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Exploring the Potential of Sports Tourism in Lombok: A Systematic Review of Related Literature

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Abstract

Sports tourism has become a significant segment of the global tourism industry. This study aims to identify the potential, opportunities, and challenges of sports tourism development in Lombok through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach based on PRISMA guidelines. The analysis was conducted on scientific publications from 2013-2025 that discuss various forms of sports tourism, including international events (MotoGP, WSBK, Tour de Lombok Mandalika), adventure sports (surfing, diving, Mount Rinjani trekking), as well as community-based initiatives and the implementation of smart tourism. The results of the literature synthesis indicate that Lombok has multidimensional potential supported by natural attractions, strategic infrastructure such as the Mandalika Special Economic Zone (SEZ) and the international airport, and opportunities to strengthen its global image as a world-class sports tourism destination. Development opportunities include product diversification and market segmentation, increasing economic impacts for local communities, cross-sector synergies, and international destination branding. However, challenges faced include limited facilities in buffer zones, low capacity and involvement of local communities, suboptimal quality of event management, risks to environmental sustainability, and weak coordination between stakeholders. This research offers a conceptual contribution in the form of the first literature map integrating all dimensions of sports tourism in Lombok, as well as evidence-based strategic recommendations for sustainable development, human resource capacity building, and inclusive destination management. These findings are expected to serve as a reference for policymakers, academics, and industry players in strengthening Lombok's global competitiveness as a sustainable sports tourism destination

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Introduction

Sports tourism has become a significant segment of the global tourism industry. As demand for adventure tourism and active recreation increases, international events—from motorcycle racing competitions to cycling and hiking competitions are increasingly attracting global tourists (Indarto, Sugiyanto, and Riyadi 2023). International literature shows that sports tourism not only boosts local economic revenue through event tourism but also strengthens the destination's image, builds infrastructure, and increases local community participation in sports activities (Arisman et al. 2024).

Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara Province, has all the key assets to develop integrated sports tourism. Its stunning natural landscape—white sandy beaches, the enchanting Gili Islands, and Mount Rinjani—provides an ideal setting for a variety of outdoor sports activities such as surfing, diving, trail running, and hiking. Furthermore, supporting infrastructure such as Lombok International Airport and the development of Mandalika as a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) provide greater access and appeal to both domestic and international tourists (Nafisah et al., 2024; Satrio, 2021).

Several sports tourism events have already taken place in Lombok: MotoGP and World Superbike (Anonim 2022) at the Mandalika International Circuit have made Lombok a host of international motorcycle events; the Tour de Lombok Mandalika (TDLM) (Imansyah 2018) part of the UCI Asia Tour, is an example of a regional-scale sporting event that combines a cycling track with cultural and natural destinations such as Kuta, Sembalun, and Mataram. Furthermore, many local communities have introduced nature-based sports tourism: for example, the post-COVID-19 Sembalun Lawang Sports Tourism Festival, which was motivated



by the potential for trekking on Mount Rinjani, and the involvement of local communities in homestays and climbing equipment rentals (Muzdalif and Afifudin. 2023).

However, academic studies that systematically examine various aspects of sports tourism in Lombok are still very limited. Most studies tend to focus on a single aspect—for example, the economic impact of the Mandalika Circuit on local communities, residents' perceptions of the MotoGP event, or the potential for water sports at Tanjung Aan Beach. For example, Pratama et al., (2023) concluded that the development of the Mandalika Circuit had a positive economic impact through job creation and local business opportunities, while Pahrudin et al., (2024) showed that public perception of MotoGP significantly impacted destination image, although environmental aspects did not significantly influence community support.

Furthermore, Kurniawati et al., (2023), reviewed water sports development strategies at Tanjung Aan Beach, highlighting the potential for activities such as surfing, kitesurfing, stand-up paddleboarding, jet skiing, and foil surfing. The study found that local communities play an active role, but regulatory barriers and academic involvement remain limited. Recommendations include developing tourism products, supporting facilities, digital promotion, strengthening human resources, and marketing collaboration.

A study in the Sembalun Lawang area demonstrated how sports tourism—through Rinjani trekking and sports festivals—encourages local community participation through bottom-up approaches. This revitalizes the local economy through MSMEs, equipment rentals, and homestays, while simultaneously building the appeal of sustainable, community-based sports tourism.

Analysis of sports tourism performance also requires consideration of the sports development index in North Lombok - a study by Nulhadi et al., (2020) which found the Sports Development Index (SDI) to be quite low (around 0.209), with key challenges in the dimensions of open space, community participation, public fitness, and the quality of sports human resources. These findings demonstrate the need for strategic interventions to increase local capacity to optimize sports tourism potential.

