

Analysis of Sport Tourism Activities in the City of Sabang, Indonesia, in 2025

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Abstract. This study analyses sports tourism activities in Sabang City in 2025. As a tourism subsector, sports tourism has great potential to drive regional economic growth, expand employment opportunities, and strengthen the destination's image at both the national and international levels. However, its development still faces challenges, including limited supporting infrastructure, transportation access, accommodations, and international-standard sports facilities. In addition, suboptimal destination promotion and branding, along with uneven human resource readiness, hinder efforts to attract tourists, particularly international visitors. Sabang Regency possesses natural advantages that strongly support sports tourism activities, particularly marine tourism such as diving, snorkelling, and other adventure sports. However, stakeholders have not yet fully optimised this potential because they organise sports events only sporadically and do not integrate them into the annual tourism calendar. As a result, tourist numbers fluctuate, accommodation occupancy rates remain low outside peak seasons, and investment stays limited.

Nevertheless, tourist satisfaction levels in Sabang are relatively high, particularly regarding natural beauty, facilities, accessibility, and the quality of guide services—factors that foster loyalty and the intention to revisit. This study employs a quantitative approach using a descriptive method. The study population consists of tourists engaging in sports tourism activities in Sabang Regency in 2025, totalling 141,121 people. The study used purposive sampling with a minimum sample size of 92 respondents based on the Slovin formula, supplemented by incidental sampling. The researcher collected data through interviews, questionnaires, and document analysis and analysed them using descriptive statistics. The results indicate that tourism activities in Sabang are dominated by nature-based activities such as diving and snorkelling, with a fairly high level of participation in various other sports activities. The main factors influencing tourists' decisions include natural attractions, guide quality, supporting facilities, accessibility, safety, price, and access to digital information.

From an Islamic Sharia perspective, factors such as Muslim-friendly services, halal food, access to places of worship, and honest, trustworthy service also enhance tourist satisfaction. Based on the research findings, sports tourism activities in Sabang have strong potential for sustainable development, particularly by integrating halal tourism principles, improving infrastructure quality, and strengthening well-planned event promotion and management. These findings are expected to serve as a foundation for the government and tourism industry stakeholders in formulating competitive sports tourism development strategies.

Keywords: Sports Tourism; Sabang Regency; Tourist Motivation; Revisit Intention; Halal Tourism.

INTRODUCTION

Global tourism has grown rapidly over the past two decades, particularly in the special interest tourism segment. One of the fastest-growing segments is sports tourism, which refers to travel related to sports activities—whether to participate, watch, or visit sports attractions. According to author [1], sports tourism is a person's journey from their place of residence to a specific destination related to sports activities. Authors [2] explain that these activities not only provide recreational and health benefits but also contribute to economic growth, destination development, and improved regional image. This phenomenon demonstrates that sports have evolved into both a lifestyle and an economic opportunity within the tourism sector.

In Indonesia, sports tourism shows a positive trend, with a value of Rp18.79 trillion in 2024 and a growth rate of about 6% per year, contributing about 25% to the tourism industry [3]. Law No. 11 of 2022 on Sports has also encouraged more systematic, integrated, and sustainable management of the sports industry. Data from BKPM show that investment in the sports and recreation sector has increased, although domestic investment still dominates [4]. The tourism sector declined significantly due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with its contribution to GDP falling from 5.6% in 2019 to 2.8% in 2020 before gradually recovering in subsequent years [5]. This trend indicates that the tourism sector, including sports tourism, has great potential to continue growing and serve as an economic driver.

Sports tourism does not focus solely on competition; it is evolving toward "sportainment"—a fusion of sports with entertainment, art, and culture—that can attract a broader range of tourists. Aceh Province has strong potential to develop sports tourism through its natural resources, which support activities such as surfing, diving, snorkelling, and adventure sports. However, this potential has not been fully utilised because of a lack of integrated strategies, a scarcity of large-scale sports events, and insufficient sustained promotion. Data from 2024 indicate a decline in international tourist arrivals and hotel occupancy rates in Aceh, including star-rated hotel occupancy of 48.08%, down 12.86 points from the previous month, as well as a 30.47% decline in tourist visits during a specific period [6].

