

Community Perspectives on the Environmental, Social, and Economic Impacts of the Tomohon International Flower Festival

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this research is to evaluate the perceptions of the local community regarding the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impacts of the Tomohon International Flower Festival (TIFF). Specifically, the study aims to understand how the residents of Tomohon view the festival's contributions to their economic well-being, social cohesion, cultural preservation, and environmental sustainability.

Methodology: This research used an exploratory approach to analyse residents' perceptions of the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impacts of festival activities in Tomohon.

Results: The research shows that the Tomohon International Flower Festival (TIFF) is positively viewed by the local community, boosting income, job creation, and regional revenue. It enhances social interactions, cultural pride, and supports education. However, concerns about waste and its impact on the city's aesthetics highlight environmental sustainability issues.

Conclusions: TIFF positively impacts the economy, society, and environment but raises concerns about waste management, highlighting the need for better sustainability practices.

Limitations: The data reflects respondents' views at a specific point in time and may be influenced by personal experiences, biases, or limited knowledge of economic, socio-cultural, and environmental factors. Additionally, the sample size, though sufficient for exploratory analysis, may not fully represent the Tomohon population, limiting the generalizability of the findings.

Contribution: This article enhances understanding of the socio-economic and environmental impacts of large cultural events like the Tomohon International Flower Festival (TIFF) from the local community's perspective. It also offers guidance for organizers and policymakers in optimizing festival benefits while addressing community concerns for more sustainable and inclusive planning.

Keywords: *Community Perceptions, Economic Impact, Environmental Sustainability, Socio-Cultural Sustainability, Tomohon International Flower Festival (TIFF).*

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1. Introduction

Tourism is a priority area of the economy tourism is a priority area of the economy Event tourism plays a crucial role in boosting local economies, promoting cultural exchange, and fostering community involvement (Madnasir, Marwin, Hanif, & Susanto, 2024). Aulia, Suharto, Isnaini, and Agustina (2024) events are an important part of Indonesia's rich culture and a tourism attraction. According to

Akhundova (2024), event tourism can drive economic growth by attracting visitors, thereby supporting local businesses and generating employment opportunities (Akhundova, 2024). Strategic planning is essential in event tourism, as it contributes to sustainable growth and enhances visitor satisfaction through well-organized events (John, Tyagi, & Nadda, 2024). Akhundova also emphasizes the cultural importance of events, highlighting their role in showcasing local traditions and encouraging intercultural dialogue (Akhundova, 2024). However, challenges such as environmental impacts and the need for effective management to minimize negative effects on local communities must be addressed. While event tourism can elevate a destination's profile, it is crucial to consider social dynamics to ensure that benefits are fairly distributed among all stakeholders (Fokin, Berkova, Borisyuk, & But, 2023). Overall, event tourism's significance lies in its ability to drive economic, cultural, and social benefits, provided it is managed sustainably.

The International Cultural Tourism Festival refers to an international cultural tourism festival held in a region (Tang, 2023). Cultural festivals significantly impact tourism development by stimulating local economies, enhancing community identity, and preserving cultural heritage. Akhundova notes that these festivals attract tourists, boosting local businesses and creating job opportunities, which contribute to economic growth (Akhundova, 2024). Cultural festivals are also vital in building social cohesion and community pride, enhancing the tourist experience, and encouraging repeat visits. These events serve as platforms for cultural exchange, enriching the tourism experience and appealing to a diverse range of visitors. However, challenges such as cultural commodification, where local traditions might be altered to meet tourist expectations, can undermine authenticity. Therefore, while cultural festivals are essential for tourism development, careful consideration of their impact on local culture is necessary (Wasela, 2023).