The study of smart tourism in Mandalika also shows that the development of digital platforms such as Go Mandalika or the Ayo Ke Lombok app supports access to information and promotion of tourist destinations—including sporting events—making tourism more interactive and accessible However, so far, no study has integrated all dimensions—international events, outdoor sports, community-based recreation, smart tourism technology, infrastructure and human resource capacity, and multi-stakeholder collaboration—into a single systematic framework based on academic literature. Similarly, there has been no systematic literature review that comprehensively classifies and synthesizes the potential and challenges of sport tourism in Lombok.

This study emphasizes the importance of employing a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach as a method to comprehensively capture and analyze findings from both empirical and conceptual research on sports tourism in Lombok. The SLR framework is particularly valuable because it enables the systematic mapping of diverse dimensions of sports tourism, ranging from different activity forms—such as large-scale sporting events, outdoor adventure sports, and active recreational practices—to broader perspectives involving key stakeholders, including government authorities, local communities, and tourism practitioners. Moreover, it also encompasses aspects related to marketing strategies and policy development, both of which are central to the long-term sustainability of the sector. The novel contribution of this study lies in producing the first academic literature map that brings together the various elements of sports tourism in Lombok in an integrated and multi-dimensional way. This mapping highlights how international-scale events like the MotoGP, World Superbike Championship (WSBK), and Tour de Lombok Mandalika (TDLM) interact with adventure and nature-based sports such as surfing, diving, and hiking. It also incorporates emerging trends such as digital-based smart tourism initiatives, alongside the critical role of community participation and the empowerment of local groups in shaping the sports tourism landscape. Through this systematic approach, the research not only generates a structured scientific synthesis but also offers practical relevance. The findings are expected to serve as a useful reference for future academic researchers, policymakers in regional tourism planning, and industry stakeholders engaged in developing Lombok's sports tourism sector.

Based on the discussion presented above, this research is structured around two primary questions. The first question explores the extent of Lombok's potential in developing sports tourism, which is examined through a systematic review of scholarly literature relevant to the field. The second question focuses on identifying the various opportunities as well as the key challenges associated with strengthening sports tourism on the island, drawing insights directly from the results of the literature review. By addressing these two interconnected inquiries, the study aims to make both conceptual and practical contributions. On the conceptual level, the synthesis of existing literature is expected to enrich the academic discourse on sports tourism by offering new perspectives and contextual insights that are specific to Lombok. On the practical level, the findings are projected to serve as the basis for formulating evidence-based strategies that can

support local governments, tourism practitioners, and community stakeholders in shaping a more resilient and competitive tourism sector. These strategies are envisioned to include initiatives such as enhancing human resource competencies, promoting collaboration between multiple stakeholders, improving the quality and availability of sports-related facilities, utilizing digital technologies for global marketing, and empowering local communities to actively participate in tourism development. Taken together, the outcomes of this research are expected to establish a strong foundation for Lombok's transformation into a sustainable sports tourism destination. At the same time, the study emphasizes the importance of maintaining Lombok's cultural distinctiveness, ensuring that global competitiveness is achieved while preserving its authentic local identity.

Materials and Methods

This study adopts a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach as its primary research method, with the aim of identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing scientific literature that discusses the potential of sports tourism in Lombok. The decision to employ the SLR method is based on its ability to generate a comprehensive and structured understanding of existing research, while simultaneously minimizing subjective bias that may arise from individual interpretation. Unlike narrative reviews, which are often more descriptive, the SLR approach relies on a transparent and replicable process grounded in evidence, making it highly suitable for building a strong conceptual and empirical foundation for this study. The review process was carried out by referring to the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework, which provides clear guidelines for conducting systematic reviews. In accordance with PRISMA, four main stages were followed: identification, selection, eligibility assessment, and synthesis. In the identification stage, relevant keywords were carefully formulated with the help of Boolean operators to capture a wide range of literature. The primary search strings included ("sport tourism" OR "sports tourism") AND "Lombok", ("event tourism" OR "sporting events") AND "Lombok", as well as the Indonesian equivalent terms for sports tourism combined with "Lombok." Sources were gathered from academic databases such as Google Scholar, supplemented with information from official websites and reputable e-newspapers to ensure inclusion of grey literature and media reports related to sports tourism development. The selection stage involved screening publications against predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Studies were considered eligible if they were published between 2013 and 2025, focused explicitly on sports tourism in Lombok or comparable destinations, appeared in indexed journals, books, or scientific proceedings, and addressed issues such as potential, opportunities, challenges, or impacts of sports tourism. Publications that did not meet these criteria—for instance, non-scholarly works, studies unrelated to tourism or sports, or papers lacking relevance to Lombok—were systematically excluded. The eligibility assessment was then conducted by reviewing the full text of the remaining studies to confirm methodological quality and relevance. This step was carried out using the PRISMA checklist, ensuring that each study adhered to appropriate standards of rigor and reliability. Only articles that met these methodological benchmarks were included in the final analysis. The last stage was synthesis, where the selected studies were analyzed thematically. Through this process, the findings were organized into major themes, including international sporting events such as MotoGP, WSBK, and the Tour de Lombok; adventure and nature-based sports like surfing, diving, and mountain trekking; the economic and social impacts of sports tourism; opportunities for local community empowerment; and the broader challenges of sustainable destination development. A PRISMA flow diagram was created to visually demonstrate the screening and selection process, while a synthesis table summarized key details such as the author, publication year, title, and main findings of each study. To further strengthen validity and reliability, the entire selection and review process was conducted by two independent researchers and verified through peer review. By adhering to the PRISMA framework and employing rigorous methodological standards, this study ensures transparency, replicability, and credibility, thereby providing a solid evidence-based foundation for understanding the development of sports tourism in Lombok.

