participants in physical activity within destination environments creating distinctive patterns of visitor expenditure, infrastructure demand, and community interaction that generate both economic opportunities and social responsibilities for host regions.

The socioeconomic significance of sport tourism extends well beyond the duration of individual events or visits. Research consistently demonstrates that well-managed sport tourism catalyzes employment creation, stimulates local small and medium enterprises, generates tax revenues, and enhances destination visibility in competitive international tourism markets (Chalip, 2006; Porter Michael, 1990; Taks et al., 2015). At the same time, scholars increasingly recognize that sport tourism's social co-benefits including the promotion of active and healthy lifestyles, environmental stewardship, and cultural preservation are equally consequential dimensions of its community value (Wicker et al., 2012). The challenge for destination managers and policymakers lies in translating this theoretical potential into tangible, equitably distributed outcomes for host communitiesa translation that requires, as its foundation, rigorous empirical evidence on participant perceptions and community impacts.

In Indonesia, sport tourism has been accorded the status of a national development priority. The National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2020–2024 explicitly designates sport tourism as a strategic sector, recognizing its dual capacity to generate economic growth and to position Indonesia's extraordinary natural endowments on the global stage. Landmark events have demonstrated the scale of this potential: the 2018 Asian Games, hosted across Jakarta and Palembang, attracted tens of thousands of international visitors and generated significant economic multiplier effects across both cities. More recently, the 2022 MotoGP Mandalika Circuit in Lombok transformed a previously underserved coastal region into a node of international sporting attention, catalyzing infrastructure investment and hospitality development across the island (Deputi Bidang Produk Wisata dan (Events), 2025). These precedents establish a clear policy trajectory — yet they also underscore the importance of ensuring that sport tourism development benefits extend beyond iconic mega-events to encompass community-level destinations where the everyday practice of sport tourism takes place.

West Lombok Regency (Kabupaten Lombok Barat) represents precisely such a community-level destination of exceptional and underutilized potential. The regency encompasses two internationally recognized tourism corridors Senggigi Beach, a long-established coastal tourism hub, and the Sekotong archipelago, an emerging destination of remarkable marine biodiversity and scenic beauty that together offer a diverse and compelling portfolio of sport tourism experiences. Water sports including surfing, snorkeling, open-water swimming, kayaking, and jet-skiing leverage the regency's extensive and ecologically rich coastline. Trail running and mountain hiking

capitalize on its forested highland terrain. Cycling routes traverse scenic coastal and rural landscapes, while organized competitive events marathons, triathlons, and open-water swimming competitions draw participants from across Indonesia and internationally. This diversity of offerings positions West Lombok not as a single-activity destination but as a multi-sport environment capable of attracting and retaining participants across a broad range of athletic interests and demographic profiles.

Despite this considerable potential, a striking empirical gap persists. Systematic, evidence-based documentation of how sport tourism participants perceive the quality of West Lombok's sport tourism offerings and how they evaluate the socioeconomic impacts of sport tourism on local communities remains largely absent from academic literature. Previous studies addressing Indonesian sport tourism have concentrated primarily on Bali and East Java (Satria & Wibowo, 2022; Sudiana et al., 2024), leaving West Lombok analytically underrepresented. This evidence gap is not merely an academic concern: it directly constrains the capacity of the Lombok Barat Regency Government, provincial tourism authorities (Dinas Pariwisata), and national policymakers to make informed, evidence-driven decisions about infrastructure investment, event programming, community engagement strategy, and environmental management in the region's sport tourism sector.

This study addresses that gap directly. Employing a purposive quantitative survey design, data were collected from confirmed sport tourism participants who had prior direct experience of West Lombok's Sekotong and Senggigi destinations. Restricting the sample to actual participants rather than the general population ensures that all perceptions are grounded in lived experience of the destination, maximizing the validity and practical relevance of findings for destination managers and policymakers. The study examines two core dimensions: the quality of sport tourism development, encompassing infrastructure, facilities, accommodation, natural environment, information access, government support, community participation, safety, and overall visitor satisfaction; and the perceived socioeconomic impacts of sport tourism on local communities, covering nature conservation awareness, health and lifestyle contribution, employment creation, economic opportunity, and cultural preservation. Together, these two dimensions provide the most comprehensive empirical baseline yet assembled for sport tourism assessment in West Lombok a foundation from which actionable, evidence-driven recommendations for sustainable and inclusive sport tourism development can be derived.

