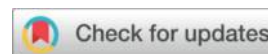




## The Post-Event Impact of Major Sporting Events' Image on Destination Image, Satisfaction, and Revisit Intention: A Critical Study of the 2022 Mediterranean Games in Oran



**Dr. Abdelkader Bouchagour <sup>1</sup>, Dr. Mohamed El Amine Abdelhafidi <sup>2</sup>, Dr. Chihab Ilimi <sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Ziane Achour University of Djelfa, Algeria. Email: [bkrabdelkader13@gmail.com](mailto:bkrabdelkader13@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup> Faculty of Economics, Commercial and Management Sciences, Ziane Achour University of Djelfa, Algeria. Laboratory of Development in Steppe Regions. Email: [m.abdelhafidi@univ-djelfa.dz](mailto:m.abdelhafidi@univ-djelfa.dz)

<sup>3</sup> Ziane Achour University of Djelfa, Algeria. Email: [c.ilimi@univ-djelfa.dz](mailto:c.ilimi@univ-djelfa.dz)

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### Abstract

This study aims to analyze the impact of the post-event image of the 2022 Mediterranean Games in Oran on shaping the destination's tourism image and enhancing visitor satisfaction and revisit intention, given the scarcity of research on major sporting events in Algeria. The study adopted a descriptive-analytical approach with a critical orientation to examine the perceptions of domestic visitors from outside the city after a period of time following the event. Results showed that the event image positively influenced the city's image during the event, which was reflected in increased levels of immediate satisfaction and temporary revisit intention. However, this effect was short-lived; the influence of the event image gradually weakened, and the gains of its tourism legacy eroded, revealing a gap between the immediate positive impression and the post-event experience. These findings highlight the need for a comprehensive long-term strategy that leverages local specificities, builds a coherent event and destination brand, maintains media promotion momentum, and enhances the city's digital presence through information systems that enable better management of the destination image over time. The study also recommends future research to adopt longitudinal designs, broader samples, and mixed-method approaches.

**Keywords:** Sport event image, destination image, tourist satisfaction, revisit intention, Oran 2022,

event legacy.

## **Introduction :**

Amid the clear dominance of research studies addressing destination image and its relationship with visitor satisfaction and revisit intention in the context of major sporting events in Europe and Asia (Tomino et al., 2020; Yüksel & Ön, 2024), there is a growing need to expand this research focus to include Africa, particularly its northern region, which possesses distinct social and cultural specificities. This need aligns with the noticeable scarcity of studies discussing this topic in the Algerian context, especially given the complexities of measuring the legacy of major sporting events and the requirement for precise approaches that consider the local context (Preuss, 2007; 2015). Preuss (2019) emphasizes that the greatest methodological challenge lies not only in identifying the outcomes of event legacies but also in establishing the causal relationship between the event and these outcomes, as well as assessing its intangible effects, which are difficult to quantify. Therefore, it is of research value to evaluate the strength of Algeria's tourism destination image and analyze its interaction with the satisfaction of domestic tourists (Tomino, Perić, & Wise, 2020) and their behavioral intentions within the framework of major sporting events adopted by Algeria as a strategy to enhance its competitiveness in the tourism sector—an objective that, as emphasized by Leopkey & Parent (2012) and Preuss (2015), requires prior planning to transform the event into a genuine and sustainable tourism legacy.

Within this context, the government claims that hosting an event of the scale of the 2022 Mediterranean Games in Oran successfully conveyed a positive image of the city as a tourist destination. Although this claim remains to be proven or refuted through empirical evidence, it finds theoretical support in the study by Xing & Chalip (2006), which demonstrated how sporting events can reshape tourists' perceptions of host destinations through image transfer mechanisms and perceptual fit. Similarly, the organizing bodies assert that the event elevated tourist satisfaction—a claim that aligns with trends in previous literature showing a correlational relationship between event image, destination image, and visitor satisfaction (Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2007; Hallmann & Breuer, 2010; Kaplanidou et al., 2012). In the same vein, Zhang, Kim, & Xing (2021) showed that the alignment between the sport event image and the host city's image significantly enhances the impact of image on tourist attitudes and behaviors. However, generalizing these findings to the Algerian context requires further testing and verification. Thus, the current study seeks to validate these claims more deeply and accurately by exploring the role of the sport event image as an independent variable (Chi & Qu, 2008; Wang & Hsu, 2010). On this basis, the study attempts to

address an important research gap by examining the role of the sport event image in both the tourism destination image and the satisfaction and revisit intentions of domestic tourists, considering the dimension of time—a key methodological element that underscores the need to understand whether the influence of the sport event image persists or has begun to fade. This is framed within a critical analysis of Oran's image and current satisfaction levels some time after the Games, given that satisfaction is a predictive indicator of future tourist behavior (Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Chen & Tsai, 2007). Based on the above, the main research question revolves around: Does the image of the 2022 Mediterranean Games in Oran have an impact on the tourism destination image, the satisfaction of domestic tourists, and their revisit intentions after a period of time following the event?

