

Pre-Event Assessment of the Economic and Social Impacts of the Mediterranean Games Oran 2022 and Their Role in Promoting Sport Tourism

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ARTICLE INFORMATION

Original Research Paper

Received : 15/07/2020

Accepted : 12/10/2020

Published :01/12 /2020

Keywords:

Sport tourism

Mediterranean Games

Economic impacts

Social impacts

Abstract

Large-scale sport events are considered to be key opportunity to promote sport tourism in the region, on this basis, the object of this study aims to identify and estimate the expected economic and social impacts of the Mediterranean Games of Oran in 2022 in order to optimize them and permit a better event experience for the participants, spectators and tourists as premises to promote sport tourism in the long term. For this purpose, we applied (Kim et al, 2014) model on a sample composed of 79 sport and Olympics experts; and we concluded that the positive impacts are more susceptible to occur indicating an optimistic prospection on the games events and their material and moral legacy in both phases: short and long-terms. On the other hand, negative impacts were evaluated to be common short term consequences that the history of games organization could not prevent

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I. Introduction

Sport tourism involves taking part into sporting events (actively or passively) while traveling abroad, and it is considered as the most growing sector of tourism. Studies have shown that hosting sport tourism events contributes to the community's economic and social development as they result into long lasting economic and social impacts. Sport tourism economic contribution is immensely valorized as it is considered to be an economic recovery strategy (Atci, D. et al., 2016), we can state the instance of the city of Mombasa in Kenya; where sports related events and activities kept attracting high withdraw of international participant's tourists although the security crisis caused by extreme terror acts of some militia that had a direct negative impact on the region's tourism (Njoroge, J. M., et al., 2017).

The non seasonality is a main characteristic of sport tourism as it is a year-round event, thus, it extends the traditional tourism period where travel destinations entice international flow only during peak seasons; therefore, it permits an extended exploitation of investments and a continuous generation of income.

Hosting large-scale sport tourism events is considered as premises to promote Sport tourism in the area as all the related investments are an important legacy that supports the perspective.

In 2015, the city of Oran won the bid to host the next edition of the Mediterranean Games scheduled in 2021 and were postponed to 2022 for the reason of the covid-19 pandemic.

The purpose of our study is to identify and estimate the economic and social impacts of the games in advance in order to optimize them and deliver a better event experience which will act as a "*pilot event*" to promote sport tourism in the city which will be able to recoup the games investments in the long term.

Starting from early 1990s, several research was directed to evaluate the positive and negative economic and social impacts of large-scale sport tourism events, the main previous study we rely on in our article is the study of the authors (Kim, W. & al; 2014) who published an article "Evaluating the perceived social impacts of hosting large-scale sport tourism events:

Scale development and validation” in the ELSEVIER’s Tourism Management Journal; 2014.

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the perceptions of social impacts resulting from hosting large-scale sport tourism events through a multidimensional scale for the sport event “F1 Korean GP” in South Korea.

In the light of this idea, we addressed the following problematic:

What are the economic and social impacts of hosting the Mediterranean Games of Oran 2022?

Our paper is inspired by the study of the authors W. Kim & al. who published in 2015 an article about evaluating the perceived social impacts of hosting large-scale sport tourism events. Also, The authors (Soutar, G. N. & Mcleoad, P. B., 1993), (Homafar, F. et. al, 2001), (Hritz, N. & Ross, C., 2010), (Clark, R. & Misener, L., 2015) and (Gallagher, S. & al., 2015) who conducted researches on positive and negative impacts of hosting large-scale sports events and accordingly, we generated the following hypotheses to the problematic.

I.1. Literature Review : Sport tourism

Starting from the early 1980s, many efforts were deployed by researchers to give enough credit to sport tourism in order to be a legitimate independent field worth of academic consideration; the arguments were based on the sport tourism value and volume in terms of Human and money draw, and in a second part, the effects of social, economic and environmental impacts of linking sports to tourism. Soon enough, definitions were given to the activity; (Ruskin, H., 1987) defined sport tourism as *“An expression of a pattern of behavior of people during certain periods of leisure time such as vacation time, which is done partly in specially attractive natural settings and partly in artificial sports and physical recreation facilities in the outdoors”*¹. Professor (De Knop, P., 1990) of "Vrije Universiteit Brussel" in Brussels conceptualized Sport tourism around three types of active sport vacations as following:

- Pure sport holiday: The primary focus is participating in a sport activity.
- Vacation: The main purpose of the travel is holiday; but they do utilize sports facilities as entertainment.
- Private sporting holiday: Where people participate in informal games like beach volleyball.