Research Objectives

a. To describe the sociodemographic and participation profile of sport tourism participants in West Lombok Regency.

b. To measure participant perceptions of sport tourism development quality across key development dimensions.

c. To assess perceived socioeconomic impacts of sport tourism on local communities.

d. To examine the relationship between sport tourism development quality and perceived socioeconomic impacts.

e. To identify differences in perceptions by gender and age group and discuss their implications for inclusive sport tourism development.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Framework of Sport Tourism

Gibson's (1998) foundational typology classifies sport tourism into active (participation), event (observation), and nostalgia (heritage) forms. West Lombok's offerings span primarily active and event categories, with surfing, snorkeling, trail running, cycling, and marathons as primary activities. Standeven and De Knop (1999) emphasize that the intersection of natural environment and sporting activity constitutes the defining experiential characteristic, a dimension highly relevant to Lombok's ecological richness. Weed and Bull (2012) conceptualize sport tourism as a dynamic interaction of activity, people, and place underscoring that destination quality, both natural

and infrastructural, shapes the overall experience and underpins the study's STD construct.

2.2 Sport Tourism and Community Socioeconomic Development

A well-established body of literature links sport tourism to multi-dimensional community development outcomes (Chalip, 2006; Taks et al., 2015). Economic benefits include employment generation, stimulation of local enterprises, and visitor expenditure multipliers (Porter, 1999) captured in this study through STI03 and STI04. Social co-benefits encompass environmental stewardship (STI01), improved public health (STI02), and cultural preservation (STI05) (Wicker et al., 2013). Bramwell (1997) and Suansri (2003) caution, however, that benefit realization is contingent on institutional capacity and community participation: when development is driven top-down, economic gains tend to concentrate rather than distribute, limiting broader welfare impacts.

2.3 Tourist Perceptions and Destination Competitiveness

Tourist perception research identifies natural environment quality, safety, accommodation, information access, and government support as primary determinants of satisfaction and return intention (Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Chen & Tsai, 2007). Ritchie and Crouch's (2003) Competitive Destination Model identifying natural resources, built infrastructure, destination management, and marketing as co-determinants of competitiveness provides the direct theoretical scaffolding for the STD01–STD10 item structure. The resource-based view (Barney, 1991) further holds that unique, inimitable natural assets constitute durable competitive advantages; for West Lombok, its coastal and marine ecosystems represent precisely such VRIN resources (Valuable, Rare, Inimitable, Non-substitutable).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a descriptive-correlational quantitative design. Data were collected between January 1–19, 2026, using a structured self-administered digital questionnaire targeting sport tourism participants at West Lombok's Sekotong and Senggigi destinations.

3.2 Sampling Strategy and Eligibility Criteria

The target population of this study comprised individuals who had directly participated in sport tourism activities in West Lombok Regency, specifically within the Sekotong and Senggigi tourism corridors. Given the absence of a formal registry or comprehensive database of sport tourism participants in the region a structural limitation common to emerging tourism destinations in Indonesia the population could not be enumerated with precision prior to data collection. The questionnaire was therefore distributed broadly through digital channels, including social media platforms, community sport groups, tourism event networks, and local sport organization communities active in West Lombok, yielding a total of 383 initial responses during the data collection period of January 1–19, 2026.

Of the 383 initial respondents, a participation screening question 'Have you previously participated in sport tourism activities in Kabupaten Lombok Barat (Sekotong or Senggigi)?' identified 224 respondents who confirmed direct prior participation. These 224 respondents constitute the study population from which the analytical sample was drawn and simultaneously serve as the analytical sample itself, as all confirmed participants were retained. The remaining 159 respondents who had not participated in sport tourism in West Lombok were systematically excluded from all analyses to preserve the experiential integrity of the dataset.

