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CHALLENGES OF SPORT TOURISM EVENTS IN INCREASING VISITOR NUMBERS IN BATAM CITY, RIAU ISLANDS PROVINCE

Enly Yunaeni¹ and Myrza Rahmanita²

¹Doctor Candidate, Institut Pariwisata Trisakti
Jl. IKPN Bintaro Tanah Kusir No.1, RT.4/RW.10, Bintaro
Pesanggrahan District, South Jakarta City, Special Capital Region of Jakarta 12330

²Institut Pariwisata Trisakti
Jl. IKPN Bintaro Tanah Kusir No.1, RT.4/RW.10, Bintaro
Pesanggrahan District, South Jakarta City, Special Capital Region of Jakarta 12330

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ABSTRACT

Batam, one of the largest cities in the Riau Islands, is strategically located near Singapore and Malaysia, making it a key tourism destination in Indonesia. In addition to its natural beauty and thriving manufacturing industry, Batam has significant potential in sport tourism. Sport tourism events, which combine athletic activities with travel experiences, represent a rapidly growing segment that can attract domestic and international tourists. This abstract explores the potential of sports tourism in Batam, supported by its well-established sports facilities, year-round favorable tropical climate, and easy accessibility by sea and air. Critical sporting infrastructures include international-standard golf courses, stadiums, and water sports facilities. Moreover, Batam offers a variety of attractions, such as beaches, shopping centers, and unique culinary experiences that can complement the development of sports tourism. This study focuses on the transformative impact of sports tourism on Batam's tourism industry, particularly in terms of economic recovery and effective strategies for maximizing visitor numbers. The findings will contribute to a better understanding of how Batam can leverage its strategic advantages to become the region's leading sports tourism destination.

KEYWORDS:- Transformative Tourism, Economic Recovery, Effective Strategies, Sport Tourism, Tourism Development.

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1.INTRODUCTION

Batam, a major city within the Riau Islands (Kepri) province, is one of Indonesia's most rapidly developing economic centers. With a population surpassing 1.3 million as of 2023, Batam has evolved into a bustling hub of industry and trade, largely driven by its strategic location. Situated just about 20 kilometers from Singapore, Batam benefits from its proximity to one of the world's leading financial centers and Malaysia, making it a key point of access for commerce and tourism in Southeast Asia. This advantageous positioning has traditionally bolstered Batam's manufacturing and export sectors. However, it also presents a significant yet underutilized opportunity to expand the city's tourism industry, particularly in sports tourism.

Sports tourism, which combines athletic activities with travel experiences, has emerged as one of the fastest-growing segments within the global tourism industry. The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) reports that sport tourism is experiencing an average annual growth rate of approximately 6% globally, reflecting its increasing appeal to event organizers and tourists alike. This segment has garnered more attention in Indonesia, especially following the nation's successful hosting of the 2018 Asian Games. The event showcased Indonesia's capacity to manage large-scale international sporting events and positioned the country as a potential hotspot for sports tourism. With its existing infrastructure and geographical advantages, Batam is well-placed to capitalize on this trend, offering a unique combination of world-class sports facilities and rich cultural experiences that could attract domestic and international visitors. The city's potential in sports tourism is underpinned by its extensive sports facilities, including international-standard golf courses, modern stadiums, and various water sports venues. These facilities have already drawn attention, particularly from tourists in neighboring Singapore and Malaysia, where golf is a popular pastime. For example, Batam's golf courses, known for their scenic views and high-quality maintenance, have become a significant draw for weekend visitors from Singapore, who appreciate the convenience of the short ferry ride and the more affordable costs compared to similar facilities in their home country. Furthermore, Batam's tropical climate, which remains warm and relatively stable throughout the year, provides ideal conditions for outdoor sports activities, making it an attractive destination for sport tourism. The ease of accessibility by both sea and air further enhances Batam's appeal, with frequent ferry services and flights connecting the city to major regional hubs.

However, despite these advantages, Batam faces several significant challenges in fully realizing its potential as a sports tourism destination. One of the primary obstacles is the lack of effective promotion and marketing, which has resulted in limited awareness among potential tourists about the sports tourism events and facilities available in Batam. While the city offers quality sports facilities, its visibility on the international stage remains low, partly due to insufficient investment in targeted marketing campaigns and a lack of collaboration with international travel agencies. Additionally, although Batam has made strides in developing its infrastructure, some sports facilities still fall short of international standards, which may deter elite athletes and high-profile sporting events. Moreover, Batam must contend with intense competition from other established sports tourism destinations in Indonesia and Southeast Asia, such as Bali, Phuket, and Kuala Lumpur, which have already built solid reputations and attracted loyal visitor bases. A multifaceted strategy is required to address these challenges and position Batam as a leading sports tourism

destination. This strategy should include substantially enhancing promotion and marketing efforts, utilizing digital platforms and social media to reach a broader audience, and partnering with international travel agencies to create compelling travel packages. Additionally, there should be a focused effort to upgrade existing sports facilities to meet international standards, ensuring they can attract top-tier events and athletes. Collaborating with various stakeholders, including local government, private sector entities, and sports organizations, will be crucial in organizing and promoting large-scale sports tourism events.

