

## ABSTRACT

**Title:** Gravel: A Phenomenon in Contemporary Cycling Sport

**Objectives:** The aim of this thesis was to evaluate the development, characteristics, and current position of gravel cycling as a growing segment within the cycling sport. The practical part of the research focused on comparing gravel bike sales of Czech brands and analyzing the evolution and structure of gravel races in the Czech Republic. It also examined how gravel bikes are perceived in terms of popularity among cyclists and what role their construction plays in comfort and the overall riding experience.

**Methods:** This thesis combines both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. The quantitative part included an analysis of sales data from four Czech gravel bike manufacturers (Festka, Qayron, Superior, Beany) between 2022 and 2024, as well as participation statistics from the Gravel Blinduro and Gravel Series races during the same period. The data were processed using descriptive statistics (including the calculation of mean, median, and standard deviation) and visualized in Microsoft Excel. The qualitative part was based on a questionnaire survey among gravel bike designers and manufacturers, focusing on perceptions of components, design specifics, and marketing strategies. The results were supplemented with thematic analysis and frequency evaluation of responses.

**Results:** The results show that gravel cycling is experiencing a significant rise in popularity in the Czech Republic. Between 2022 and 2024, gravel bike sales increased by 54.9% at Festka, 42.9% at Beany, 28.5% at Superior, and Qayron recorded a dramatic jump from 27 to 261 bikes (+866.7%). Similarly, participation in gravel races also grew – Gravel Blinduro saw an increase from 305 participants in 2022 to 470 in 2024 (+54.1%), with the number of female participants rising by 64.6%. The theoretical analysis confirmed that tire width and frame geometry are among the key design factors influencing both riding comfort and the overall popularity of gravel bikes among cyclists.

**Conclusion:** Gravel cycling represents a modern, versatile, and rapidly evolving segment of the cycling sport that combines athletic challenge, adventure, and recreational value. Its growing popularity across age groups and genders contributes to promoting an active lifestyle in natural environments and secures its position on both the cycling scene.

**Keywords:** gravel, gravel bike, cycling, components, races, Czech gravel brands