Mamuaja, Rompis, and Timboeleng (2018), Mantur and Chuanda (2023) explain that Tomohon City is a city known as "Kota Bunga" or Flower City as a tourist city located in North Sulawesi Province, Indonesia. The Tomohon International Flower Festival (TIFF) is a key cultural event that showcases the floral heritage and traditions of Tomohon, Indonesia. The Tomohon International Flower Festival (TIFF) aims to promote the potential of the city of Tomohon as a flower city and its supporting industries so that it can become the center of the flower industry in Eastern Indonesia (Kowaas, Pioh, & Kumayas, 2017). Research shows that TIFF not only promotes local floristry and horticulture but also enhances community engagement through skill development programs related to event management and floristry (Swandewi, Febrianto, Adinda, Adipati, & Wirata, 2024). The festival attracts both domestic and international tourists, boosting the local economy and fostering cultural exchange. Additionally, TIFF plays a vital role in preserving local customs through various cultural performances integrated into the festival activities. However, challenges such as environmental sustainability and the need for improved infrastructure could impact the festival's long-term success. Overall, TIFF demonstrates how cultural events can serve as platforms for community development, tourism, and cultural preservation, despite facing operational challenges.

The relationship between economic, socio-cultural, and environmental sustainability in the context of cultural events is complex. While previous studies may have explored the impacts of cultural festivals on local economies, social structures, and environments, there is limited research specifically focusing on the community's perspectives regarding these impacts. Moreover, existing studies may not adequately address the long-term sustainability of such events, particularly in balancing economic benefits with environmental protection and socio-cultural preservation. Additionally, the unique context of the Tomohon International Flower Festival, with its specific cultural and environmental setting, has not been sufficiently examined in the literature. This gap highlights the need for a more nuanced understanding of how local residents perceive the festival's impacts across these dimensions and how these perceptions may influence future planning and management of the event. Furthermore, the absence of longitudinal studies assessing the festival's ongoing effects on the community over time represents a critical area for further exploration. Therefore, a holistic approach that considers all three sustainability pillars is essential for the successful perception and execution of cultural events. This study aims to evaluate the perceptions of Tomohon residents towards the International Flower Festival, focusing on sustainability. It seeks to understand how demographic factors and motivations for

attending the festival influence these perceptions, providing valuable insights for event organizers, local administration, and tourism stakeholders.

2. Literature review and hypotheses development

2.1 Economy Sustainability

Tourism is a priority area of the economy (Darchashvili, 2024). Festivals and events have become significant tools for economic development, particularly in promoting tourism and stimulating local economies. Events and festivals has predominately focused on evaluating their economic impacts and to a lesser extent their social and cultural impacts (Collins & Cooper, 2017). Well-managed events can generate substantial economic benefits for host communities by attracting visitors, increasing spending in local businesses, and creating employment opportunities. These economic benefits often extend beyond the duration of the event itself, as they can lead to increased investment in infrastructure, enhanced regional visibility, and the development of new business opportunities (Mastroianni, Lancaster, Korkmann, Opdyke, & Beitelmal, 2021). However, for these benefits to be sustainable, it is crucial that events are planned and executed with a long-term perspective that considers the needs of future generations. The financial viability of events is another crucial aspect of economic sustainability (Wulandari & Arif, 2022). According to Getz and Page (2016), for events to be economically sustainable, they must generate sufficient revenue to cover their costs and produce a surplus that can be reinvested in future events or the community. This requires careful financial planning, including securing diverse revenue streams, managing costs effectively, and ensuring that the event delivers value to all stakeholders. Additionally, events that are financially sustainable can reduce their reliance on external funding sources, such as government subsidies, thereby enhancing their independence and resilience.

2.2 Socio Cultural Sustainability

Festivals can play a vital role in reinforcing local cultural identities and traditions, thereby contributing to the socio-cultural sustainability of a community. Events that celebrate local heritage, for example, can serve as platforms for the transmission of cultural knowledge and practices to younger generations, ensuring their continuity (Wasela, 2023). Moreover, culturally sustainable events can enhance social cohesion by bringing together diverse groups within the community, fostering a shared sense of identity and purpose (Hassanli, Walters, & Williamson, 2021). Furthermore, socio-cultural sustainability also involves addressing issues of social equity and inclusion. Events should be accessible to all members of the community, regardless of their socioeconomic status, and should provide opportunities for marginalized groups to participate and benefit, events that prioritize inclusivity can contribute to social sustainability by reducing social inequalities and promoting social justice within the community.

