

Role of Sports Tourism in Enhancing the Dimensions of Purple Economy During the Mediterranean Games Oran 2022

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Abstract:

This research delineates the impact of sports tourism on the purple economy's dimensions (cultural, environmental, and public services aspects) in Oran, following the city's hosting of the Mediterranean Games in 2022. Utilizing a descriptive methodology, the study employed a questionnaire distributed among 90 volunteers from the lodging, hospitality, and catering committee. The findings demonstrate that sports tourism substantially enhances the purple economy in Oran, particularly through the organization of the Mediterranean Games.

KEY WORDS : Sports Tourism; Purple Economy; Mediterranean Games.

الملخص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى إبراز مساهمة السياحة الرياضية في تحقيق أبعاد الاقتصاد البنفسجي (الجانب الثقافي، الجانب البيئي، جانب الخدمات العامة) بوهران بعد احتضانها لدورة الألعاب المتوسطية 2022، اعتمدنا في هذه الدراسة على المنهج الوصفي، وكأداة للدراسة استخدمنا استبيان موجه لـ 90 متطوع بلجنة الإيواء والفندقة والإطعام، وتوصلنا إلى أن السياحة الرياضية ساهمت في تحقيق أبعاد الاقتصاد البنفسجي بوهران من خلال تنظيمها دورة ألعاب البحر الأبيض المتوسط.

الكلمات المفتاحية: السياحة الرياضية؛ الإقتصاد البنفسجي؛ الألعاب المتوسطية؛

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1. Theoretical Study:

1.1 Introduction and Research Problem:

Sports economics has recently emerged as a distinct field within the broader disciplines of economics and sports sciences over the last few decades. Though its significance is well-acknowledged today, it has only recently become a subject of academic inquiry, as economic studies traditionally overlooked sports.

Currently, a symbiotic relationship exists between sports and economics, each benefiting from the other's advancements. Economic entities now invest in and support sports initiatives akin to international sports federations and the Olympics, and similarly, national governments extend their patronage (Falaha and Muaziz, 2013: 59).

In contemporary discourse, the concept of the purple economy has gained traction, recognized for its crucial role in societal advancement and prosperity. This economy is regarded as the bedrock that supports the development of other economic sectors (Razai and Towam, 2022: 459). More than just a novel term, the purple economy actively fosters a cultural milieu that propels national economic growth toward societal welfare.

The interconnectedness of tourism and sustainable development has given rise to a modern sustainability paradigm, predicated on the premise that tourism is intrinsically linked to natural and cultural attractions, including landscapes, climates, historical, and contemporary sites. Thus, the enhancement and expansion of tourism infrastructure are vital for holistic economic, social, cultural, and environmental progress (Ben Malek, 2019: 39).

Sports play a pivotal role in the communal nexus of consumption and production. They integrate into the economic cycle as both commodity and collaborative producer, contributing added value. The staging of local, regional, and international sports events exemplifies this integration.

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The city of Oran, known affectionately as "El Bahia" and located in western Algeria, proudly hosted the 19th Mediterranean Games from June 25th to July 6th, 2022. This prestigious event saw participation from 26 nations including Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Syria, Italy, Portugal, Spain, France, Turkey, Cyprus, Serbia, Slovenia, and Greece.

The successful execution of this significant sports event was crucial for the Algerian authorities in fostering a positive national image and in demonstrating Algeria's economic viability. This effort not only aimed to create a lasting impression on foreign delegations but also to showcase the nation's economic promise. Furthermore, it set the stage for future developmental projects and countered persistent efforts to question the country's capabilities and integrity, thereby protecting its standing among international sports organizations.

In anticipation of the 19th Mediterranean Games, the Algerian government dedicated considerable resources to ensure the event's success. A total of approximately \$307 million USD (around 45 billion Algerian Dinars) was allocated to fund over 35 projects spanning eight distinct sectors.

Specifically, the Mediterranean Village, constructed to house foreign delegations, received an allocation of \$115.9 million USD (17 billion Dinars). The newly built Olympic Stadium in Oran, named Meloud Hadeffi, was funded with approximately \$109.1 million USD (about 16 billion Dinars).

This sum included around \$1.15 million USD (approximately 170 million Dinars) for installing a state-of-the-art hybrid turf. Additionally, \$95.5 million USD (14 billion Dinars) was expended to complete the dual carriageway linking the port of Oran to the East-West highway.

The expansion of the Ahmed Ben Bella International Airport was another significant investment, costing \$259.26 million USD (about 38 billion Dinars), to facilitate optimal reception of international delegations (Maatallah, 2022).