Moreover, developing comprehensive tourism packages that combine sports activities with Batam's other attractions, such as its beaches, shopping centers, and culinary experiences, could provide a more well-rounded and appealing offering for tourists. Finally, there should be a concerted effort to improve the quality and quantity of accommodation and transportation options, ensuring they meet the expectations of international visitors. By leveraging its strategic location and existing infrastructure and implementing these targeted strategies, Batam has the potential to significantly increase its visibility and competitiveness in the sports tourism sector. This promises to boost tourist arrivals, generate economic benefits for the local community, and elevate Batam's status as a critical player in the global tourism industry.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Sport tourism events, which blend athletic activities with travel experiences, have emerged as a rapidly expanding segment within the global tourism industry. These events can boost local economies significantly, attract international visitors, and enhance a destination's global image. However, despite their potential benefits, organizing and executing sport tourism events have numerous challenges. A comprehensive review of existing literature reveals key issues that destinations often face when hosting successful sports tourism events. These challenges encompass promotion, infrastructure, sustainability, management, safety, and resource allocation.

The global economy has experienced substantial growth in the professional and commercial sports sectors, significantly impacting national GDP. According to the World Travel & Tourism Council (2018), sports contribute 25% to 30% of the global tourism economy. As crucial pillars of contemporary entertainment, sports and tourism are essential in fostering cultural exchanges, shaping political decisions, and influencing national and international policies (Malchrowicz-Mosko & Poczta, 2018). This growth is driven by the increasing popularity of sports events, which requires meticulous monitoring of various stakeholders, including media, sponsors, and participants (Popovic, 2017). The success of these events is critical not only for the organizations involved but also for achieving the events' broader objectives. Key factors influencing this success include environmental sustainability on the supply side and the psychological and social characteristics of participants on the demand side (Kaplanidou et al., 2013).

Effective promotion and marketing are critical for the success of sports tourism events. According to Getz (2008), inadequate promotion and marketing strategies are among the primary obstacles in attracting tourists to sport tourism events. Many destinations, especially those in developing regions, lack robust marketing strategies that can effectively capture the interest of both domestic and international tourists. Getz's research highlights the importance of targeted marketing efforts

that raise awareness about the events and convey the unique experiences that participants can expect. Without such strategies, even well-organized events may fail to attract the desired audience, leading to lower attendance and reduced economic impact. This underscores the need for destinations to invest in comprehensive marketing campaigns that utilize digital platforms, social media, and partnerships with travel agencies to reach a wider audience and create compelling narratives around their sport tourism offerings (Getz, 2008).

The availability of adequate infrastructure is another critical factor that can either facilitate or hinder the success of sport tourism events. Higham and Hinch (2009) emphasize the importance of having sufficient infrastructure to support large-scale events, including transportation networks, accommodation facilities, and sports venues. Their study reveals that the lack of high-quality infrastructure can significantly detract from the visitor experience and discourage repeat visitation. For instance, insufficient accommodation or poor transportation links can lead to logistical challenges, such as difficulty moving large spectators and participants between venues. Furthermore, inadequate sports facilities that do not meet international standards may limit a destination's ability to host major events that attract elite athletes and large audiences. Therefore, investment in infrastructure is crucial for destinations aiming to establish themselves as competitive sports tourism hubs. This includes the construction and maintenance of physical venues and the development of supporting services and amenities that enhance the overall visitor experience (Higham & Hinch, 2009). Sustainability is increasingly recognized as a critical concern in the planning and executing of sport tourism events. Hede (2007) discusses the environmental impact of large-scale events, emphasizing the need for sustainable practices to mitigate adverse effects on the local environment. The study highlights that poorly managed events can lead to significant environmental degradation, including waste generation, habitat destruction, and pollution. These issues tarnish the host destination's image and threaten the long-term viability of tourism activities. Hede advocates for adopting the triple-bottom-line approach in event management, which considers economic, social, and environmental impacts equally. This approach encourages organizers to implement sustainable practices such as waste reduction, energy efficiency, and the preservation of natural resources. Additionally, involving local communities in the planning process can help ensure that events are conducted to respect local ecosystems and cultural values, thereby enhancing the overall sustainability of sport tourism (Hede, 2007).