Results and Discussions

1. Sports Tourism Potential in Lombok

Various academic literature confirms that Lombok has significant potential for sports tourism. Studies by Larasati et al., (2023) dan Satiadji et al., (2024) show that the Mandalika MotoGP has strengthened Lombok's tourism image, creating economic opportunities for local communities through the accommodation, transportation, and MSME sectors. Quantitative research by Pahrudin et al., (2023) confirms that local perceptions of the event, from an economic, social, and cultural perspective, are highly supportive of destination development, although environmental aspects have not proven significant.

Furthermore, the Tour de Lombok Mandalika (TDLM), a prestigious cycling competition of the UCI Asia Tour, has expanded sports tourism potential to include cross-country and cultural events, such as the Kuta, Sembalun, and Mataram circuits.

A study of nature-based sports tourism in the Sembalun Lawang area shows that trekking on Mount Rinjani has had a positive economic impact: outdoor equipment rentals have increased, homestays have revitalized the community economy, and demand for organic trekking services has increased (Muzdalif and Afifudin. 2023). The potential for coastal tourism is also significant: research by Saputra et al., (2023) on Senggigi Beach revealed that recreational sports such as snorkeling and surfing can be a magnet for tourists, with strong natural appeal for both domestic and international markets. Furthermore, Yudha Isnaini & Mutallib, (2022) mapped the potential for sports tourism in Kuta Mandalika, listing various activities such as cycling, diving, rafting, running, and camping as sports-based business opportunities.

Overall, Lombok offers multidimensional potential: large-scale international events (MotoGP, WSBK, TDLM), adventure sports (surfing, diving, trekking, trail running), and a synergy between natural attractions and sports within the Mandalika Special Economic Zone (SEZ) ecosystem and the Rinjani and Senggigi Beach tourism buffer zone. Infrastructure investment (airports, circuits, roads) supports accessibility and the global image of the region (Kusumayani and Wardana 2023).

2. Opportunities for Lombok's Sports Tourism

The literature shows that sports tourism can extend tourists' stays and increase spending. This opens up potential new segments, such as automotive enthusiasts, trail runners, cyclists, and adventure-seeking tourists (Wahyuni 2015). The Tourism Destination (TDLM) opens access to the international professional cycling market, while surfing and diving events attract niche water sports enthusiasts.

MotoGP and WSBK events, as found by Widjaja et al., (2023) have direct and indirect economic impacts on local communities, particularly in the main corridor of the Mandalika Special Economic Zone (SEZ), a national priority destination. Homestays, travel services, local trade, and sports MSMEs show growth following major events. In the Sembalun region, Rinjani trekking has boosted outdoor equipment rental businesses, local guides, and community-based accommodation (Muzdalif and Afifudin. 2023).

The sports tourism management system in Lombok demonstrates synergy between the government, industry (ITDC), and local communities. Sari, (2024) underscored the importance of multi-sector collaboration as a key element of sustainable development in Central Lombok, encompassing government, business, academia, and the community. Furthermore, digital platforms such as regional destination apps support the promotion of sports tourism, facilitating access to event information, tickets, and tourist routes. The Mandalika SEZ and international circuit have placed Lombok on the global map of motorsport and sports tourism. As noted in Panorama Destination, since 2021, the image of MotoGP and GT World Challenge Asia has increased hotel occupancy, international media exposure, and enhanced Lombok's image as a world-class sports tourism destination (Admin 2025).