## **Literature Review:**

### **Tourist Destination Image:**

Tourist destinations face significant challenges in influencing tourist behavior, as tourists today are more demanding than ever before; this is due to the availability of numerous alternatives, as well as their pre-existing perceptions of these destinations even before they visit (Gartner, 1994; Pike, 2002; Beerli & Martín, 2004; Chen & Tsai, 2007). Hence, the importance of image in the success and sustainability of a tourist destination becomes evident (Tasci & Gartner, 2007).

Gallarza, Saura, & Garcia (2002) proposed a conceptual model based on four characteristics describing the structure and nature of a tourist destination image: a complex nature (being not clear), multifaceted in elements and processes, relative (subjective and generally comparative), and dynamic (changing over time and space). Therefore, arriving at a comprehensive definition of destination image is somewhat problematic and difficult (Jenkins, 1999). Crompton (1979) defined destination image as: "the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a person has of a destination," while others view it as all the thoughts, beliefs, feelings, or attitudes that the destination evokes in the tourist, which the tourist associates with the place (Bigne', Sánchez, & Sanz Blas, 2009). This image arises from visual or mental impressions of the place (Milman & Pizam, 1995), developed based on a limited set of impressions selected from among the many available (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991). The perceived image is deeply influenced by the individual's needs, motivations, prior experience, and socio-demographic characteristics..., variables that have received extensive attention from researchers (Um & Crompton, 1990; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Beerli & Martín, 2004).

The model by (Gunn, 1972), later developed by (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991), is one of the foundational models for understanding the process of destination image formation. It is based on three sequential stages; it begins with the organic image, then transitions to the induced image, finally arriving at the complex image formed after an actual visit to the destination, where pre-existing impressions blend with direct experience, leading to the development of a more complex perception of the destination (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991). This image is influenced and changes based on available information and direct experience (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003). While early models focused on the temporal development of the image, subsequent studies turned towards the structural deconstruction of its nature. In this context, the cognitive and affective dimensions of destination image received wide attention from researchers (Gartner, 1993; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Beerli & Martín, 2004), with the study by (Tasci & Gartner, 2007) emerging as one of the first to expand the concept, considering destination image a behavioral construct resulting from the mental representation of beliefs and feelings. These dimensions are interconnected within a hierarchical structure (San Martín & Rodríguez del Bosque, 2008).

Similarly, (Wang & Hsu, 2010) conceptualized destination image as a reflection of tourists' perceptions of the strength of cognitive and affective attributes. Recent studies have shown an increasing trend towards analyzing the reciprocal interactions between the three dimensions of destination image (Kock, et al., 2016; Stylos et al., 2016). According to this perspective, cognitive evaluations lead to emotional responses, and the interaction between them forms the overall mental image of the destination (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). Although some research pointed to this unidirectional sequential relationship, later studies revealed that this relationship is more complex, with limited reciprocal influence and a greater direct effect of the cognitive dimension (Beerli & Martín, 2004; Lin, et al., 2007; Alcocer & López Ruiz, 2020). On this basis, measuring tourist destination image should encompass both its cognitive and affective dimensions (Byon & Zhang, 2010). The matter does not stop at the formation of a mental image of the destination but extends to this image playing an influential role in guiding tourist behavior (Yüksel & Yüksel, 2003; Bigné et al., 2005; Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2007; Chi & Qu, 2008; Zhang et al., 2014).

### **Satisfaction:**

The success of marketing a tourist destination depends on the ability to provide distinguished tourism offerings. Therefore, effective planning of tourism products and services must fundamentally be based