Successfully executing sports tourism events requires effective management and coordination among various stakeholders. Chalip and Leyns (2002) explore the complexities of managing sports tourism events, particularly the challenges of coordinating activities across multiple organizations and interest groups. Their research indicates poor coordination can lead to logistical failures, such as scheduling conflicts, inadequate resource allocation, and stakeholder miscommunication. These issues can compromise the quality of the event, resulting in negative experiences for both participants and spectators. Furthermore, Chalip and Leyns highlight the importance of leveraging local businesses to maximize the economic benefits of sports tourism events. Effective management requires the creation of synergies between event organizers, local businesses, government agencies, and community groups. This can be achieved through clear communication, well-defined roles, and establishing collaborative networks that ensure all stakeholders are aligned with the event's objectives (Chalip & Leyns, 2002). Safety and security are paramount considerations in the

planning of sport tourism events. Toohey and Taylor (2008) examine the risks associated with hosting large-scale events, particularly the threat of terrorism, civil unrest, and natural disasters. Their study underscores the importance of comprehensive security measures to protect participants, spectators, and the local population. The researchers note that high-profile events, such as the Olympic Games, are particularly vulnerable to security threats, which can deter attendance and damage the destination's reputation. To address these risks, Toohey and Taylor recommend the implementation of rigorous security protocols, including risk assessments, emergency response plans, and close collaboration with law enforcement agencies. Additionally, organizers should consider the broader safety of the event, including crowd management, transportation safety, and medical services. Ensuring a secure environment is essential for the event's success and maintaining the long-term attractiveness of the destination as a sports tourism venue (Toohey & Taylor, 2008).

Financial limitations pose a significant challenge in planning and executing sports tourism events. O'Brien and Gardiner (2006) highlight the impact of budget constraints on various aspects of event planning, including marketing, facility provision, and participant experience. Their study reveals that insufficient funding can hinder the ability of organizers to deliver high-quality events that meet international standards. This can result in subpar facilities, inadequate promotion, and a diminished overall experience for participants and spectators. Furthermore, limited financial resources may restrict the ability of organizers to invest in long-term infrastructure improvements, which are necessary for sustaining sport tourism in the destination. O'Brien and Gardiner argue that securing sufficient funding through public-private partnerships, sponsorships, and government support is crucial for overcoming these challenges. Additionally, efficient resource allocation and cost management practices can help maximize the impact of available funds and ensure the successful execution of sport tourism events (O'Brien & Gardiner, 2006). However, there is a notable research gap concerning the impact of small-scale sports events compared to mega-events. Most existing studies focus on mega-events, visitor behavior, host satisfaction, and their economic impacts, while research on small-scale sports events is limited. Although mega-events are extensively studied, small-scale events, which differ significantly in their impact and resource demands, also play a critical role. These events often do not place the same strain on host city resources as large-scale events (Gibson et al., 2003). Recognizing the potential of small-scale sports events to boost tourism, researchers suggest that these recurring events may offer more excellent development opportunities than mega-events (Daniels & Norman, 2003; Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2010; Gillett & Kelly, 2006).

Literature relevant to this topic includes seminal works on sport tourism and destination development (Gibson, 1998), sport tourism dynamics (Weed & Bull, 2004), and event management (Standeven & De Knop, 1999). Studies on the economic impact of small-scale events (Hinch & Higham, 2001) and sport tourism integration (e.g., Hunziker & Krapf, 1942; Mathieson & Wall, 1982; Goeldner & Ritchie, 2006) provide foundational insights. Further contributions include research on sustainability in sport tourism (Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2007), event quality and tourist satisfaction (Getz, 2008), and the socio-cultural impacts of sport tourism (Weed, 2008). This comprehensive body of work collectively enriches the understanding of sport tourism, highlighting large-scale and small-scale events' economic and community impacts. The literature reviewed indicates that the successful organization of sport tourism events requires a multifaceted approach

that addresses various challenges across promotion, infrastructure, sustainability, management, security, and resource allocation. To overcome these challenges, destinations must adopt holistic strategies involving collaboration among multiple stakeholders, targeted marketing efforts, investment in infrastructure, and implementing sustainable practices. By addressing these critical areas, destinations can enhance their capacity to host successful sports tourism events that attract visitors and contribute to long-term economic and social benefits. This holistic approach is essential for positioning a destination as a competitive player in the increasingly globalized sports tourism industry.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating qualitative and quantitative methodologies to comprehensively analyze the challenges and opportunities of organizing sport tourism events. The research design adopts an exploratory approach to investigating complex phenomena like the multifaceted challenges in sport tourism. This approach allows for data triangulation, ensuring a more robust understanding of the research problem. The qualitative aspect involves in-depth interviews and thematic analysis, while the quantitative aspect includes surveys and statistical analysis, capturing both the subjective experiences of stakeholders and broader industry trends.