In the other hand, Professor of Marketing (Hall, C. M., 1992) at the "University of Canterbury" in Britain identified three tourism domains as following:

- Hallmark events (Olympic Games, World Cups ... etc.): Defined as the most strongly linked to sports-related tourism.
- Outdoor recreation or adventure tourism
- Tourism associated with health and fitness.

Later, in 1997, Professor Sean Gammon, senior lecturer at the school of management, the University of Central Lancashire in Britain, and professor Tom Robinson, associate director for graduate studies in the school of communications at Brigham Young University, both gave a 'Hard' and 'Soft' definitions to Sport tourism:

- Hard sport tourism: People participating at competitive sport events such as Olympics or the World Cups
- Soft Sport tourism: People travel to participate in recreational and leisure sporting activities

A decade after H. Ruskin's definition, a more specific one was given by (Gibson, H. J., 1998): "*Leisure based travel that takes individuals temporarily outside of their home communities to participate in physical activities, to watch physical activities or to venerate attractions associated with physical activity*".

Nowadays, Sport tourism is the fastest growing branch of tourism and it is considered as a recovery economic strategy for developing countries as it is a multi-billion trade. In 2016, it made 1, 41 trillion USD of international income, and it is expected to reach 5, 72 trillion USD in the horizons of 2021 (Technavio, 2017).

I.2. Sport tourism and regional development:

Many studies have been conducted regarding the impact of sport tourism on regional development; most of the papers emphasize on the legacy of hallmark and mega sporting events like World cups, Olympic Games and regional games. The findings support our hypotheses that the Mediterranean Games of Oran 2022 shall be premises to baptize sport tourism in the region.

Most of the authors evaluated the contribution of sport tourism to regional development upon economic, social and environmental impacts; the authors (Hritz, N. & Ross, C., 2010), (Clark, R. & Misener, L., 2015) and (Gallagher, S. et al., 2015) all identified positive economic impacts of increasing employment opportunities, enhanced businesses, shopping activities, increased cultural identity, social interactions, more involvement into recreation, physical activities, promotion of a wellbeing lifestyle and general improvement of the city through building infrastructures, services, lodging facilities and improving public transportation, ... etc. Furthermore, (Soutar, G. N. & Mcleod, P.B., 1993) and (Homafar, F. & al., 2001) identified economic growth, urban development, increasing income and job opportunities and minimizing inflation as positive consequences.

Environment impacts were cited by (Gallagher, S. et al, 2015) in a study they conducted regarding shark diving sport tourism where the communities erased maritime environment awareness and established regulation about fishing rights and maritime protection of the diving areas.

All the authors commonly agreed on the long term positive economic impacts of sport tourism on the hosting community and area; however, they did not guarantee the same impact continuity for social and environmental impacts. There are also negative impacts of hosting large-scale sport tourism events that can result into economic costs (i.e. Taxes, increasing prices of real estate) and negative social impacts (i.e. disorder, security issues, traffic congestion).

I.3. The Mediterranean Games Oran 2022

The Mediterranean games are one of the “Regional Games” approved by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) that allow the hosting countries to be part of the international sports movement, but also an opportunity to deploy economic, organizational and logistical efforts to organize a large scale competition which can be premises for Olympic consecration that require more demanding specifications.

Organizing the regional games offers to the hosting countries - most of them are either developing or undeveloped countries- recognition as regional powers and confirm their leading positions on several aspects including economic, political, organizational, tourism and logistics, as it is reported *"The Mediterranean Games represent for the participating nations a number of interests, even if they are very different depending on the level of development of the countries. For some, it's about using this event to test athletes for larger competitions. For others, such a competition facilitates international recognition and affirmation as a regional power "*. (Adami, S., 2004).

On August 28th, 2015, the city of Oran won the bid and was designated by the International Committee of the Mediterranean Games (ICMG) to host the 2021 edition (Postponed to 2022), it marks the return of the games to the country after more than 40 years when they took place firstly in the city of Algiers in 1975 and which has been a great sporting and organizational success.

The city of Oran has a great Mediterranean tourism appeal as it is home to more than 14 million summer visitors per year (National Office for Statistics, 2018). In addition, the city is recognized for its organizational experience for both national and international events and is known to be a business tourism city as dozens of infrastructures were implemented in the course of the last years in the purpose of promoting the city as a pole of economic, industrial, cultural and social influence within the Mediterranean.