2.3 Environmental Sustainability

Sustainable management is an important consideration for businesses and organisations, and the enormous number of tourism events taking place requiring facilities, power, transport, people and much more makes sustainable event planning a considerable priority. Sustainable cultural events is considered one of the most important today for the cultural industry, creative economy, and tourism (Dimitrova, 2023). One of the critical aspects of environmental sustainability in event tourism is the management of waste generated by events. Events can produce significant amounts of waste, including food waste, packaging, and promotional materials (Zafari & Golzary, 2023). If not properly managed, this waste can lead to environmental degradation and strain local waste management systems. To address this, event organizers are increasingly adopting waste reduction strategies such as recycling programs, composting, and the use of biodegradable materials. These practices not only reduce the environmental impact of events but also enhance their appeal to environmentally conscious attendees.

Energy consumption is another important factor in achieving environmental sustainability in events. Events often require substantial energy inputs for lighting, sound, and other operational needs. Naura, Safira, and Larasati (2022), argue that reducing energy consumption through the use of renewable energy sources and energy-efficient technologies is essential for minimizing the carbon footprint of events. Additionally, the integration of energy-saving measures, such as LED lighting and energy-

efficient equipment, can significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with event activities (Getz & Page, 2016).

3. Research Methodology

This research used an exploratory approach to analyse residents' perceptions of the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impacts of festival activities in Tomohon. The study aimed to identify both the positive and negative effects that such activities may have on the local community. To achieve this, a survey was conducted with a total of 100 residents of Tomohon, selected using the Slovin formula to ensure a representative sample. The survey focused on various aspects of the festival's impact, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the residents' views. The data were collected through a structured questionnaire, with all items measured using a five-point Likert scale, where respondents indicated their level of agreement with each statement, ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). This scale was chosen to capture the intensity of residents' perceptions across different dimensions of impact. This study uses a quantitative approach and was analysed based on weight mean score (WMS) by using Excel, the hypotheses in this study are as follow:

- H1 : Economic Impact Hypothesis: "The Tomohon International Flower Festival significantly contributes to the economic development of the local community".
- H2 : Socio-Cultural Impact Hypothesis: "The Tomohon International Flower Festival positively enhances social and cultural pride within the local community."
- H3 : Environmental Impact Hypothesis: "Despite its positive contributions to public spaces and the natural environment, the Tomohon International Flower Festival generates significant environmental concerns".

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 Result

Table 1. Result Calculation

ITEM	MEAN	STD DEV	ITEM-TOTAL CORRELATION	CRONB AHS VALUE	DECISION
ECONOMY					
TIFF event increases the income of the residents and improves my standard of living.	4,06	0,983	0,582	0,746	ACCEPTED
TIFF creates new job opportunities for the citizens.	4,21	0,880	0,693		ACCEPTED
Generates additional revenue for the regional budget.	4,27	0,815	0,758		ACCEPTED
TIFF event attracts investment to the city of Tomohon.	4,24	0,900	0,807		ACCEPTED
encourages residents to develop new economic activities (stimulating local entrepreneurship)	4,30	0,937	0,705		ACCEPTED
SOCIO-CULTURAL					
TIFF event provides many opportunities for local residents to spend their leisure time.	3,91	1,036	0,541	0,826	ACCEPTED
TIFF enhances communication and social interaction among residents.	4,09	0,900	0,659		ACCEPTED