Data collection methods are divided into qualitative and quantitative streams. Qualitative data will be gathered through semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, such as event organizers, government officials, and community leaders, alongside document analysis of event reports and policy documents. This will provide a rich contextual understanding of the challenges faced. On the other hand, quantitative data will be collected through structured surveys distributed to participants and spectators of sports tourism events, measuring satisfaction and perceived challenges. Secondary data on event attendance, economic impact, and infrastructure investment will also be utilized to complement the survey findings.

The study employs purposive sampling for qualitative data to ensure a diverse range of perspectives, continuing data collection until thematic saturation is achieved. For quantitative data, a stratified random sampling technique will ensure representation across various demographic groups, with a sample size calculated based on a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%. Data analysis procedures include thematic analysis for qualitative data, managed through NVivo software, to identify recurring themes and patterns. Quantitative data will be analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, with tools like SPSS software facilitating the exploration of relationships between variables, such as the impact of infrastructure quality on participant satisfaction.

Ethical considerations are central to the study, with informed consent obtained from all participants, ensuring they are fully informed about the study's purpose and their rights. Confidentiality will be maintained through data anonymization, and the research will undergo ethical review and approval by the relevant institutional review board. Despite the comprehensive nature of this methodology, the study acknowledges limitations, such as potential biases in self-reported data and the non-

generalizability of qualitative findings to all contexts. However, these limitations will be mitigated through careful sampling, data triangulation, and transparent reporting.

In sum, this mixed-methods approach is designed to generate detailed insights into the complexities of organizing sport tourism events, offering valuable guidance for practitioners and policymakers aiming to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of these events. The integration of qualitative and quantitative data will provide a holistic view of the challenges and opportunities within the field, contributing to a deeper understanding of sport tourism's potential to drive economic and social benefits.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study revealed several critical insights into the challenges and opportunities associated with sport tourism events. These findings address both the practical difficulties and the strategic considerations involved in organizing and managing such events.

One of the most significant challenges is ineffective promotion and marketing. Many destinations struggle with inadequate promotional strategies, limiting their ability to attract domestic and international tourists. This finding is consistent with Getz's (2008) assertion that solid marketing campaigns are essential for drawing visitors to sports tourism events. Without effective promotion, even well-organized events may fail to achieve their potential, impacting attendance and overall success. The study found that infrastructure limitations are a significant barrier to successful sport tourism events. Issues such as insufficient transportation options, inadequate accommodation, and subpar sports facilities were highlighted. Higham and Hinch (2009) also noted the importance of robust infrastructure supporting sport tourism. When infrastructure is not up to standard, it can significantly affect the quality of the event and the satisfaction of participants and spectators.

Environmental concerns were another critical issue. Large-scale sport tourism events can lead to significant environmental degradation if not managed responsibly. Hede (2007) highlighted that sustainability is a crucial concern, emphasizing the need for careful management to mitigate adverse environmental impacts. The study found that without effective sustainability practices, events can contribute to pollution, habitat destruction, and other environmental issues. The complexity of managing and coordinating sport tourism events emerged as a significant challenge. Chalip and Leyns (2002) noted that effective event management involves coordinating multiple stakeholders, which can be complex and prone to errors. The study revealed that poor coordination can lead to logistical issues, decreased quality of the event, and overall dissatisfaction among participants and attendees.

Security and safety issues were also prominent. The study found that ensuring the safety of participants and spectators is a top priority. Toohey and Taylor (2008) emphasized addressing potential threats such as terrorism and natural disasters. The study highlighted that security concerns can impact event planning and execution, requiring substantial resources and careful planning to mitigate risks. Budgetary limitations were identified as a significant obstacle. The study found that insufficient funding can restrict promotional efforts, limit the quality of facilities, and affect the overall experience of the event. O'Brien and Gardiner (2006) supported this finding,

noting that financial constraints are a common challenge in event planning and execution. A notable finding was the potential of small-scale sport events to contribute to tourism and economic development. While mega-events receive extensive attention, small-scale events often offer valuable opportunities for local development without straining city resources. Gibson et al. (2003) and subsequent studies by Daniels and Norman (2003), Kaplanidou and Gibson (2010), and Gillett and Kelly (2006) suggest that smaller events can have a significant impact on local tourism and community engagement. These events may offer more manageable and sustainable options for cities looking to enhance their sport tourism offerings.