A purposive sampling approach was deliberately adopted as the overarching sampling strategy, consistent with studies in which the research objective demands that respondents possess specific, verifiable experiential knowledge relevant to the phenomenon under investigation (Patton, 2002). In this context, purposive sampling ensures that all perception data regarding development quality, socioeconomic impact, safety, infrastructure, and community contribution are grounded in direct, lived engagement with West Lombok's sport tourism environment, rather than hypothetical evaluation or secondhand impression. This design choice enhances ecological validity and

practical relevance of findings for destination management and policy (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Patton, 2002). The resulting sample of n = 224 satisfies the minimum threshold recommended for descriptive-correlational quantitative research (Hair et al., 2019) and is consistent in scale with purposive samples employed in comparable sport tourism perception studies (Gibson et al., 2003; Popa et al., 2015).

3.3 Instrument and Variable Operationalization

The questionnaire comprised: (1) eligibility screening; (2) sociodemographic items; (3) 15 Likert-scale items (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree); and (4) three open-ended qualitative items. Likert items were organized into two constructs with standardized item codes:

a. Sport Tourism Development (STD01–STD10): Infrastructure quality (STD01), sports facility adequacy (STD02), accommodation standards (STD03), natural scenic beauty (STD04), information accessibility (STD05), government support (STD06), community participation (STD07), safety and comfort (STD08), economic impact awareness (STD09), and overall satisfaction (STD10).

b. Sport Tourism Impact (STI01–STI05): Nature conservation awareness (STI01), health and lifestyle contribution (STI02), local employment creation (STI03), economic opportunity for local businesses (STI04), and cultural preservation (STI05).

3.4 Reliability and Validity

Internal consistency was assessed via Cronbach's alpha: STD $\alpha = 0.897$ and STI $\alpha = 0.915$, both exceeding Nunnally's (1978) threshold of $\alpha \geq 0.70$, confirming excellent reliability. Content validity was established through expert panel review prior to data collection.

3.5 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, minimum, maximum) were computed for all items and composite scores. Pearson's product-moment correlation assessed the STD–STI relationship. An independent samples t-test examined gender differences in STD scores. All analyses used Python 3.12 (pandas, numpy, scipy). Statistical significance: $\alpha = 0.05$.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Respondent Profile

Table 1 presents the profile of the 224 purposive respondents. The sample was predominantly male (85.3%, n = 191), consistent with the demographic profile of active sport tourism participants in the region. The under-20 cohort dominated (60.7%, n = 136), followed by the 21–30 group (33.9%, n = 76). Educational attainment was distributed across SMA graduates (57.6%) and diploma/bachelor holders (40.6%). Nearly half participated occasionally (47.8%), while 35.7% were first-time visitors and 16.5% were frequent participants. Water sports was the primary activity reported (32.6%), followed by other/combined activities (37.5%), cycling (10.7%), trail running (10.3%), and competitive events (8.9%).

Table 1. Sociodemographic and Participation Profile of Respondents (n = 224)

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	191	85.3%
	Female	33	14.7%
Age	< 20 years	136	60.7%
	21–30 years	76	33.9%
	31–40 years	3	1.3%
	41–50 years	6	3.0%
	> 50 years	3	1.3%

Education	Senior High School (SMA)	129	57.6%
	Diploma / Bachelor's (S1)	91	40.6%
	Postgraduate (S2+)	4	1.8%
Visit Frequency	First time	80	35.7%
	Occasional	107	47.8%
	Frequent	37	16.5%
Primary Activity	Water sports (surfing, snorkeling, etc.)	73	32.6%
	Cycling	24	10.7%
	Trail running / Hiking	23	10.3%
	Competitive events (marathon, triathlon)	20	8.9%
	Other / Combined activities	84	37.5%

Note. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. 'Other/Combined' includes multiple activities and unspecified recreational sports.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics: STD01–STD10 and STI01–STI05

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics for all 15 indicators. Within the STD construct, item means ranged from 4.145 (STD06: Government support) to 4.378 (STD04: Natural scenic beauty), with a composite mean of 4.211 (SD = 0.303). STD04 recorded the highest score across both constructs and the entire instrument, with a minimum value of 4 — no respondent rated natural beauty below 'Agree.' This near-universal consensus empirically confirms Lombok's ecological assets as its primary competitive resource (Barney, 1991; Ritchie & Crouch, 2003). Government support (STD06; M = 4.145) and infrastructure (STD01; M = 4.152) registered the lowest STD means, signaling areas of relative dissatisfaction consistent with qualitative data identifying road access deficiencies, limited public amenities, and insufficient governmental engagement as primary barriers.