TIFF event fosters the development of a sense of pride in the “existence” of the city of Tomohon.	4,16	0,873	0,773		ACCEPTED
TIFF event promotes the culture and local identity of the city of Tomohon.	3,99	0,969	0,787		ACCEPTED
TIFF event stimulates the development of the existing culture in the city of Tomohon.	4,13	0,861	0,811		ACCEPTED
TIFF event also facilitates the development of education and culture in the community.	3,92	0,992	0,734		ACCEPTED
It improves the foreign language skills of the residents.	3,94	0,962	0,636		ACCEPTED
ENVIRONMENTAL					
TIFF event contributes to the improvement of the city’s natural environment.	3,95	0,957	0,730	0,787	ACCEPTED
TIFF event contributes to traffic congestion in the city of Tomohon.	3,86	0,975	0,825		ACCEPTED
It generates waste and negatively impacts the city’s aesthetic aspects.	3,67	1,045	0,661		ACCEPTED
TIFF motivates public institutions to utilize unused spaces for cultural and social life.	3,75	0,809	0,772		ACCEPTED
TIFF motivates public institutions to organize public spaces (streets, buildings, parks).	4,02	0,964	0,708		ACCEPTED

Source: Authors (2024)

Considering that the alpha value for all perception categories exceeded 0.70, the three survey dimensions indicated an acceptable level of internal consistency, 22 were retained. To achieve a more comprehensive measure of residents' perceptions across the three dimensions of sustainability (economic, socio-cultural, and environmental), a composite variable was created for each category of perceptions. These composite variables were constructed using the median scores from each respondent. Consequently, the final score range of the composite variables was between 1 and 5, where 1 represented the perception that the flower festival is not sustainable at all, and 5 indicated that it has achieved an "ideal" level of sustainability. It is recommended that festival organizers determine their own optimal sustainability level, which they consider most suitable for the future development of the festival. This will enable them to compare their goals with locals' perceptions. However, for the purpose of this study, we used the median value of responses on a 5-point scale to understand the underlying nature and direction of consumer perceptions of the event. This serves as a "benchmark" that can be utilized in future evaluations of the event.

4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 Perception on Economy Sustainability

The Tomohon International Flower Festival (TIFF) is widely perceived by local residents as a significant contributor to economic sustainability within the region. Residents express strong agreement

that TIFF encourages the development of new economic activities by stimulating local entrepreneurship, evidenced by a high mean score of approximately 4.33. Such high scores indicate strong internal consistency in the measurement of economic impacts. Additionally, the festival is seen as a vital attractor of investment to the city, with a mean score of around 4.25, further reinforcing its positive economic impact.

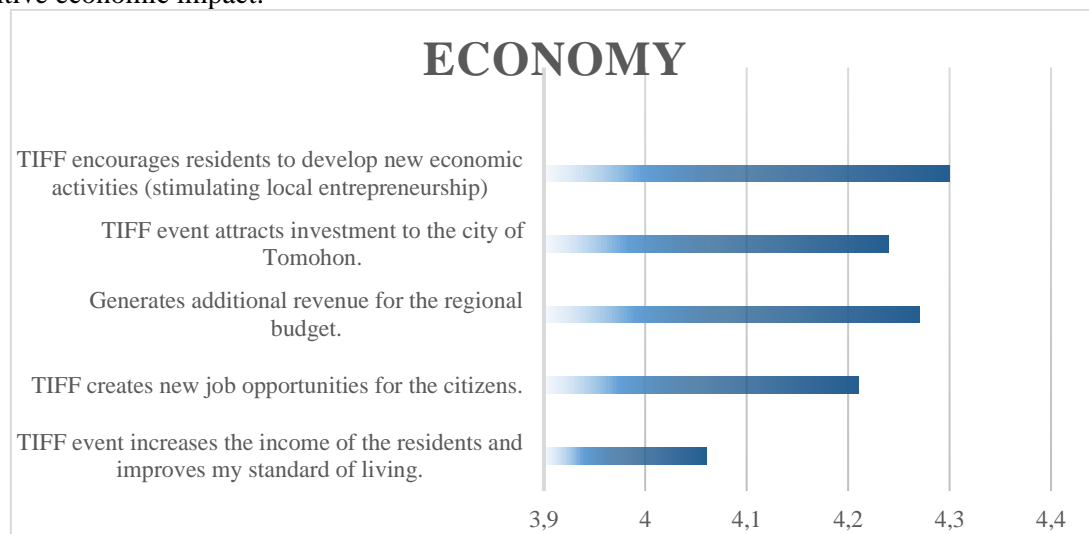


Figure 2. Perception of Economy Sustainability
Source : Authors (2024)