Sabang Regency, as one of Aceh's premier destinations, excels in marine tourism and adventure sports. Activities such as diving, snorkelling, and trekking are the main attractions. Although tourist satisfaction is relatively high regarding natural beauty, facilities, and services, management of sports tourism activities remains ad hoc and has not yet been integrated into the annual tourism calendar. Fluctuating visitor numbers, low occupancy rates outside the holiday season, and limited investment challenge its development. Other factors, such as tour guide quality, accessibility, safety, pricing, and digital information, also influence tourists' decisions to participate.

Aceh's characteristics, which uphold Sharia values, provide a unique advantage for developing halal-based sports tourism. The availability of places of worship, guaranteed halal food, and an environment that upholds modesty standards add value for tourists, particularly Muslim tourists. Sports activities can still be carried out while considering safety, ethics, and environmental sustainability. These conditions open opportunities to develop sports tourism that is not only economically competitive but also in harmony with cultural and religious values.

Given these conditions, a study is needed to describe the characteristics, motivations, and factors influencing tourists in sports tourism activities. This research aims to provide an empirical overview that can inform more targeted, sustainable, and competitive sports tourism strategies.

METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach and descriptive methods to systematically and factually describe sports tourism activities in Sabang Regency in 2025. The operationalisation of parameters involved breaking down the research variables into measurable indicators, including tourists' demographic profiles, travel characteristics, participation in sports activities, satisfaction levels, and intention to revisit. In addition, this study identifies factors influencing tourists' decisions, such as accessibility, the quality of natural attractions, facilities and services, price, promotion, safety, the environment, culture and halal compliance, and supporting events. The researcher used operational definitions to ensure that each concept could be observed and empirically tested, as explained by the author [7]. The researcher collected data through questionnaires, inter-

views, and document reviews to obtain comprehensive information regarding tourists' behaviour and perceptions.

The population in this study consists of all tourists engaging in sports tourism activities in Sabang Regency in 2025, totalling 141,121 people. The sample was determined using purposive sampling with specific criteria: tourists aged 20 years or older, currently in Sabang, and who have visited at least twice. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with a 6% margin of error, resulting in a minimum of 92 respondents [8]. Sampling was conducted incidentally, based on tourists encountered by chance who met the study criteria. Data analysis used descriptive statistics, including percentages, frequency distributions, and mean values, to describe respondents' characteristics and patterns of tourist activities, as explained by [7]. This analysis provides an empirical overview of sports tourism activities and the factors that influence tourists' experiences and satisfaction.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

By 2025, sports tourism in Sabang Regency will grow rapidly by capitalising on its outstanding marine and natural tourism potential, such as Weh Island, Rubiah Island, and Iboih Beach, which serve as hubs for diving, snorkelling, and other water sports. In addition, the development of land-based sports, such as the Tour de Sabang cycling event and the Sabang Night Run, further enhances the area's tourist appeal, increasing tourist visits while propelling Sabang toward becoming a sustainable sports tourism destination that integrates economic, social, and environmental conservation.

Table 1 – Respondent Characteristics by Age

Age Group (Years)	Number of Respondents	%
17–25	24	26,1
26–35	30	32,6
36–45	20	21,7
46–55	12	13,0
>55	6	6,6
Total	92	100

Based on age data, most respondents were in the productive age group of 26–35 years old, totalling 30 people (32.6%), followed by the 17–25

age group with 24 people (26.1%); this indicates that sport tourism in Sabang is dominated by young people and young adults who tend to be physically active and have a strong interest in sports tourism activities.

Table 2 – Characteristics of Respondents by Gender

No	Gender Type	Number of Respondents	%
1	Male	56	60,9
2	Women	36	39,1
Total		92	100

Respondents were predominantly male, with 56 men (60.9%) and 36 women (39.1%); this indicates that sports tourism activities in Sabang are more popular among men, although female participation is also quite significant.