Furthermore, the city has a long sport history; indeed, the Athletic Freedom Club of Oran created in 1897 was the first sports club in the African continent, the city covers multiple and diversified sport disciplines,

and represents a very important sports pole at national and international level. For the organization of the games, the city had been provided with an extensive budget to build an Olympic village, sport and leisure facilities; thereupon, promoting sport tourism will have dual positive effects; first, it will increase the tourism income from international sports tourists and second, make profits from the continuous exploitation of the investments by organizing more sporting events.

The aim of our investigation is to help build a sport tourism oriented strategy considering the findings of our research and to optimize the couple: (Positive impacts/ Negative impacts) that can be generated into the following formula (F):

$$F = \text{Optimum of (Positive impacts \& Negative impacts)} \\ = \text{Maximum (positive impacts) \& Minimum (negative impacts)}$$

II. Method

In order to answer our problematic, a survey was elaborated by addressing a questionnaire to a panel of Algerian sports experts in an aim to assess the expected economic and social impacts of hosting the Mediterranean Games, Oran 2022.

The items of the survey were elaborated by authors (Kim, W. & al., 2014) in their article “Evaluating the perceived social impacts of hosting large-scale sport tourism events”.

The authors generated the 11 items following a review of the literature, a scale development procedures and a list of the economic and social impacts of large-scale sport tourism events from previous works of the authors (Bearden, W. O.; Netemeyer, R. G. & Teel, J. E.; 1989), (Lankford, S. V., & Howard, D. R.; 1994), (Mc Dougall & Munro; 1994) , (Mayfield, T. R., & Crompton, J. L.; 1995), (Delamere, T. A.; 2001), (Weed, M.; 2005) and (Kim, W. & Walker, M.; 2012).

The study resulted by identifying six (06) perceived economic and social impacts: Economic benefits, community pride, community

development, traffic problems, security risks, and economic costs. Later on, the previous six (06) items were derived into positive and negative impacts making a total of eleven (11) sub items as shown in the figure (1):

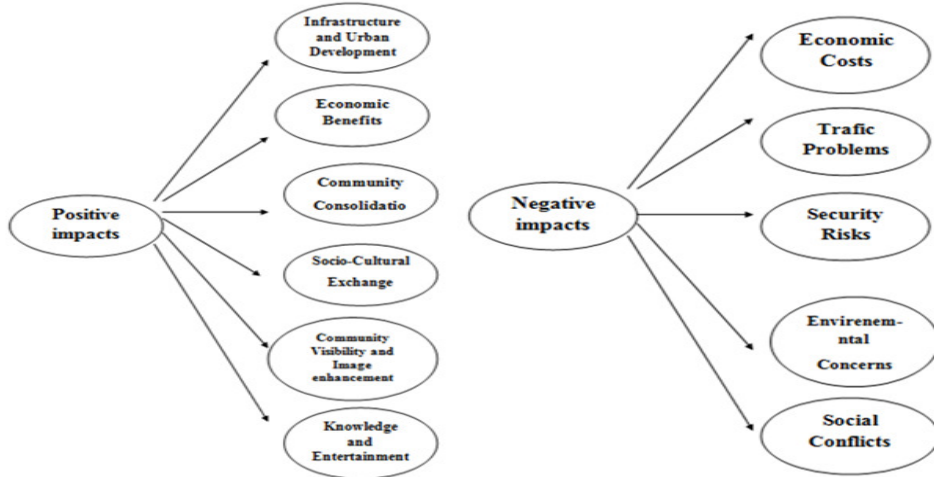


Figure 1: Economic and Social impacts of hosting large-scale sport tourism events.

Source : (W. Kim et al., 2014)

In order to enhance clarity, relevance, and effectiveness (Babbie, E.; 1992), a scientific evaluation of the 11 representative items was proceeded through focus group interviews and a panel of experts resulting into the positive and negative dimensions.

1 Participants

The data was collected out of a panel of 79 experts in sports domain, the gender distribution of the sample is 59% women and 41% men, with an average age of 36.31 years old. The Social-Professional categories distribution of the individuals of the sample showed that 56% of them work in the field of sports and precisely in Algerian Ministry of Youth and Sports (MJS), Algerian Olympic and Sports Committee (COA), members of sports federations and teachers in Algiers' Institute for Sports Technologies

(ESSTS). Many of the interviewees of this category took part into large-scale sport tourism events in Algeria and abroad and many of them will take part in organizing the Mediterranean Games of Oran 2022 as well. Otherwise, 30% of the interviewees are students enrolled into Master degree and PhD programs in sports and Olympics, and the rest 14% are people having interests in the sports and Olympics fields as amateurs; the previous data in addition to age categories of the interviewees are presented in (Table 1).

