



## **An Investigation of Social Impacts for Sports Events on Local Communities: The Case of Sriwijaya Gran Fondo Cycling Event on South Ogan Komering Ulu Regency, South Sumatera, Indonesia**

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### **ABSTRACT**

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The growth and popularity of athletic events in Indonesia might cause ripple effects in the tourism and creative economy sectors. Sports are not only a need but have also become a part of people's lifestyles. Cycling is one of the most popular leisure sports in urban areas. The Sriwijaya Gran Fondo's goal is to introduce and promote tourism through supporting improvements in all areas, such as micro, small, and medium firms, to strengthen the community's economy. The purpose of this study is to investigate the social impact of cycling activities on local communities. This study aims to examine their perspectives of societal repercussions in terms of (1) image and reputation; (2) international exchange and collaboration; (3) living inconvenience; (4) environmental pollution and safety issues; (5) economic development and tourism; and (6) infrastructural development. To supplement the primary research, the secondary data results were translated into questions. For two weeks, an online questionnaire was used for primary research, and 91 valid responses were successfully obtained by SPSS before being connected with secondary data. According to the findings, the Sriwijaya Ranau Gran Fondo boosted the friendliness and civility of the community's citizens. The tournament also provided international sports development opportunities for Banding Agung inhabitants. The Sriwijaya Gran Fondo event increased the cost of living in Banding Agung, which created anxiety. The Sriwijaya Gran Fondo attracts tourists and provides entertainment for Banding Agung inhabitants. Through component analysis, four factors were discovered: the negative influence of the incident, community progress, infrastructural development, and quality of life.

**Keywords:** *Sriwijaya Gran Fondo, social impact, local communities, cycling event*

## 1. Introduction

Sports events are increasingly recognized as a strategic driver of tourism and regional development. According to Higham (2010), they can be categorized into different scales—ranging from small community-based activities to large international spectacles—that bring economic, cultural, and social impacts. In Indonesia, international and national-level sports events have become significant platforms to promote destinations, stimulate the creative economy, and strengthen global networks.

South Sumatra, with its unique landscapes and cultural heritage, has positioned itself as a hub for sports tourism. Among its initiatives, the Sriwijaya Ranau Gran Fondo, an annual international cycling event held around Lake Ranau, has become one of the most prominent. Since its debut in 2018, the event has attracted both domestic and international participants, providing not only competitive sporting experiences but also opportunities to explore the natural and cultural richness of the region. Its growth illustrates how well-managed sports events can function as a strategic tool for tourism promotion and regional branding.

Sports tourism, broadly defined as travel motivated by sporting activities, whether as participants or spectators (Gammon & Robinson, 2003) has been increasingly studied for its economic and social contributions. Chalip (2004) highlights that sports events can strengthen destination branding, while Getz (2012) emphasizes their role in generating media exposure and tourism awareness. Furthermore, Kaplanidou & Vogt (2007) argue that such events foster community pride and social cohesion.

Cycling events hold a distinctive place within sports tourism. Lamont (2009) notes that cycling races often traverse rural and scenic landscapes, creating opportunities for destination promotion beyond urban centers. The concept of *Gran Fondo*, originating from Italy, blends professional-level competition with mass participation, attracting both elite athletes and amateur enthusiasts. This inclusive model has made Gran Fondo events effective tools for promoting tourism, extending visitor stays, and encouraging repeat visits.

Research also underscores the importance of local engagement and sustainability. The success of sports events relies not only on professional organization but also on the involvement of communities, integration with tourism strategies, and long-term planning. Without these, the benefits may be temporary and fail to create lasting impact.

## 2. Methodology

This study employed a quantitative descriptive approach to investigate the social impact of the Sriwijaya Ranau Gran Fondo. A deductive paradigm was adopted, moving from theory to data, in order to test existing propositions

through a structured survey. Both secondary and primary research were utilized, with careful attention to ethical considerations, validity, and reliability. The quantitative design was chosen for its ability to capture systematic numerical data, test theoretical frameworks, and provide generalizable results (Saunders et al., 2019). Secondary research served as the foundation of the study by identifying existing theories, frameworks, and research gaps. Sources included academic journals, books, government reports, and online databases such as Google Scholar, using keywords such as sport events, cycling events, social impact, and local community. The review was conducted not only descriptively but also critically, contextualizing the research problem and guiding the development of the questionnaire.