on achieving tourist satisfaction (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Research in the field of satisfaction has received extensive and continuous attention for decades (Cardozo, 1965; Oliver, 1980; Churchill & Surprenant, 1982; Yi, 1990; Fornell, 1992; Erasmus & Donoghue, 1998; Oliver & Burke, 1999; Millána & Esteban, 2004; Feijó et al., 2005). Notably, studies on consumer satisfaction have moved beyond a superficial treatment of the concept to focus on exploring the subjective experience as lived by the consumer in different contexts (Oliver, 1997, 2010). Thus, it is logical for definitions of satisfaction to vary according to the specificity of each context (Giese & Cote, 2000). For example, (Oliver, 1981) considers satisfaction a transient psychological state in the consumer arising from the interaction between feelings related to their expectations and feelings resulting from the actual consumption experience. In contrast, (Fornell, 1992) describes satisfaction as a perceptual judgment the consumer derives after a comprehensive evaluation of a post-purchase experience. Conversely, Halstead, Hartman, & Schmidt (1994) see satisfaction as an emotional response occurring post-purchase resulting from a comparison the consumer makes between the product's performance and pre-held standards. Meanwhile, Kotler & Keller (2006) argue that satisfaction consists of feelings of pleasure, happiness, or disappointment that the consumer experiences after comparing what they obtained from the product with their expectations. The reason for this variation in definitions is the lack of resolution regarding whether consumer satisfaction is a process or an outcome (Yi, 1990; Giese & Cote, 2000). Some considered it a process (Oliver, 1981; Fornell, 1992), while other research treated it as a response to an evaluation process (Cadotte, Woodruff and Jenkins, 1987; Tse & Wilton, 1988; Wirtz, 1993; Halstead, Hartman and Schmidt, 1994; Oliver 1997; chan et al., 2003). That is, the consumer enters the purchase process with expectations about the product, which they use as standards for comparison and evaluation. This trend explains that satisfaction does not occur immediately but only takes a specific form with product use (Erasmus & Donoghue, 1998).

Amidst this diversity of concepts regarding consumer satisfaction, Giese & Cote (2000) clarify that researchers typically tend to adopt one of two concepts; either that satisfaction is a cognitive response (Oliver, 1980; Tse & Wilton, 1988; Bolton & Drew, 1991), or that it is an emotional response (Oliver, 1989; Westbrook & Oliver, 1991; Mano & Oliver, 1993; Erasmus & Donoghue, 1998; Giese & Cote, 2000). However, a third trend views satisfaction not merely as a separate cognitive or emotional response but as the result of the interaction of both (Feijó et al., 2005; Kim et al., 2008; Guido, 2015). This divergence keeps the research horizon for defining the concept of consumer satisfaction open and fertile. Although Giese & Cote (2000) did not definitively resolve the nature of the response, their analysis showed that more recent literature tends increasingly to consider satisfaction an emotional response.

These variations in determining the nature of satisfaction are also reflected in the tourism context, where satisfaction is viewed as a composite concept combining a cognitive response towards the destination and an emotional response related to the feelings the tourist experiences before, during, and after the tourism experience (Bigné et al., 2001; Yüksel & Yüksel, 2003; Bigné et al., 2009; Prayag, 2009). This interaction between cognitive and affective aspects is what makes tourist satisfaction an overall outcome of the experience as a whole (Bigné et al., 2005; Hosany & Gilbert, 2009). Based on this understanding of satisfaction, the interaction between the cognitive and affective aspects of satisfaction and its influence on subsequent behaviors forms the theoretical foundation of this research paper.

### **Revisit Intention:**

"Studying tourist behavior and predicting its future trajectory is considered one of the fundamental pillars in tourism research. Numerous studies have devoted special attention to analyzing tourist behavior and evaluating their experiences, enabling a deeper understanding of behavioral patterns (Bigne, Sanchez & Sanchez, 2001; Jang & Feng, 2007; Hutchinson, Lai & Wang, 2009; Chen & Chen, 2010). In this context, researchers have focused on evaluating tourists' experiences during, after, and prior to forming any subsequent behavior, aiming to understand and interpret their future behavior using consumer behavior models (Um, Chon, & Ro, 2006). From this perspective, predicting tourists' revisit intentions is a key element in understanding their future behavior (Lin, 2013; Rini et al., 2021). According to Nguyen (2020), revisit intention reflects a tourist's desire to return to a destination, while Cole & Scott (2004) describe it as a future travel plan considered by the tourist. This likelihood indicates future tourist behavior toward the destination (Kozak & Rimmington, 2000; Hui et al., 2007; Lin, 2013; Tsai, 2020). Therefore, revisit intention is regarded as a key indicator of tourist loyalty (Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Wang & Hsu, 2010), as it represents a behavioral response to previous positive experiences with the destination (Viet, Dang, & Nguyen, 2020). That is, this intention reflects the continuity of the relationship between the tourist and the destination. Hume, Mort, & Winzar (2007) suggest that intention arises from the destination's ability to provide products and services that evoke lasting positive emotions even after the visit ends. Thus, the intention to revisit is a result of the tourist's impressions of the destination's performance (Hume et al., 2007; Quintal & Polczynski, 2010). When tourists have enjoyable and exciting experiences, they are more likely to be satisfied with the destination (Viet, Dang, & Nguyen, 2020).