This aligns with the objectives and purpose of the Tomohon International Flower Festival (TIFF) as outlined in the Terms of Reference (TOR), which are to enhance the well-being of the community through the growth of tourism-related businesses and to foster a love for flowers and ornamental plants as part of the local culture. By promoting the beauty of local flora and integrating it into the community's cultural practices, TIFF not only drives economic development through tourism but also strengthens cultural identity and appreciation for local biodiversity.

TIFF is also recognized for generating additional revenue for the regional budget, which is crucial for funding local infrastructure and services, as indicated by a mean score of about 4.20. Such economic benefits are often a key objective of large-scale cultural events. Furthermore, the creation of new job opportunities, with a mean score of 4.15, is another key benefit highlighted by residents, emphasizing the festival's role in reducing unemployment and improving the standard of living. Although slightly lower, the perception that TIFF increases residents' income and enhances their standard of living, reflected by a mean score of 4.05, still indicates a positive view of the festival's contribution to individual financial well-being. Overall, these perceptions underscore TIFF's role as a major economic driver in the region, supporting both macroeconomic development and individual prosperity (Kowaas et al., 2017)

4.2.2 Perception on Socio Cultural Sustainability

The Tomohon International Flower Festival (TIFF) has significantly influenced the socio-cultural landscape of Tomohon, as evidenced by the positive perceptions of the local community regarding its impact on socio-cultural sustainability. Residents perceive that TIFF plays a crucial role in enhancing various socio-cultural aspects. The festival is highly regarded for its ability to foster the development of foreign language skills among residents, with a mean score of approximately 3.75, suggesting that the event encourages cultural exchange and learning. Further, TIFF is seen as a catalyst for the development of education and culture within the community, receiving a mean score around 3.95, indicating that the event facilitates educational and cultural engagement (Pangerapan, Kaawoan, & Pioh, 2018). Additionally, the festival is credited with stimulating the existing cultural dynamics in Tomohon, with a perception score near 4.05, reflecting its role in enriching the local cultural fabric (AVE, Statistics, & Square, 2020).

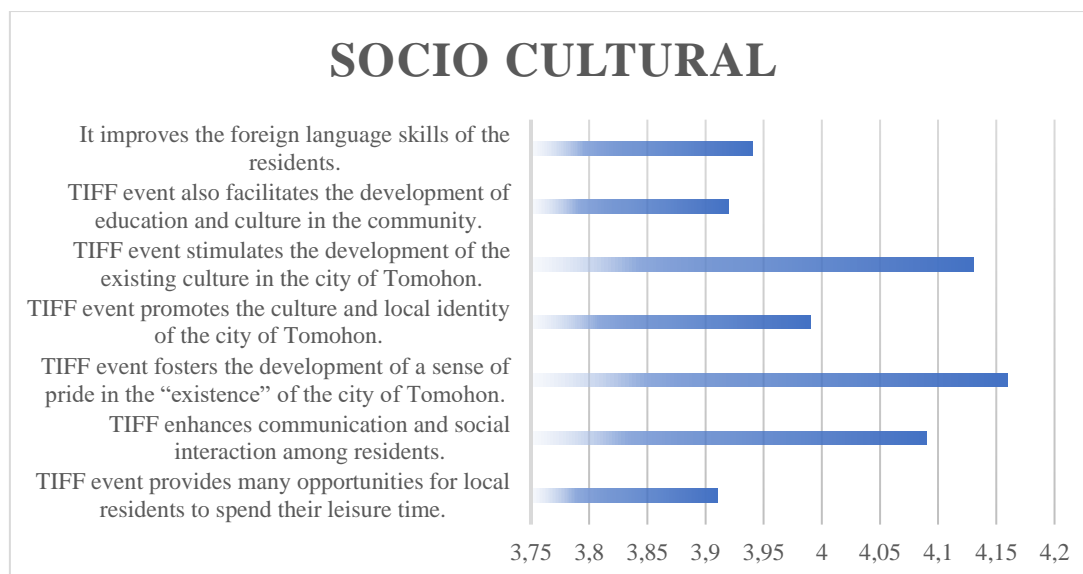


Figure 2. Perception of Socio Cultural Sustainability
Source: Authors (2024)