Primary data collection was carried out through an online questionnaire distributed to residents of Banding Agung Village, the main host area of the event. The instrument was designed to measure perceptions across five socio-demographic variables (gender, age, education, marital status, and income) and several indicators of social impact, including reputation, international cooperation, inconvenience of life, environmental impact, economic development, and infrastructure improvement. A structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” was developed and pre-tested with five respondents to ensure clarity. Reliability was measured through Cronbach’s Alpha, producing a coefficient of 0.924, which indicates high internal consistency, while validity was confirmed through correlation tests where all items met the 0.05 significance threshold.

The study population consisted of 1,050 residents of Banding Agung (BPS, 2021). Due to time and resource limitations, a non-probability purposive sampling technique was employed, targeting residents who had lived in the area for at least six months and were aged between 17 and 65 years. Based on the Slovin formula with a 10% margin of error, a minimum sample size of 91 respondents was determined. Questionnaires were distributed online via Google Forms to increase accessibility, reduce costs, and ensure efficient real-time data collection, consistent with the advantages of online surveys highlighted by Raju and Harinarayana (2016). Collected data were processed using SPSS 26, and several statistical analyses were conducted. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize means, minimum, maximum, and standard deviations. Validity and reliability tests were performed to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the instrument. Exploratory Factor Analysis was applied to identify underlying dimensions of social impact, while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) tested differences across socio-demographic groups. Additionally, one-sample t-tests were conducted to examine whether community perceptions significantly differed from neutral expectations. Throughout the study, ethical standards were upheld. Participation was voluntary, with informed consent obtained from all respondents, and anonymity was ensured. Respondents were also given the right to withdraw at any stage of the study without consequence, maintaining the integrity and ethical soundness of the research process.

### 3. Findings and Discussion

This chapter analyses the primary data gathered from the local community of Banding Agung Village regarding the social impacts of the Sriwijaya Ranau Gran Fondo. The survey, distributed online through Google Forms, produced 91 valid responses. The data were processed and examined using SPSS 26 with descriptive statistics, reliability and validity testing, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), analysis of variance (ANOVA), and a one- sample t-test. The findings are presented below.

The socio-demographic profile of respondents highlights the community characteristics of Banding Agung. A majority of respondents were female, reflecting the high involvement of women in local community life. Age distribution showed dominance of the 17–24 age group, indicating that younger residents were more actively engaged in responding to the survey and possibly more exposed to event-related changes. Educational levels were mostly secondary, consistent with the rural educational attainment of the region. The income profile revealed that more than half of respondents earned less than IDR 1,000,000 per month, signifying economic vulnerability but also the potential for such events to create meaningful opportunities. Employment patterns showed that many were self-employed or engaged in informal work, underlining the dependence of the village economy on small-scale trade, agriculture, and services. This demographic background provides context to interpret perceptions of both benefits and challenges from the cycling event.

Image and status of the destination, the findings indicate that more than half of respondents (53%) perceived the event as improving the image of Banding Agung. Residents highlighted the growth of hospitality and politeness in the community as they interacted with visitors. The event was seen as elevating Banding Agung's reputation as a cycling destination in Indonesia. This aligns with broader literature suggesting that sport events can act as branding tools for emerging destinations. For residents, the recognition that their village could host an international event instilled a sense of pride and belonging.

International exchange and cooperation, a similar proportion (52.7%) agreed that the Gran Fondo facilitated cultural exchange and supported sport development. The presence of athletes from abroad, coupled with international media exposure, created opportunities for showcasing local traditions, food, and hospitality. Residents acknowledged that cultural performances and tourism activities organized around the event allowed Banding Agung to build networks beyond national borders. This reflects the dual role of sport events not only as competitive platforms but also as cultural showcases.

Inconvenience of daily life, despite the positive outlook, residents did not ignore the costs. Around 29.7% reported that their daily lives were disrupted. Price increases in essential goods during the event were noted, likely caused by temporary demand shocks from visitors. Road closures to secure cycling routes limited mobility and inconvenienced commuting routines. Some respondents

described the congestion as a source of frustration. These findings suggest that although the majority recognized the benefits, a notable minority experienced tangible disruptions that shaped their perception of the event's value.