The STI construct demonstrated tight clustering across all five items (range: 4.276–4.309), with a composite mean of 4.287 (SD = 0.398). Cultural preservation (STI05; M = 4.309) and nature conservation awareness (STI01; M = 4.293) led the impact dimension. Employment creation (STI03) and economic opportunity (STI04) were equally rated at M = 4.276, reflecting strong but relatively moderate perceptions of economic benefit — suggesting that the economic impact of sport tourism, while recognized, remains less immediately tangible to participants than cultural and environmental impacts.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics: Sport Tourism Development (STD01–STD10) and Impact (STI01–STI05)

Item	Indicator	n	Mean	SD	Min	Max
	Sport Tourism Development — STD (α = 0.897)		4.211	0.303		
STD01	Infrastructure supports sport tourism activities	223	4.152	0.384	3	5
STD02	Sports facilities are adequate for various events	222	4.162	0.393	2	5
STD03	Accommodation meets tourist expectations	221	4.213	0.421	2	5
STD04	Natural beauty provides unique sport tourism experience	222	4.378	0.486	4	5

STD05	Sport tourism information is easily accessible	222	4.216	0.434	3	5
STD06	Local government provides adequate support	220	4.145	0.378	2	5
STD07	Local community participation contributes positively	222	4.194	0.407	2	5
STD08	Safety and comfort during activities	222	4.225	0.429	2	5
STD09	Positive economic impact on local community	222	4.266	0.443	2	5
STD10	Overall experience meets expectations	222	4.162	0.381	3	5
	Sport Tourism Impact - STI (α = 0.915)		4.287	0.398		
STI01	Increased awareness of nature conservation	222	4.293	0.466	3	5
STI02	Contribution to personal health and lifestyle	221	4.281	0.460	3	5
STI03	Job creation for local community	221	4.276	0.458	3	5
STI04	Economic opportunities for local businesses	221	4.276	0.458	3	5
STI05	Preservation of local culture and traditions	223	4.309	0.473	3	5

Note. Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree. Composite rows report means across respective items. a = Cronbach's alpha.

4.3 Correlation and Inferential Analyses

Table 3 presents the inferential results. The Pearson correlation between STD and STI composites yielded r = 0.738 (p < .001), indicating a strong positive relationship: participants who perceived higher development quality also perceived greater socioeconomic impact. This finding is consistent with Chalip's (2006) leverage framework institutional and infrastructure quality are necessary preconditions for realizing sport tourism's community dividends.

No statistically significant gender difference in STD perceptions was detected (Male: M = 4.223; Female: M = 4.142; t = 1.419, p = .157). The absence of a significant gender effect in this participant-specific sample is noteworthy: when restricted to confirmed participants, the experiential basis for evaluation is more homogeneous across genders. Older age cohorts (41–50 years: M = 4.383; > 50 years: M = 4.333) reported higher STD means than younger groups (< 20 years: M = 4.226; 21–30 years: M = 4.170), suggesting that older participants with greater comparative tourism experience evaluate development conditions more favorably.

Table 3. Pearson Correlation, Independent t-test, and Age Group Comparison Results

Analysis	Group	n	Mean	Statistic	p
Pearson Correlation (STD–STI)	All	224	–	r = 0.738	< .001***
Independent t-test (Gender × STD)	Male	190	4.223	t = 1.419	.157 ns
	Female	33	4.142		
Age group means (STD)	< 20 years	135	4.226	–	–
	21–30 years	76	4.170	–	–
	41–50 years	6	4.383	–	–
	> 50 years	3	4.333	–	–

*Note. ***p < .001; ns = not significant. STD = Sport Tourism Development composite; STI = Sport Tourism Impact composite.*

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Natural Capital as Primary Competitive Advantage

The dominant finding STD04 (M = 4.378; minimum = 4) receiving the highest rating across all 15 items with no respondent rating below 'Agree' - provides unambiguous empirical confirmation that West Lombok's natural scenic beauty is its cornerstone competitive resource. This aligns with (Iriani et al., (2025); Simarmata et al., (2022)VRIN framework: the Sekotong coastline and Senggigi marine environment are inimitable assets differentiating West Lombok from competing sport tourism destinations. Destination marketing should foreground ecological richness as the primary experiential draw, while strict environmental carrying capacity management must be implemented to protect the natural foundation of the destination's competitiveness (Stanišić et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2024).