Given these significant investments by the Algerian government, several pertinent questions arise regarding the impact of the Mediterranean Games:

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General Question:

- Did sports tourism contribute to achieving the dimensions of the purple economy in Oran after organizing the Mediterranean Games?

Specific Questions:

- Did sports tourism contribute to reviving the cultural aspect in Oran through the organization of the 2022 Mediterranean Games? Did sports tourism contribute to improving public services in Oran through the organization of the 2022 Mediterranean Games?

General Hypothesis:

- Sports tourism contributed to achieving the dimensions of the purple economy in Oran through its organization of the Mediterranean Games.

Specific Hypotheses:

- Sports tourism contributed to reviving the cultural aspect in Oran through the organization of the 2022 Mediterranean Games.
- Sports tourism contributed to improving public services in Oran through the organization of the 2022 Mediterranean Games.

1.2 Previous Studies:

1.2.1 Study by Ammar Ben Malek (2019) titled "*The Contribution of Sports Tourism to Achieving the Dimensions of the Purple Economy - The Case of the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia*".

The objective of this study was to assess the extent to which sports tourism contributed to the dimensions of the purple economy in Russia through its organization of the 2018 FIFA World Cup. The study concluded that there was an economic revival in Russia, as

evidenced by improvements in the gross domestic product and individual income, and a decline in unemployment rates.

In terms of the environmental dimension, an increase in the number of green spaces and recreational areas was recorded. The socio-cultural dimension was achieved through the revival of both tangible and intangible Russian heritage, along with an increase in the country's cultural activity index (Ben Malek, 2019).

1.2.2 Study by Kasmi Bachir et al. (2018) titled "*The Role of Events and Traditional Popular Sports in Activating Sports Tourism in Some National States*".

This study aimed to identify the role of traditional sports events in enhancing sports tourism in various Algerian states. The research team employed a descriptive approach, applying the study to 96 practitioners and tourism sector officials, and the president of the federation for traditional games and sports. Statistical analysis in this study used the Chi-square goodness-of-fit test and the Smirnov test (Kasmi et al., 2018).

These studies provide a backdrop against which the current study's hypotheses are evaluated, emphasizing the potential multifaceted benefits of sports tourism in economic, cultural, and environmental terms.

1.2.3 Commentary on Previous Studies:

In light of the presentation, analysis, and commentary on previous studies, these studies have paved the way for the research team to identify numerous landmarks that have benefited the current study in the following aspects:

- Establishing the methodology of the current study.
- Methodology for selecting and determining the size of the study sample.
- Identifying the research community.

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- Determining the appropriate sample size for the current study.
- Defining the general framework of the study.
- Outlining the steps followed in the research procedures.
- Identifying the most suitable statistical methods to be utilized in our study.

1.3 Study Objectives:

- To highlight the importance of sports tourism as a developmental alternative in achieving the dimensions of the purple economy.
- To assess the extent of sports tourism's contribution to realizing the dimensions of the purple economy.
- To enlighten the general economic opinion about the importance of the cultural dimension in societies.
- To identify the dimensions of the purple economy that contribute to achieving sustainable development.

1.4 Procedural Definitions of Research Concepts:

1.4.1 The Purple Economy:

The concept of the purple economy is intimately linked to the cultural landscape and originated at the inaugural International Forum on the Purple Economy, held by Diversum in Paris from October 11 to 13, 2011. This forum received the patronage of prestigious entities such as UNESCO, the European Parliament, and the European Commission (Razai and Towam, 2022: 460).

The purple economy introduces a new spectrum of sustainable economic practices, emphasizing the profound cultural dimensions of society. It strives to create an economic and political equilibrium that resonates with the internal cultural identity of a nation. Central to its philosophy is the valorization of local services and goods, and the fostering of sectoral linkages that reflect local cultural attributes.

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Furthermore, the purple economy is intrinsically tied to sustainable development by weaving cultural considerations into the tripartite dimensions of sustainability: economic, environmental, and social (Ben Malek, 2019: 43).

1.4.2 Mediterranean Games:

The Mediterranean Games, a quadrennial multi-sport event, involves nations from the Mediterranean Basin. The inaugural Games were hosted in Alexandria in 1951 (Al-Muaddib, 2022).