Environmental and security concerns, approximately 30.8% expressed concern about environmental and security issues. The surge of visitors generated significant waste management challenges, with some residents complaining of litter and increased noise levels. Others pointed to risks of petty crime associated with crowding. Such negative effects are consistent with common criticisms of event tourism, where short-term surges in visitors strain local infrastructure and services. For a small village like Banding Agung, the influx of thousands of visitors represents a sharp contrast to daily routines, magnifying these concerns.

Economic and Tourism Development, on the positive side, the event's contribution to economic and tourism development was strongly emphasized. Over half of respondents (52.7%) noted increases in tourist arrivals during the event. Many households benefited directly by offering homestays, selling food and beverages, or marketing local products. Temporary stalls and small businesses experienced higher turnover. For communities with limited income opportunities, the event provided an important seasonal boost. Residents perceived these opportunities as proof that large-scale events can serve as catalysts for rural development when properly managed.

Public Infrastructure, the final dimension highlighted was infrastructure improvement. A majority (53.8%) agreed that the event stimulated investments in public facilities such as roads, signage, and communication networks. These upgrades were not only beneficial during the event but also left a lasting legacy for residents. Improved transportation infrastructure enhanced mobility and connectivity, while better communication facilities supported tourism promotion. Respondents saw these changes as a tangible outcome of hosting the Gran Fondo, further legitimizing their support for the event.

Exploratory Factor Analysis reduced the many observed indicators into four broader dimensions that summarize how residents perceive the event's social impact:

1. Adverse Impact – including concerns about waste, noise, safety, and cost of living increases. This factor captured the burdens and inconveniences associated with hosting.
2. Community Advancement – reflecting positive outcomes such as improved reputation, pride in hosting an international event, and increased politeness and hospitality.
3. Infrastructure Growth – related to construction, road improvements, public facilities, and communication services resulting from the event.
4. Quality of Life – capturing broader improvements in well-being, social opportunities, and cultural interaction enabled by the event.

These four factors align with established frameworks in event impact studies, confirming that both benefits and costs are recognized simultaneously by host communities.

The analysis demonstrates that positive impacts outweighed negative impacts, both statistically and in perception. The most recognized benefits were linked to reputation, economic opportunities, and infrastructure, while the most cited challenges were waste management, noise, and cost of living. The duality of impacts indicates that residents are generally supportive but also cautious.

The findings mirror prior research (Baldock et al., 2014; Dongfeng, 2015) that highlight the necessity of strategic event management to minimize adverse outcomes while amplifying positive legacies. In Banding Agung, where resources are limited, the role of local authorities, organizers, and community collaboration becomes crucial. Enhancing waste management systems, providing clear communication about road closures, and ensuring security presence can mitigate many of the reported issues. Overall, the Sriwijaya Ranau Gran Fondo has delivered substantial benefits to Banding Agung in terms of reputation, economic stimulation, infrastructure improvements, and community pride. The event also facilitated cultural exposure and positioned the village within the broader narrative of Indonesia's sport tourism development. However, challenges remain regarding environmental sustainability, cost of living pressures, and daily inconveniences. Community support remains strong, suggesting that residents value the event's contributions despite its drawbacks. The analysis underscores the importance of integrating local perspectives into event planning to ensure balanced and sustainable outcomes. If managed effectively, the Sriwijaya Ranau Gran Fondo has the potential to become a model of rural sport tourism development in Indonesia, providing both immediate and long-term benefits for host communities.

#### **4. Conclusion**

This study examined the social impacts of the Sriwijaya Ranau Gran Fondo on the local community of Banding Agung, South Sumatra. Drawing on data collected from 91 respondents through an online questionnaire and analyzed using quantitative methods, the research has revealed that the event generated a combination of positive and negative outcomes, with the positive impacts emerging as more dominant. The findings demonstrate that the event enhanced the image and reputation of Banding Agung, instilling a sense of pride among residents and elevating the village's status as a national cycling destination. Respondents expressed that the event encouraged hospitality and politeness within the community, reflecting broader improvements in social behavior associated with the hosting of international visitors.