3. Challenges in Developing Sports Tourism in Lombok

Although the Mandalika Circuit is an icon of sports tourism, transportation access in several buffer areas, such as Sembalun and Senggigi, still faces challenges such as suboptimal road conditions, limited facilities, and limited sports equipment (Saputra et al. 2023). Supporting tourism facilities are not evenly distributed across potential areas. Satiadji et al., (2024) dan Yudha Isnaini & Mutallib, (2022) noted that local communities do not fully understand sports tourism opportunities, lack training and involvement in sports attraction management, and receive minimal support from the government and academics. This hinders the optimization of the potential of local sports-based businesses.

A study by Satiadji et al., (2024) showed that event management significantly influences the perceived quality of sports tourism services in Mandalika (- 97.7%), surpassing infrastructure and security. Obstacles in event planning, implementation, and promotion can reduce visitor satisfaction and the positive impact of the destination. Although public perception of the environmental aspects of the MotoGP event does not significantly support tourism development (Pahrudin et al. 2023), this indicates potential problems in environmental management, especially if the growth of the event is not accompanied by mitigation of environmental and social impacts such as relocation of residents in Mandalika. Sari, (2024) noted that coordination between the government, the private sector, and the community is still unbalanced; different priorities and uneven distribution of resources trigger disharmony in the development of sustainable sports tourism in Lombok.

4. Synthesis Discussion: Answering the Problem Formulation

Problem Statement 1: What is the potential for sports tourism in Lombok based on the academic literature review? The SLR results indicate that Lombok has strong potential in various aspects of sports tourism: global events (MotoGP, WSBK, TDLM), adventure sports (surfing, diving, hiking Rinjani), and community

recreation. Infrastructure such as the Mandalika Special Economic Zone (SEZ) and the airport support global access and branding of the destination. The socio-economic impact on local communities is evident through MSMEs, homestays, and outdoor equipment rentals.

Problem Statement 2: What are the opportunities and challenges in developing sports tourism in Lombok? Key opportunities include diversification of sports-based tourism products, positive resonance with the global destination image, and local economic empowerment for the community. Challenges include limited facilities in the hinterland, low local capacity and training, event management that still needs improvement, potential environmental and social impacts, and suboptimal coordination between stakeholders.

Conclusion

From the findings and discussions presented, it can be concluded that Lombok possesses strong and competitive potential to position itself as a leading sports tourism destination, both on a national and international scale. This potential is demonstrated by the island's ability to host prestigious global events such as the MotoGP Mandalika, the World Superbike Championship (WSBK), and the Tour de Lombok Mandalika. Alongside these international events, Lombok also offers diverse nature-based sports activities that continue to attract visitors from around the world. These include trekking on Mount Rinjani, surfing along renowned beaches, diving in rich marine ecosystems, and cross-country cycling through its scenic landscapes. Such a combination of world-class events and natural attractions highlights Lombok's unique comparative advantage in the sports tourism sector. Supporting this potential is the availability of strategic infrastructure, particularly the Mandalika Special Economic Zone (SEZ), which has been developed as a hub for tourism and investment. Coupled with air connectivity through Lombok International Airport, these assets enhance accessibility and reinforce Lombok's branding as an emerging world-class destination for sports tourism. The opportunities for future development lie in diversifying sports tourism products and tapping into varied market segments, which in turn can stimulate greater economic benefits for local communities. This includes supporting micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), encouraging homestay accommodations, and fostering the growth of tourism-related services. In addition, cross-sector collaboration creates room for innovation, including the adoption of smart tourism practices, while global branding efforts can further elevate Lombok's image in the international marketplace. Despite these opportunities, several challenges must be addressed. Limitations in supporting facilities across buffer zones can hinder visitor experiences, while the low level of local community involvement and limited human resource capacity present barriers to sustainable management of sports attractions. Event management standards are not yet consistently professional, and environmental risks as well as potential social impacts remain concerns that require careful mitigation. Furthermore, weak coordination among stakeholders often results in fragmented development efforts. Therefore, the long-term success of sports tourism in Lombok will depend on implementing an integrated strategy. This should balance infrastructure improvements with capacity building for local human resources, strengthen professionalism in event management, and maintain a strong commitment to both environmental sustainability and social inclusivity. By optimizing its existing strengths while addressing its weaknesses, Lombok can transform into a highly competitive and sustainable sports tourism destination that not only appeals to global markets but also benefits local communities

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