1.4.3 The 2022 Mediterranean Games:

The 19th edition of the Mediterranean Games, a prominent international multi-sport event, took place from June 25 to July 5, 2022, in Oran, Algeria. Oran was selected as the host city during the General Assembly of the International Committee of the Mediterranean Games in Pescara, Italy, on August 15, 2015, triumphing over Sfax, Tunisia, by a vote of 51-17 (Al-Muaddib, 2022).

2. Field Study:

2.1 Research Methodology:

This study employs a descriptive methodology to underscore the significance of the purple economy as a modern extension of sustainable development strategies, specifically within the realm of sports tourism.

2.2 Research Community and Sample:

From a pool of 400 volunteers engaged in the lodging, hospitality, and catering committee, a sample of 90 volunteers, representing 22.5%, was selected for the study. Notably, about four thousand volunteers,

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spanning various age groups, were distributed among 12 committees integral to the organization of the Mediterranean Games.

The assignment of volunteers was meticulously planned according to the requirements and roles of each committee. The largest contingents were stationed at the stadium agents (700 volunteers), followed by the sports competitions committee (520 volunteers). Over 400 volunteers were specifically assigned to the Mediterranean Village, which housed the athletes.

Additionally, another 240 volunteers, primarily university students from the media and communications departments, were engaged with the press and media committee, operating predominantly at the International Press Center and the Mediterranean Village among other key venues.

All volunteers underwent comprehensive training programs to ensure meticulous preparation for the Games and to foster a hospitable environment for the participating delegations (Cheikhi, 2022).

2.3 Research Tools:

The primary instrument employed for data collection in this study was the questionnaire, recognized for its efficacy in eliciting detailed information about specific issues, problems, or circumstances. This methodological choice reflects its widespread acceptance and reliability in gathering qualitative and quantitative insights.

2.4 Statistical Treatment:

To analyze the data obtained from the research:

- We performed calculations of percentages to understand the distribution and proportions within the data.
- The Chi-square test (χ^2) was utilized to examine the independence of various categorical variables.

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- Pearson's correlation coefficient was employed to assess the strength and direction of the linear relationship between variables.

2.5 Pilot Study:

A pilot study was conducted involving seven volunteers who mirrored the characteristics of the main study's sample. These volunteers were administered the questionnaire twice under consistent conditions, one week apart. The primary objectives of this preliminary study included:

- Verifying the feasibility and potential for success of the broader study.
- Facilitating the selection of a representative sample from the larger community.
- Gaining a deeper understanding of the environment surrounding the sample.
- Identifying and revising any ambiguous questions to improve clarity.
- Evaluating the psychometric properties of the questionnaire, including its validity, reliability, and objectivity. This step was crucial to ensure that the instrument was both robust and effective in capturing the necessary data for the study.

3. Presentation, Analysis, and Discussion of Results:

Table (01): Cultural Aspect

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Statistical Significance	χ^2 Table Value	χ^2 Calculated	Responses						Question
Significant	5.99	96.02	No	Somewhat	Yes				1- Did the organization of the Mediterranean Games (Oran 2022) contribute to highlighting the local community's customs and traditions?
						Percentage (%)	Frequency		
						1.11	01	17.78	
						Percentage (%)	Frequency		
						81.11	16		
							73		
Significant	5.99	51.20	No	Somewhat	Yes				2- Did the organization of the Mediterranean Games (Oran 2022) contribute to the spread of new cultures by tourists affecting the local population?
						Percentage (%)	Frequency		
						15.56	14	15.56	
						Percentage (%)	Frequency		
						68.89	14		
							62		
Significant	5.99	72.20	No	Somewhat	Yes				3- Did the organization of the Mediterranean Games (Oran 2022) contribute to enhancing interest in the cultural heritage of the area?
						Percentage (%)	Frequency		
						4.44	04	21.11	
						Percentage (%)	Frequency		
						74.44	19		
							67		

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4- Did the organization of the Mediterranean Games (Oran 2022) contribute to increasing interaction between tourists and local community members?	Yes	No		Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	58.07	5.99	Significant
		Somewhat								
		Percentage (%)								
		Frequency								
		12.22			11	16.67	15	71.11	64	
5- Did the organization of the Mediterranean Games (Oran 2022) contribute to the restoration of archaeological sites in Oran?	Yes	No		Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	27.27	5.99	Significant
		Somewhat								
		Percentage (%)								
		Frequency								
		58.89			53	24.44	22	16.67	15	
6- Did the organization of the Mediterranean Games (Oran 2022) contribute to fostering interest in local historians?	Yes	No		Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	65.40	5.99	Significant
		Somewhat								
		Percentage (%)								
		Frequency								
		73.33			66	16.67	15	10	09	
7- Did scheduling the closing ceremony on July 5th	Yes	No		Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	115.80	5.99	Significant
Somewhat										
Percentage (%)										