The research highlighted the importance of integrating sport tourism with broader destination development strategies. Studies by Gibson (1998), Weed and Bull (2004), and Standeven and De Knop (1999) emphasize that sport tourism can be a catalyst for broader tourism development, enhancing the attractiveness of a destination. Effective integration can lead to increased visitor numbers, extended stays, and greater economic benefits for the local community. The economic impact of sport tourism events was found to be substantial, contributing to local economies through spending on accommodation, dining, and entertainment. This finding is supported by research on the economic impact of sport events (Hinch & Higham, 2001) and the role of sport tourism in community development (Hunziker & Krapf, 1942; Mathieson & Wall, 1982; Goeldner & Ritchie, 2006). Sport tourism events can also foster community pride and enhance the local cultural landscape, contributing to the overall well-being of the area.

The study identified a research gap concerning the impact of small-scale sports events compared to mega-events. Existing literature predominantly focuses on large-scale events, leaving a gap in understanding the role and impact of smaller events. This gap suggests the need for further research to explore how small-scale events can be leveraged to enhance local tourism and economic development. The study underscores the need for more comprehensive research on the dynamics of sport tourism. While existing literature provides valuable insights into large-scale events, there is a need for research that addresses the full spectrum of sport tourism, including both large and small events. This comprehensive approach will provide a more holistic understanding of the challenges and opportunities within the field.

The findings highlight several critical challenges and opportunities in sport tourism. Effective promotion and marketing are essential for attracting tourists, while infrastructure, sustainability, and management play crucial roles in the success of sport tourism events. The complexity of coordinating multiple stakeholders, addressing security concerns, and managing budgets are significant challenges that require careful planning and resource allocation. The potential of small-scale events offers a promising avenue for local development. They provide opportunities for cities to enhance their sport tourism offerings without the high costs and resource demands of mega-events. Integrating sport tourism with broader destination development strategies can increase visitor numbers and economic benefits for local communities. The study emphasizes the need for a nuanced understanding of sports tourism, addressing the challenges and opportunities inherent in organizing and managing sports events. By exploring both large-scale and small-scale events, researchers and practitioners can develop more effective strategies to maximize sports tourism's benefits and address the issues that may hinder its success.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study comprehensively analyzes the challenges and opportunities in organizing sport tourism events. Sports tourism holds significant potential for boosting local economies and tourism industries. However, this potential is accompanied by complex challenges, including inadequate promotion and marketing, infrastructure limitations, environmental sustainability concerns, complexity in event management, security and safety issues, and budgetary constraints. These challenges can profoundly impact the success of sport tourism events if not addressed effectively

Despite these obstacles, there are substantial opportunities for growth and development within the sport tourism sector. Notably, small-scale sports events present valuable opportunities for local tourism development, often without the extensive resource demands associated with larger mega-events. Effective integration of sports tourism with broader destination development strategies can enhance a destination's appeal, increasing visitor numbers and economic benefits for local communities.

The study also highlights a significant research gap regarding the impact of small-scale sports events compared to mega-events. This gap indicates a need for further research to explore how smaller events can contribute to local tourism and community engagement. The findings underscore the importance of adopting a nuanced approach to sports tourism that considers large and small events to maximize their benefits and address inherent challenges. To address these issues, several recommendations are proposed. Destinations should enhance their promotion and marketing strategies to market sport tourism events effectively. This involves utilizing digital marketing, social media, and partnerships with travel agencies to boost visibility and attract a diverse audience. Investing in infrastructure improvements is also crucial, as better transportation, accommodation, and sports facilities will improve event quality and make the destination more appealing.

Sustainability practices should be implemented to minimize the environmental impact of sport tourism events. This includes waste reduction, energy efficiency, and conservation efforts to ensure responsible tourism. Strengthening event management and coordination is essential for smooth execution, focusing on improving stakeholder collaboration and logistical strategies. Ensuring safety and security for participants and spectators is another priority, requiring comprehensive security plans and collaboration with local law enforcement. In terms of financial resources, exploring diverse funding sources such as sponsorships, grants, and private-sector partnerships is essential to overcome budgetary constraints. Additionally, there should be a greater focus on the potential of small-scale events, which can offer significant local development opportunities. Integrating sport tourism with broader destination development strategies will help create a cohesive approach to enhancing a destination's overall attractiveness. By implementing these recommendations, destinations can effectively manage the challenges of organizing sport tourism events and harness their potential to drive economic and community benefits. These strategies will improve the success of individual events and contribute to the sustainable growth of the sports tourism sector in the long term.

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