Table 3 – Characteristics of Respondents by Region / Nationality

Original Category	Number of Respondents	%
Domestic tourists	58	63,0
Foreign Countries	34	37,0
Total	92	100

Most respondents were domestic tourists, totalling 58 people (63.0%), while international tourists numbered 34 (37.0%). These data indicate that domestic tourists still dominate the main market for sports tourism in Sabang, but its international appeal is also strong.

Table 4 – Characteristics of Respondents Based on Highest Level of Education

Level of Education	Number of Respondents	%
Upper Secondary School or Equivalent	18	19,6
Diploma (D3)	14	15,2
Bachelor's Degree (S1)	47	51,1
Master's Degree (S2)	12	13,0
Doctorate (S3)	1	1,1
Total	92	100

Most respondents held a bachelor's degree (S1)—47 people (51.1%)—followed by high school graduates, with 18 people (19.6%); this suggests that tourists generally have a fairly high level of education, which may influence their preference for high-quality tourism experiences.

Table 5 – Respondent Characteristics by Occupation

Job Category	Number of Respondents	%
Students	27	29,3
Private-Sector Workers	30	32,6
ASN (Civil Service)	20	21,7
Self-Employed	13	14,1
Other	2	2,3
Total	92	100

Most of the respondents worked in the private sector—30 people (32.6%)—and were students—27 people (29.3%); this suggests that sports tourism is dominated by working-age people who are highly mobile and interested in active recreational activities.

Table 6 – Characteristics of Respondents Based on Length of Residence in Sabang

Length of Stay	Number of Respondents	%
1–2 days	19	20,7
3–5 days	51	55,4
6–10 days	18	19,6
More than 10 days	4	4,3
Total	92	100

Most tourists stayed for 3–5 days—51 people (55.4%)—followed by 1–2 days—19 people (20.7%); this indicates that the length of stay is ideal for enjoying various sports tourism activities in Sabang.

Table 7 – Characteristics of Respondents by Type of Accommodation

Types of Accommodation	Number of Respondents	%
Resort	38	41,3
Homestay	26	28,3

Types of Accommodation	Number of Respondents	%
Guesthouse	22	23,9
Liveaboard Boat	4	4,3
Other (camping areas, local lodging)	2	2,2
Total	92	100

The largest number of respondents chose resorts (38 people, 41.3%), followed by homestays (26 people, 28.3%); this indicates that tourists tend to choose comfortable accommodations that still offer variety based on their preferences and budgets.

Table 8 – Characteristics of Respondents Based on the Source of Their Information About Sabang

Sources of Information	Number of Respondents	%
Social Media (Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, etc.)	53	57,6
Friends/Relatives (Word of Mouth)	13	14,1
Online Reviews (TripAdvisor, Google Reviews, Blogs, etc.)	11	12,0
Official Website (Government/Tourism)	8	8,7
Travel Agency	5	5,4
Other (exhibitions, events, sports communities)	2	2,2
Total	92	100

Most respondents—53 people (57.6%)—got information from social media, followed by friends and relatives (13 people, 14.1%); this confirms that social media is the primary source for promoting and disseminating tourism information in Sabang.

Table 9 – Sports Activities to Do While in Sabang

Type of Activity	Number of Respondents	%
Diving (Scuba)	38	41,3
Snorkelling	29	31,5
Trekking / Jungle Trek	15	16,3
Freediving	8	8,7
Trail Running	5	5,4
Kayaking	6	6,5

Type of Activity	Number of Respondents	%
Fishing	4	4,3
Cycling	3	3,3
Spearfishing	2	2,2
Surfing	1	1,1
Other (Beach Yoga, Beach Games, etc.)	2	2,2
Total	92	100

The most popular activities were diving, with 38 participants (41.3%), and snorkelling, with 29 participants (31.5%); this indicates that marine tourism is the main attraction in Sabang's sports tourism.