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contribute to promoting awareness of Algeria's glorious revolution?	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)			
	78	86.67	09	10	03	3.33			

Based on Table (01) concerning the volunteers' opinions on cultural aspects, the analysis shows several significant insights. For the first question, the calculated Chi-square value is 26.02, which exceeds the critical value of 5.99 at the 0.05 significance level with 2 degrees of freedom. This significant difference suggests that the majority of volunteers believe that the organization of the Mediterranean Games (Oran 2022) has effectively highlighted the local community's customs and traditions.

In the second question, a Chi-square value of 51.20 also surpasses the threshold, indicating that most volunteers viewed the event as instrumental in introducing new cultures brought by tourists, which positively affected the local inhabitants. Similarly, for the third question, with a Chi-square value of 72.20, the data reflects a significant difference, suggesting that the Games contributed to enhancing interest in the cultural heritage of the area's residents.

The fourth question yields a Chi-square value of 58.07, significantly higher than the critical value, supporting the view that the organization of the Games increased interaction between tourists and the local community. In the fifth question, the value stands at 27.27, indicating that most volunteers believe the Mediterranean Games led to the restoration of archaeological sites in Oran.

The sixth question reports a Chi-square value of 65.40, which shows a substantial consensus among volunteers that the Games fostered interest in the region's historians. Lastly, the seventh question reveals a Chi-square value of 115.80, the highest recorded, which suggests that scheduling the closing ceremony on July 5th was effective in promoting awareness of Algeria's Glorious Revolution.

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These findings affirm the positive cultural impact attributed to the organization of the Mediterranean Games in Oran 2022. The responses highlight the event's broad influence on both the preservation of cultural heritage and the promotion of new cultural exchanges, showcasing and enriching local and historical culture, and leading to increased interactions and recognition of cultural values and historical figures within the region.

Table (02): Public Services

Statistical Significant	Significant	χ^2 Table Value	χ^2 Calculate	Responses	Question	
1- Did the organization of the Mediterranean Games (Oran 2022) contribute to the flourishing of public transportation?	Significant	5.99	77.40	No	Yes	
				Percentage (%)		Percentage (%)
				Frequency		Frequency
				06	6.67	
				15	76.67	
				69		
2- Did the organization of the Mediterranean Games (Oran 2022) contribute to increased internet flow in the area?	Significant	5.99	72.20	No	Yes	
				Percentage (%)		Percentage (%)
				Frequency		Frequency
				04	4.44	
				19	74.44	
				67		

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3- Did the organization of the Mediterranean Games (Oran 2022) contribute to increased attention to green spaces in the area?	Yes	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Somewhat	Percentage (%)	Frequency	No	Percentage (%)	Frequency	82.40	5.99	Significant
4- Did the organization of the Mediterranean Games (Oran 2022) contribute to improving the quality of tourism services?	Yes	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Somewhat	Percentage (%)	Frequency	No	Percentage (%)	Frequency	42.87	5.99	Significant
5- Did the organization of the Mediterranean Games (Oran 2022) contribute to the restructuring of Oran's road network?	Yes	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Somewhat	Percentage (%)	Frequency	No	Percentage (%)	Frequency	42.47	5.99	Significant
6- Did the organization of the Mediterranean Games (Oran 2022) contribute to an increase in the number of other tourist facilities?	Yes	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Somewhat	Percentage (%)	Frequency	No	Percentage (%)	Frequency	6.47	5.99	Significant

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From Table (02) regarding the volunteers' opinions on public services, significant findings are noted. The first question reveals a calculated Chi-square value of 77.40, which significantly exceeds the critical value of 5.99 at a 0.05 significance level with 2 degrees of freedom. This indicates that most volunteers perceive the Mediterranean Games (Oran 2022) as having contributed to the flourishing of public transport systems.

The second question recorded a Chi-square value of 72.20, also surpassing the threshold, suggesting that the majority believe the event significantly improved internet connectivity in the region. In the third question, the Chi-square value reached 82.40, further supporting the view that the Games increased attention to green spaces in the area.

For the fourth question, with a Chi-square value of 42.87, the data shows a significant difference, indicating that most volunteers recognize the Games' positive impact on enhancing the quality of tourist services. Similarly, the fifth question's Chi-square value of 42.47 indicates that most volunteers feel that the event contributed to the restructuring of the road network in Oran.