Table 1: Presentation of the sample

Presentation of the sample		
Gender distribution	Men = 32	41%
	Women = 47	59%
	Total = 79	100%
Age categories distribution	18 -- 24	12%
	25 – 34	15%
	35 – 44	24%
	45 – 54	15%
	55 – 64	20%
	+ 65	14%
Social professional distribution	Working in the field of sports and Olympics	56%
	Studying in the field of sports and Olympics	30%
	Amateurs of sports and Olympics	14%

2 Design and Procedure

A survey constituted of the previously cited eleven (11) items was directed through individual interviews. The items were presented as rating questions on a rating scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is “not at all agree” and 5 is “extremely agree”. The questionnaire was followed with discussions and recommendations were delivered. They were undertaken in French language due to the participants' lack of mastery of the English language and procedures of translation were undertaken.

2.1. Statistical Analysis

Statistical analyses were processed by Microsoft Excel software; we approached the results by using two statistical variables:

- a) The arrhythmic mean (m): The sum of a collection of numbers divided by the count of numbers in the collection to calculate the average of all results and identify a general tendency.

$$m = \bar{X} = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^N xi$$

- b) The standard deviation (σ): To quantify the level of dispersion and variation around the arrhythmic mean in order to appreciate the confidence of statistical results. A small standard variation is interpreted by a close distribution of the data around the mean and it reinforces the credibility of the mean, and the opposite is true.

$$\sigma = \sqrt{\frac{\sum (x - \bar{x})^2}{n}}$$

III. Results :

3.1. Positive impacts

The mean scored rate for all the perceived positive impacts were higher than 2.5 and all items together have a general mean of 3.13 with a general standard deviation of 1.32; as shown in Table (1):

Table 2: Results of the survey for the positive impacts.

Positive Impacts	Mean	Standard deviation
1. Infrastructure and urban development	Mean	Standard deviation
Enhance community beauty	3,17567568	1,51568377
Increase shopping facilities	2,93333333	1,13105229
Increase leisure facilities	3,37333333	1,27102144
Improve sanitation facilities	3,34666667	1,38029896
Increase number of lodging facilities	3,4	1,35566878
Accelerate the development of sports facilities in general	3,6	1,44033894
Sub mean	3,30483483	1,3490107
2. Economic Benefits	Mean	Standard deviation
increase trade for local business	3,22666667	1,24741173
increase employment opportunities	3,05333333	1,25087357
Improve economic conditions	2,96	1,36004769
Sub mean	3,08	1,286111
3. Community consolidation	Mean	Standard deviation
Enhance social unity of the community	2,92	1,2494323
Increase the sense of belonging to the community	2,82666667	1,21224979
Sub mean	2,87333333	1,23084105
4. Socio-Cultural exchange	Mean	Standard deviation
Increase number of cultural events	3,01333333	1,26804098
Improve tolerance to visitor cultures	3,32	1,37703167
Motivate the preservation of the local culture	3,13333333	1,40782882
Increase interest in international sporting events	3,24	1,50530593
Sub mean	3,17666667	1,38955185
5. Community visibility and image enhancement	Mean	Standard deviation
Improve the visibility of the city of Oran on the international scale	3,29333333	1,47751923
Improve the media visibility of the city	3,25333333	1,47128674
Promote a good image on the organization of sports events in the country	3,10666667	1,43859291
Sub mean	3,21777778	1,46246629
6. Knowledge and entertainment opportunities	Mean	Standard deviation
Increase the appreciation of the sport	3,05333333	1,35460509
Increase volunteering opportunities	3,12	1,20763338
Enhance Opportunities to practice new sports	3,21333333	1,20015014
Sub mean	3,12888889	1,25412954
General mean	3,13025025	1,32868507

The results indicate that the interviewees are prospecting high positive impacts of hosting the Mediterranean Games of Oran in 2022. The item “Infrastructure and urban development” recorded the highest mean rate of 3.30; it is pertinent to note that this item relates to long term urban positive impacts that are expected to remain as legacy of the games (Kim, W. & Walker, M.; 2012). The item “Community visibility and image enhancement” recorded the second highest mean rate indicating that the games will be a key opportunity (Crompton, J.; 2004), to increase the visibility of the City of Oran internationally, the city is famous to be a business tourism destination and hosting the games in 2022 will promote it as a sport tourism destination as well. In the other hand, the item “Community consolidation” (Delamere, T., A.; 2001), (Fredline, F. & Faulkner, B. ; 2001) recorded the lowest mean rate of 2.82, one of our interviewees explained himself for giving low rates to this item by affirming that the community of the city of Oran is known for being a consolidated one with big pride of their roots, the sense of belonging to the community is already instituted and will not necessary result from hosting the games, this is one point of view, (Kim, W. et al.; 2006).