Beyond reputation, the event also created notable economic and tourism benefits. Residents recognized that tourist arrivals increased during the event, and many households were able to participate directly in the local economy through small businesses, homestays, food stalls, and the sale of local products. This was particularly significant for Banding Agung, where many residents depend on modest incomes from informal work and agriculture. The Gran Fondo also left a tangible legacy in the form of infrastructure development. Road improvements, enhanced communication networks, and better public facilities were perceived as lasting outcomes that not only supported the event itself but also improved daily life for the community in the long term. Similarly, the presence of international athletes and cultural exchanges linked to the event provided opportunities for promoting local identity on a global stage, reinforcing the dual role of sport events as both tourism and cultural platforms.

Despite these achievements, several challenges were also identified. Residents reported that the cost of living temporarily increased during the event, placing additional financial pressure on low-income households. Road closures and heavy traffic disrupted daily routines, particularly for those commuting or conducting business activities. Environmental concerns such as increased waste, noise pollution, and occasional security risks were also cited as negative outcomes. Although these issues did not outweigh the perceived benefits, they serve as important reminders of the potential costs that accompany large-scale events, especially in small rural communities with limited infrastructure and resources. The findings further showed that socio-demographic factors such as age, gender, education, and income shaped how residents evaluated the event, suggesting that perceptions of benefits and drawbacks were not uniform across the population.

While this study provides valuable insights, it is important to recognize its limitations. The sample size was relatively small, with only 91 respondents, which may not fully represent the diversity of views across the population of 1,050 residents. The use of an online questionnaire also created constraints, as it excluded residents without internet access or digital literacy, particularly older community members. In addition, the study focused only on one edition of the event, making it difficult to assess long-term or cumulative impacts over time. Methodologically, the reliance on quantitative analysis provided structured and measurable results, but it also limited the ability to capture personal narratives, emotions, and nuanced perspectives that qualitative methods might reveal. Finally, because the study was conducted in a single location, its findings are context-specific and may not be directly generalizable to other host communities.

Based on these findings, several recommendations can be made to strengthen the planning and sustainability of future Sriwijaya Ranau Gran Fondo events. Event organizers, government authorities, and community representatives should work more closely together to ensure that residents' perspectives are included in decision-making processes. Such collaboration

would not only increase local ownership but also help mitigate resistance. Attention should also be directed toward reducing negative impacts through more effective waste management systems, better traffic planning and mobility arrangements, and measures to prevent unnecessary spikes in the cost of living during the event. At the same time, efforts should be made to maximize positive outcomes by integrating the event more deeply with local tourism development strategies. This could involve showcasing local culture, cuisine, and handicrafts as part of the event program, ensuring that the benefits extend beyond the cycling activity itself. Continuous monitoring and evaluation frameworks are also recommended so that each edition of the event can be assessed systematically, and lessons learned can inform future improvements.

Future research should expand upon the limitations of this study. Increasing the sample size and broadening participation to include more diverse demographic groups would provide a more representative picture of community perceptions. Employing mixed-methods approaches that combine surveys with interviews or focus group discussions would allow for deeper exploration of community narratives, providing richer insights into the lived experiences of residents. Longitudinal research that tracks changes across multiple editions of the Sriwijaya Ranau Gran Fondo would help to understand the sustainability and long-term legacies of the event, while comparative studies across different host villages or regions could shed light on how social impacts vary depending on local contexts. Finally, research that examines the long-term economic and cultural legacies of sport events would contribute to broader debates about how rural communities can leverage tourism and events for regional development.

In conclusion, the Sriwijaya Ranau Gran Fondo demonstrates the significant potential of sport tourism events to contribute to the development of rural communities in Indonesia. For Banding Agung, the event has already delivered improvements in reputation, economic opportunities, and infrastructure, while also fostering pride and cultural exchange. At the same time, the presence of negative impacts underscores the importance of careful planning, community engagement, and sustainable management practices. With stronger collaboration and more inclusive strategies, the event can continue to grow as a model of rural sport tourism that maximizes benefits and minimizes costs, ensuring that both the community and the wider region can share in its success.

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