Table 10 – How Many Times Did You Participate in Sports Tourism Activities During This Visit

Frequency of Activity	Number of Respondents	%
1 time	26	28,3
2–3 times	42	45,7
4–5 times	17	18,5
More than 5 times a day	7	7,6
Total	92	100

Most respondents participated in activities 2–3 times, totalling 42 people (45.7%); this indicates that tourists are quite active in making the most of their visit by engaging in various sports activities.

Table 11 – Levels of Experience in Sports Tourism

Level of Experience	Number of Respondents	%
Beginners	37	40,2
Experienced	33	35,9
Certified (Open Water / Advanced)	22	23,9
Total	92	100

Most respondents were beginners—37 people (40.2%)—followed by experienced participants, 33 people (35.9%); this indicates that Sabang is not only attractive to professionals but also welcoming to tourists new to sports tourism activities.

Satisfaction While Engaging in Sports Tourism Activities in Sabang. The research results show that tourist satisfaction with sports tourism activities in Sabang Regency falls into the "very good" category, as reflected in the high ratings for indicators such as guide quality, condition of tourist sites, safety, equipment, and value for money. Guide quality received a high score (409), indicating professionalism and competence in providing safe and informative services. The condition of tourist sites also received a good rating (score 386), particularly for water clarity and the richness of marine biodiversity—the main attractions of diving and snorkelling activities. In addition, safety (score of 383) and equipment quality (score of 432) indicate that tourists feel safe and comfortable during their activities. Positive perceptions regarding value for money (score of 391) further reinforce a satisfying travel experience. These findings indicate that Sabang is highly competitive as a nature-based sports tourism destination with strong service quality.

High tourist satisfaction directly impacts loyalty, as evidenced by the intention to revisit (score 403) and the willingness to recommend Sabang to others (score 382), both of which fall into the "very good" category; this indicates that positive travel experiences can shape a strong destination image and drive positive word-of-mouth. Key driving factors include natural beauty, guide professionalism, safety, and the variety of activities offered. Nevertheless, several aspects still need improvement, such as consistency in service quality, environmental cleanliness, and access to tourist sites. From a Sharia perspective, this satisfaction is further reinforced by the availability of halal services, an environment that upholds Sharia norms, and honest, trustworthy service. Therefore, improving infrastructure quality, strengthening human resource capacity, and managing destinations based on sustainability and Sharia values are crucial steps to maintaining and enhancing the appeal of sports tourism in Sabang.

What Factors Will Influence Tourists' Participation in Sports Tourism in Sabang Regency in 2025. Based on the analysis of questionnaire data from 92 respondents across 32 statements, the factors influencing tourists' participation in sports tourism in Sabang Regency in 2025 generally fall into the "very good" category; this is based on a scale ranging from a maximum score of 460 (92×5) to a minimum score of 92 (92×1), resulting in a normalised score (NJI) of 73.6. Based on the rat-

ing classification, the majority of the study's indicators fall within the 386.4–460 range (very good). Aggregately, nearly all key variables—such as accessibility (score 397–429), quality of natural attractions (score 388–422), facilities and services (score 386–418), price (score 393–401), promotion (score 393–416), safety (score 386–403), environmental conditions (score 386–416), culture and halal compliance (score 396–410), and events and recommendations (scores 394–410) all show average scores above 4.20, indicating a very positive perception among tourists. The factors with the highest scores were transportation frequency (429; average 4.66), travel time (428; average 4.65), and environmental cleanliness (416; average 4.52), indicating that ease of access, travel efficiency, and environmental quality are the dominant factors in attracting tourists.