Kozak (2001) indicated that satisfaction level is one of the most influential variables in explaining a tourist's intention to revisit the same destination or explore new ones. Similarly, a study by Hyun &

Perdue (2010) confirmed that tourist satisfaction with their previous experience at a destination is a key determinant of their future intentions. This research consensus supports continuing to view revisit intention as an extension of tourist satisfaction with their experience (Um, Chon, & Ro, 2006; Tsai, 2020; Viet, Dang, & Nguyen, 2020). However, satisfaction is not the only critical factor determining revisit intentions; studies (Bigné et al., 2001; Chalip et al., 2003) have shown that destination image can directly influence revisit intention. Chalip et al. (2003) also indicated that the image of a sports event can have a direct impact on revisit intention. This diversity of factors underscores the complexity inherent in tourist behavior models and highlights the need to consider other variables when analyzing and interpreting these intentions.

### **Sports Event Image:**

The definition of an event remains debated in academic circles, with researchers agreeing on the absence of a single universally accepted definition, leading many to use general terms in their studies (Deng, Li, & Shen, 2015). In this context, Roche (1994) views major sports events like the Olympics as short-term activities requiring massive infrastructure investments and strategic planning, heavily reliant on media promotion. Müller (2015) emphasizes that these events leave profound impacts on host cities and their residents. The scale of the event and how it is strategically invested in grant it the ability to enhance the appeal of host destinations, attract media and visitors to attend, and interact positively with it (Florek & Insch, 2011).

Events are considered attractions within a destination, and as such, the concept of event image closely resembles that of destination image (Hallmann, Kaplanidou, & Breuer, 2010). Kaplanidou & Vogt (2007) describe the image of a sports event as a set of impressions and ideas in visitors' minds about the event, formed through the interaction of various elements such as organizational quality, surrounding environment, excitement level, opportunities for social interaction, sense of fulfillment, and emotions evoked by the event. Therefore, it can be said that event image consists of components similar to those of destination image (Kaplanidou, 2006; Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2010; Hallmann et al., 2010; do Valle et al., 2012; Huang et al., 2015). Event image is seen to include cognitive aspects reflected in event organization and characteristics, and affective aspects representing the emotions and impressions the event evokes in participating athletes and visitors (Kaplanidou, 2006; Lita & Ma'ruf, 2015). Kaplanidou & Vogt (2010) note that sports events can evoke impressions of destinations through direct experiences or media exposure. Although the visitor's experience may be brief, it remains ingrained in their memory

and contributes to shaping their impression of the destination (do Valle, Mendes, & Guerreiro, 2012). Gwinner (1997) suggests that this perception is influenced by three main factors: event type (sports, film, cultural, etc.), event characteristics (scale, location, promotion method, historical timing, etc.), and individual factors (past event experiences, emotions, number of images associated with an event, etc.). Kusumah (2023) believes that visitors care more about the sports event itself than the destination if their primary motivation is to attend the event, and their opinions about the event and destination may vary. Meanwhile, Rozhdestvenskaya & Sheresheva (2021) argue that event appeal is the decisive factor, and its positive impact on the destination depends on its ability to meet visitors' needs and desires beyond their expectations, regardless of their differing motivations. In this sense, a destination hosting a sports event can successfully shape the image of the city or country, generating a positive perception among followers as a preferred travel destination (Kaplanidou, 2006; Florek et al., 2008; Kaplanidou et al., 2012; Deng et al., 2015; Lita & Ma'ruf, 2015).

This anticipated success explains the intense competition among destinations to host these events and the significant social, economic, and cultural benefits they may gain, along with the positive image acquired (Florek & Insch, 2011; Atci et al., 2013; Hsu et al., 2020). The legacy of major sports events has transcended material gains to include post-event image, which enhances the host city's image and fosters positive impressions among visitors, especially domestic ones, potentially encouraging revisit and destination recommendation (Li et al., 2021; Du et al., 2025). Therefore, destination officials must leverage the opportunity of hosting sports events, transforming attendees' passion into admiration for the destination by creating exciting and unique tourism experiences (Rozhdestvenskaya & Sheresheva, 2021)."