Moreover, TIFF is highly valued for promoting the culture and local identity of Tomohon, which is essential for fostering community pride and identity, evidenced by a high score of 4.15. This aligns with studies that suggest major cultural events significantly enhance local identity and pride (Richards, 2001). The festival also boosts communication and social interaction among residents, scoring approximately 4.10, which enhances social cohesion and community spirit. Lastly, TIFF is appreciated for providing numerous leisure opportunities, with a score of about 4.20, which contributes to the overall quality of life and leisure satisfaction among the residents (Saroinsong & Sendouw, 2020). According to an interview with a local resident of Tomohon, they mentioned that :

"TIFF has made Tomohon more well-known, especially because, aside from our extreme market, we also have an annual event that is recognized worldwide." (Source : Interview, 2024).

These insights underscore the integral role of the Tomohon International Flower Festival (TIFF) in both preserving and promoting local culture while simultaneously enhancing the socio-cultural fabric of Tomohon. The festival serves as a vital platform for showcasing the rich cultural heritage of the region, offering the community an opportunity to celebrate and take pride in their traditions. Furthermore, TIFF contributes significantly to socio-economic development by driving tourism and increasing community engagement. Festivals not only highlight cultural heritage but also act as catalysts for economic growth by attracting visitors and fostering a sense of community. This dual impact of cultural preservation and economic stimulation makes TIFF a cornerstone in the sustainable development of Tomohon, reinforcing its identity on both a local and global scale (Kawatak, Koondoko, & Montolalu, 2021).

4.2.3 Perception on Environmental Sustainability

The Tomohon International Flower Festival (TIFF) significantly impacts the local environment, and residents' perceptions reflect a nuanced understanding of both the positive and negative environmental consequences of the event. The festival is particularly noted for its role in motivating public institutions to organize and improve public spaces, such as streets, buildings, and parks, with a mean perception score of 4.02. This suggests that TIFF plays a key role in enhancing the urban infrastructure and aesthetic appeal of the city, which aligns with the idea that large events can catalyze urban development (Roring, Simanjuntak, & Suwartiningsih, 2025). Additionally, residents perceive that TIFF encourages the utilization of unused spaces for cultural and social activities, with a mean score of 3.75, indicating the festival's potential in revitalizing underutilized areas within the city (Castro-Wooldridge & Lizon, 2016).