Lastly, the sixth question presents a Chi-square value of 6.47, just above the critical value, suggesting a consensus among volunteers that the Mediterranean Games led to an increase in the number of other tourist facilities. These responses collectively highlight the broad and positive impact of the Mediterranean Games on public services in Oran, reflecting improvements in infrastructure and service quality that are likely to benefit residents and visitors alike.

3.1 Discussion of Results in Relation to Hypotheses:

The findings from the study corroborate the pivotal role of sports in fostering international camaraderie and reinforcing bonds among nations. Historically, sports have consistently demonstrated their capacity to bridge geographical, cultural, linguistic, and religious divides, thereby promoting unity and collaboration across diverse communities. They offer a platform for interaction and

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communication through competitive events and have been instrumental in enhancing international relations.

The Mediterranean Games serve as a prime example of how sports can unite disparate nations, assembling countries around the Mediterranean to engage and compete. This event not only showcases athletic prowess but also embodies the spirit of cooperation through sports.

Further supporting our findings, the former Minister of Culture, Ms. Wafaa Chaalal, disclosed the extensive cultural agenda for the 19th edition of the Mediterranean Games in Oran, which featured nine diverse cultural festivals. This initiative aimed to showcase Algerian culture to an international audience (Jabbar, 2022).

For this purpose, various cultural venues in Oran were utilized, including the Abdelkader Alloula Regional Theatre, Ahmed Zabana Museum, the House of Culture, cinema halls, and significant historical sites such as the Hassan Chakroun Open-Air Theatre and other prominent locations.

Additionally, exhibitions focusing on Oran's cultural heritage were organized alongside tourist tours to the city's major archaeological sites. Consequently, the first partial hypothesis, that sports tourism revitalized the cultural landscape of Oran through the 2022 Mediterranean Games, was substantiated.

In anticipation of the Mediterranean Games, the Transportation Committee worked in collaboration with the local sector directorate to formulate a strategic traffic management plan for the duration of the event. This plan was bifurcated into two main components: the first ensured the smooth transit of the official participating delegations and was exclusively managed by the organizing committee; the second catered to the local populace of Oran and visitors from various regions, both domestic and international, who attended the games.

Each venue hosting the events was equipped with access to multiple transportation options, including taxis, buses, and trams. A special corridor was also designated for the participating delegations on highways leading to the competition venues. Key residential areas, such as Wadi Tleilat and "Ahmed Zabana" in Es Senia, were connected to the Balqaid Olympic Sports Complex via expedited

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routes. Furthermore, new bus services were introduced to facilitate the transportation of spectators from arrival points to the sports venues, enhancing the accessibility and overall experience of the Games.

According to information from the Ministry of Youth and Sports' website, extensive investments were made in Oran in preparation for the Mediterranean Games, significantly enhancing telecommunications infrastructure, including telephone services and internet speed. These improvements have continued to benefit the residents of Oran post-Games. Additionally, several green spaces and roads were upgraded specifically for the event (Yousry, 2022). Therefore, the second partial hypothesis, "Sports tourism contributed to improving public services in Oran through the organization of the 2022 Mediterranean Games", is substantiated.

In May 2022, a strategic partnership agreement was formalized between the National Confederation of Employers and the Mediterranean Games Organizing Committee, under the auspices of Mr. Selmi Aqbi, President of the Confederation, and Mr. Aziz Derouaz, the Games Commissioner, alongside local authorities. This agreement was designed to leverage the Games as a catalyst to enhance economic activities across the country.

Mr. Sami Akli, the then President of the Algerian Confederation of Employers, emphasized the commitment of Algerian business leaders to support the Mediterranean Games as part of their civic duty to bolster national pride and elevate Algeria's profile internationally (Zidan, 2022). Thus, the general hypothesis "Sports tourism contributed to achieving the dimensions of the purple economy in Oran through the organization of the Mediterranean Games", is also validated.

Conclusion:

Events such as the Mediterranean Games significantly boost the economic sectors in Oran, especially transportation, hospitality, retail, and overall tourism, thereby increasing income and revenue in Oran and surrounding tourist cities. The construction and upgrading of

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football stadiums not only provide temporary employment but also yield long-term economic benefits.

By continuing to host international sports events, Algeria can enhance its attractiveness for investments, improve trade relations, and invigorate the modern tourism and hospitality industries. Such endeavors further reinforce Algeria's prospects as a preferred venue for other prominent international and continental events.

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