3. Negative impacts:

The estimated negative impacts scored together a mean rate of 2.66 which is very approximate to the average mean with a general standard deviation of 1.37 indicating that negative impacts resulting from hosting the games are expected to be found to a rate of 50% (approximately); as shown in table (2):

Table 3: Results of the survey for the negative impacts.

Negative Impacts	Mean	Standard variation
1. Economic Costs	Mean	Standard variation
Excessive spending on new sports facilities	2,853333333	1,420823261
Increase real estate prices	2,586666667	1,39587552
Increase prices of products	2,893333333	1,361371857
Sub mean	2,777777778	1,392690213
2. Traffic problems	Mean	Standard variation
Road closures and disruptions	3,066666667	1,491718883
Difficulties to find parking	3,16	1,479956172
Difficulties using the public transportation	2,853333333	1,332477203
Damage the roads following traffic jams	2,773333333	1,457258935
Sub mean	2,963333333	1,440352798
3. Security risks	Mean	Standard variation
Increase crime	2,413333333	1,424622599
Increase risk of terrorism	2,413333333	1,39587552
Disturbances on the part of visitors	2,453333333	1,265907786
Sub mean	2,426666667	1,362135302
4. Environmental Concerns	Mean	Standard variation
Increased garbage and waste	2,866666667	1,338952125
Increase air pollution	2,64	1,410769389
Increase noise	2,626666667	1,383037524
Environmental damage	2,72	1,39070272
Sub mean	2,713333333	1,380865439
5. Social Conflicts	Mean	Standard variation
Local residents are not the primary focus of the event organization	2,52	1,245098498
Disrupt the lives of local residents	2,506666667	1,287920315
Conflicts and antagonism between local residents and visitors	2,346666667	1,390054766
Sub mean	2,457777778	1,307691193
General mean	2,667777778	1,376746989

The item “Traffic problems” recorded the highest mean rate of 2.96; and it is also important to emphasize that traffic problems are short term

impacts that may occur meanwhile the games are taking place. Most of our interviewees reported on their personal experiences on attending sport tourism events, reporting that transport and traffic jams are hard to avoid even in the most costing and organized games. The sub item “Excessive spending on new sports facilities” (Deccio, C. & Baloglu, S.; 2002). recorded high mean rates also up to 2.85, it was explained that although the city of Oran is known for sports practice but yet it needs more facilities to be built to make the hosting of the games possible. If these facilities will host more events in the future it will make the spending profitable in the long term; nowadays there is innovation revolution in minimalistic, economic and green building of sports facilities that can solve this issue. Otherwise, the item “Security risks” was the least rated with 2.42 mean rate and it was explained that sports and Olympics are perceived to promote peace and tolerance and a retrospective observation in the history of sport events indicates that security concerns are seldom to occur during the games. (Kim, W.; et al.; 2006), (Kim, S. & Petrick, J. F; 2005) & (Waite, G.; 2003).

IV. Conclusion

The literature review confirms our two hypotheses that hosting large-scale sport tourism events results in both economic and social positive and negative impacts. We conducted our investigation within a proactive approach to indentify the future susceptible impacts of hosting the Mediterranean Games of Oran in 2022 in an objective of taking advantage of the remaining time lapse before the D-Day and optimize them.

Both economic and social positive impacts had shown approximate high rates indicating that the two types of impacts are assessed to be important and both constitute the wished material and moral legacy of the games. The negative impacts for both types of the items recorded lower rates indicating a considerable optimism towards hosting the games, the huge spending of enormous funds cannot be avoided for any city to host the games as sport tourism events are by definition known to be costing investments. What governments can do is to make the investment project profitable in the long run by continuously putting to exploitation the sports,

accommodation, leisure and all peripheral facilities after the games, in this light of point, promoting the city of Oran as a sport tourism destination will be key to insure amortization and long term profitability of the games investments.

We suggest more researchers to conduct investigations on SWOT analyses of the positive/negative economic and social impacts of the Mediterranean Games of Oran in 2022 as a complementary proactive perspective.

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