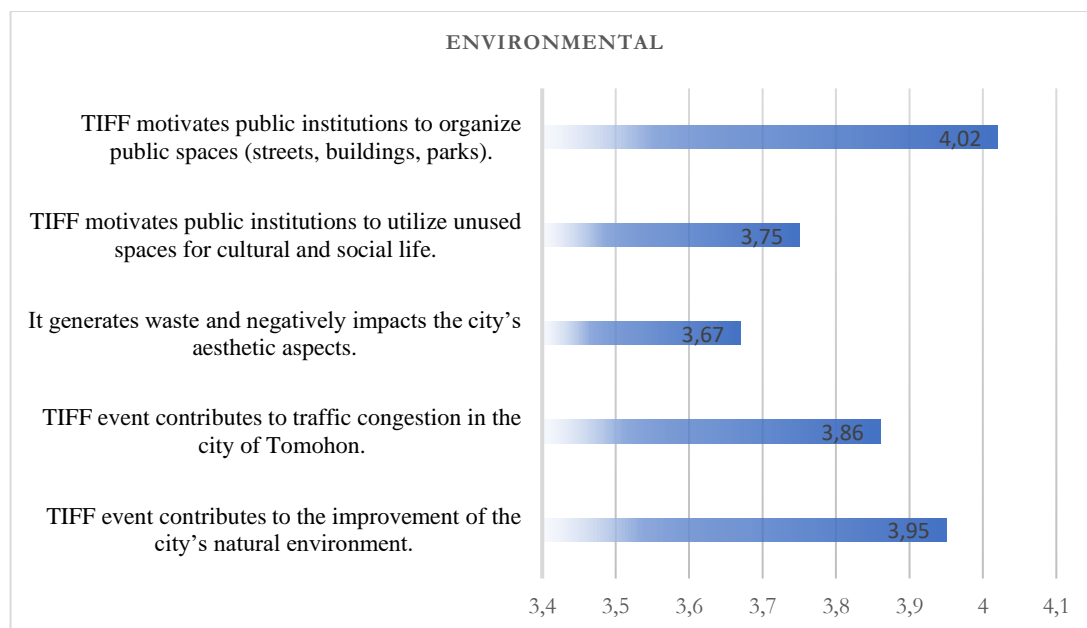


Figure 3. Perception of Environmental Sustainability
Source : Authors (2024)

However, the event is also perceived to have some negative environmental impacts. Residents have expressed concerns about the waste generated by TIFF and its potential to negatively affect the city's aesthetic aspects, with a score of 3.67. This is consistent with studies that highlight the environmental challenges associated with large-scale events, particularly in waste management (Mantur & Chuanda, 2023). Furthermore, the festival is perceived to contribute to traffic congestion in Tomohon, reflected by a score of 3.86, a common issue in cities hosting major events (Taruk & Setyadi, 2016). On a more positive note, the festival is also seen as contributing to the improvement of the city's natural environment, with a score of 3.95, which underscores the dual impact of TIFF on both urban and natural landscapes.

These perceptions indicate that while TIFF brings significant environmental benefits, particularly in urban improvement and environmental enhancement, it also presents challenges that need to be addressed, such as waste management and traffic congestion. This dual impact suggests that future iterations of TIFF could benefit from more sustainable planning practices to mitigate its environmental footprint while maximizing its contributions to urban and environmental development.

5. Conclusion

The Tomohon International Flower Festival (TIFF) is perceived by the community as having a positive impact on economic, socio-cultural, and environmental dimensions. Economically, TIFF is seen as boosting income, creating jobs, and stimulating local entrepreneurship. Socio-culturally, the festival fosters social cohesion, cultural pride, and supports educational and cultural development. However, while TIFF is viewed as beneficial to the city's environment and public spaces, concerns about waste management highlight the need for improved environmental practices. Overall, TIFF is considered a positive contributor to the community, with areas for enhancement in environmental management.

Limitation

The limitations of this research primarily stem from its reliance on community perceptions, which, while valuable, are inherently subjective and may not fully capture the objective impacts of the Tomohon International Flower Festival (TIFF). The data gathered reflects the views of the respondents at a specific point in time and may be influenced by personal experiences, biases, or limited knowledge about broader economic, socio-cultural, and environmental factors. Additionally, the sample size, though sufficient for exploratory analysis, may not be fully representative of the entire Tomohon population, potentially limiting the generalizability of the findings.

Another limitation is the focus on self-reported data, which could be affected by social desirability bias, where respondents may provide answers they believe are expected or favorable rather than their true opinions. The research also does not deeply explore the long-term impacts of TIFF, focusing more on immediate or short-term effects perceived by the community. Furthermore, while the study touches on environmental concerns, it lacks detailed environmental assessments, such as ecological or carbon footprint analyses, which would provide a more comprehensive understanding of TIFF's environmental impact. These limitations suggest that future research could benefit from a more mixed-methods approach, including objective data collection and longitudinal studies, to provide a more nuanced and comprehensive evaluation of TIFF's impacts.

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