5.2 Government Support and Infrastructure as Priority Policy Gaps

STD06 (government support; M = 4.145) and STD01 (infrastructure; M = 4.152) were the lowest-rated development items, yet still positive. Qualitative data corroborate these ratings, with respondents explicitly calling for improved road access, safety facilities, public amenities, and a fundamental reorientation of Dispar from top-down program delivery toward participatory community-based planning (Olabosinde, 2025; Tanjung et al., 2024). Given the strong STD–STI correlation (r = 0.738), investments targeting STD06 and STD01 are the highest-leverage interventions available to policymakers improving development quality directly amplifies perceived community welfare outcomes.

5.3 Socioeconomic Impact: Strong and Coherent Perceptions

The STI construct exhibited both high means (range: 4.276–4.309) and excellent reliability (α = 0.915), reflecting coherent and strong participant conviction regarding multi-dimensional community benefits. Cultural preservation (STI05; M = 4.309) and nature conservation awareness (STI01; M = 4.293) leading the impact dimension suggests that participants experience sport tourism as advancing environmental and cultural well-being simultaneously consistent with (Boley et al., 2018; Frleta, 2022; Taks et al., 2015). Employment and economic opportunity items (STI03 and STI04; M = 4.276 each) being the lowest though still strongly positive indicates that economic benefit, while recognized, may be experienced less directly by tourist participants than by community members. Future research incorporating resident perspectives would provide a more complete picture of economic impact realization (Andereck & Nyaupane, 2011; Šegota et al., 2022).

5.4 Implications of the STD–STI Correlation

The correlation r = 0.738 ($p < .001$) is the study's most policy-relevant finding: it establishes that investments in sport tourism development quality are not merely industry expenditures but community welfare investments. Each unit improvement in STD composite perceptions is associated with a proportional increase in STI perceptions. This empirical relationship provides local government with a quantitative justification for prioritizing sport tourism infrastructure in budget allocation infrastructure investment can be argued on social equity grounds alongside conventional economic efficiency rationales.

6. CONCLUSION

This study provides the first participant-specific quantitative assessment of sport tourism development and socioeconomic impact perceptions in West Lombok Regency, drawing on a purposive sample of 224 confirmed participants. The purposive sampling strategy restricting analysis to respondents with direct experiential knowledge strengthens the ecological validity of findings for destination management.

Three key conclusions emerge. First, natural scenic beauty (STD04) is West Lombok's unambiguous primary competitive advantage, commanding near-universal agreement. Second, government support (STD06) and infrastructure (STD01) are the strategic priority gaps requiring targeted policy intervention. Third, the strong STD–STI correlation (r = 0.738) confirms that development improvements directly translate into greater

perceived community welfare, validating infrastructure investment on equity grounds.

6.1 Practical Recommendations

a. Infrastructure priority: Upgrade road access, transportation connectivity, safety facilities, and public amenities at Sekotong and Senggigi as the highest-leverage intervention.

b. Community-based governance: Restructure Dispar's planning toward participatory bottom-up engagement, positioning local residents as co-designers and co-beneficiaries.

c. Regular event calendar: Establish a stable multi-level event calendar (local to international) to generate consistent visitor flows and local business planning horizons.

d. Digital promotion: Develop virtual tour content and integrated digital marketing targeting first-time visitors (35.7% of sample) who identified information gaps.

e. Ecological stewardship: Integrate nature conservation education and ecological carrying capacity management into all sport tourism programming.

f. UMKM development: Align local enterprise programs with sport tourism demand patterns to strengthen employment and economic opportunity impact dimensions.

6.2 Limitations and Future Research

The purposive design ensures experiential validity but limits population-level generalizability. The sample skewed young (< 20 years: 60.7%) and male (85.3%), reflecting current participant demographics rather than potential market breadth. Future studies should employ stratified probability sampling; use SEM to test causal pathways between specific STD dimensions and STI outcomes; adopt longitudinal designs to track perceptual change as infrastructure develops; and extend scope to include resident community perspectives to complete the stakeholder picture of sport tourism's socioeconomic impacts.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

DECLARATION

'Declaration of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process'.

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