In addition, other contributing factors such as the beauty of the underwater world (score 388; average 4.22), the clarity of the seawater (421; average 4.57), and the diversity of marine life (420; average 4.57) are also major attractions in sports tourism, particularly for diving and snorkelling. In terms of facilities, the availability of equipment (415; average 4.51), dive centres (418; average 4.54), and accommodations (400; average 4.35) also contribute to tourists' comfort. Meanwhile, in terms of promotion and social influence, online testimonials (416; average 4.52), social media information (403; average 4.38), and online reviews (410; average 4.46) play a significant role in shaping visitation decisions. It can be concluded that the factors most influencing tourists to engage in sports tourism in Sabang include accessibility, the quality of natural attractions, facilities, affordable prices, digital promotion, safety, and clean and sustainable environmental conditions—all of which fall into the "very good" category and contribute significantly to increased tourist interest.

Overview of Tourism in Sabang Regency in 2025. A profile of tourists in Sabang Regency in 2025 indicates very high satisfaction with various aspects of the destination, such as natural beauty, accessibility, facilities, guide services, and digital promotion. Tourists rate their experiences as exceeding expectations, shaping a positive perception of Sabang as a premier sports tourism destination. This situation indicates that destination management has been effective in creating high-quality tourism experiences.

This finding aligns with authors [9], who state that tourist satisfaction arises from comparing expectations with actual experiences during a trip. When the experience exceeds expectations, it fosters tourist satisfaction and loyalty [9]. Furthermore, authors [10] emphasise that a positive destination image enhances tourism appeal and encourages repeat visits.

Authors [11] also state that a tourist destination's success depends not only on its natural potential but also on the quality of the experience it provides. In Sabang, this is evident in the combination of natural beauty, comfortable facilities, and professional service. From a Sharia perspective, these conditions also reflect the values of trustworthiness, honesty, and service in accordance with the principles of halal tourism.

Tourists in Sabang Regency in Sports Tourism in 2025. The research findings indicate that the most dominant sport tourism activities in Sabang Regency are diving and snorkelling, followed by trekking and other adventure activities; this suggests that marine tourism remains a major attraction in Sabang, largely because of its internationally renowned underwater beauty. Tourists also tend to try more than one activity during their visit. This phenomenon aligns with authors [12], who state that the main attractions of marine tourism are the beauty of marine ecosystems and high-water visibility.

Islamic law permits sports tourism activities such as diving, snorkelling, and trekking, provided that they do not violate Islamic principles. These activities also promote physical and mental health and align with the principle of preserving life. Thus, sports tourism in Sabang can be developed as a form of tourism that is not only recreational but also holds positive value from a Sharia perspective.

Factors Influencing Tourists' Participation in Sports Tourism in Sabang Regency in 2025. The results indicate several key factors influencing tourists' participation in sports tourism in Sabang: guide quality, natural conditions, facilities, accessibility, price, and digital promotion. High-quality instructors provide a sense of security and boost tourists' confidence, especially in high-risk activities such as diving and kayaking. This aligns with studies that show tour guide competence significantly influences tourist satisfaction. Furthermore, author [13] emphasises that the authenticity and preservation of natural

attractions are key factors driving tourists to choose a destination.

Authors [14] also support the importance of accessibility, noting that ease of access increases tourists' interest in visiting. Furthermore, explain that digital media and word-of-mouth significantly influence tourists' decisions. Price is also a key factor; authors [15] note that perceiving fair pricing relative to service quality enhances tourist satisfaction. From a Sharia perspective, these factors reflect the values of justice, trustworthiness, and responsibility, and support tourism that is safe, sustainable, and in accordance with Islamic principles.

CONCLUSIONS

Tourists in Sabang Regency in 2025 will report very high satisfaction, particularly with natural

beauty, facilities, accessibility, and guide services. This satisfaction will foster positive perceptions, increase loyalty, and encourage repeat visits, supported by Muslim-friendly services such as places of worship and halal food.

Sports tourism activities are dominated by nature-based activities such as diving, snorkelling, and trekking, and tourists tend to participate in more than one activity. Tourism stakeholders can develop these activities sustainably as long as they align with safety, cleanliness, and Sharia values. The main factors influencing tourists' decisions include tour guide quality, natural attractions, facilities, accessibility, safety, price, and digital information. Support for halal services, transparency, and safety also help build trust and enhance the tourist experience.

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