### **Research Methodology:**

The study adopted a descriptive-analytical approach with a critical orientation, focusing on tracking impressions over time and analyzing the phenomena and mechanisms that influence destination image, satisfaction, and revisit intention. The study aims to understand the post-event image of the city of Oran following the organization of the 2022 Mediterranean Games and to determine the extent of its impact on visitor satisfaction and their intention to revisit. To achieve this, a triangulation of qualitative data sources was employed to strengthen the validity of the conclusions:



- Direct field observation of the event atmosphere, interactions in public spaces, and visual manifestations of the city's identity in relation to the event, with the aim of understanding the experience in its natural context.
- Analysis of media and digital content by monitoring national and international news coverage, as well as analyzing a sample of posts, images, and videos circulated on social media platforms, to explore representations of Oran's image during and after the event.
- Brief, semi-structured on-site interviews with a sample of domestic tourists during and immediately after the event to assess their experience and their initial intentions to revisit Oran in the future. Follow-up interviews were also conducted after a moderate period with visitors who attended the event to evaluate their residual satisfaction level, understand the nature of the image retained in their minds, and explore whether they were genuinely considering repeating their visit.

This approach provided integrated analytical levels combining the examination of media and digital discourse, exploration of the subjective experiences of a sample of visitors, and observation of societal interactions. The critical perspective also enabled an assessment of the sustainability of the impact of the sporting event on the destination's image during and after the event relative to the passage of time, by comparing actual results with the expectations of theoretical models regarding the relationship between: event image, destination image, satisfaction, and revisit intention in the post-event period.

In recent years, Algeria has adopted a new vision aimed at advancing the tourism sector and enhancing the appeal of Algeria as a destination by investing in hosting major international sporting events. In this context, Algeria bet on the 2022 Mediterranean Games in Oran as a strategic opportunity to reintroduce a positive image of Algeria and shape it in the minds of foreign delegations and local visitors. This bet materialized through investments in infrastructure and the provision of a well-organized environment reflecting Algeria's ambition to strengthen its regional and international tourism presence.

### **The 2022 Mediterranean Games in Oran:**

The city of Oran hosted the 19th edition of the Mediterranean Games with the participation of 26 countries from both shores of the Mediterranean, including Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Syria, France, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Turkey, Cyprus, Serbia, Slovenia, and Greece. In preparation for this event, significant funds were allocated to ensure its success. These substantial investments indicate the

host city's seriousness in developing sports and tourism infrastructure, which may reflect positively on the destination's image, visitor satisfaction, and revisit intention.

### **Field Analysis Results:**

The results of field observation and analysis of available data indicated that the organization of the 2022 Mediterranean Games in Oran contributed to forming a positive immediate image of the city during the event period, benefiting from the large-scale investment in sports and tourism infrastructure meeting international standards. This was reflected in the general atmosphere of the city, which exhibited remarkable dynamism, evident in the positive interaction of various stakeholders who demonstrated a clear desire to ensure the success of this edition and contribute to conveying a positive image of Oran and Algeria as a whole. Visual symbols, such as the widely circulated slogan "Oran in the Heart," the event mascot, traditional souvenirs, and photographs and videos shared on digital platforms, also helped reinforce the city's visual identity and highlight it as a tourist destination. In addition, news coverage by major media outlets highlighted tourist sites, archaeological landmarks, and historic streets, as well as conveying the various experiences of foreign guests and athletes.

Interview data and media coverage indicate that many domestic tourists and foreign delegations expressed a noticeable improvement in their perceptual image of Oran compared to what they had expected before the event, showing positive surprise at the level of organization, quality of facilities, and various event-related activities, considering the experience different and more positive than they had imagined. This reflects the event's role in reshaping the mental image of the city within a short period, consistent with the findings of Watanabe, Gilbert, Aman, & Zhang (2018). On the other hand, news reports during the Mediterranean Games period, in addition to monitoring the experiences of a sample of domestic tourists and foreign delegations and tracking interactions on social media pages, showed that the general impression of Oran was largely positive. Many visitors expressed in brief interviews that this image was not something they had held before and that what had formed in their minds was sufficient to create a sense of satisfaction with their experience, aligning with the results of Prayag (2009). Visitors showed signs of joy and comfort, reflecting a high level of satisfaction with their visit and attendance at the sporting event, which contributed to reinforcing a positive perception of the city. These results support the hypothesis that a positive destination image during the event was a factor in increasing satisfaction levels, consistent with literature linking destination image, experience quality, and tourist satisfaction.

However, noteworthy was the subsequent observation of a gradual, then nearly complete, disappearance of the visual identity associated with the event, which had been prominent during its activities, both in public spaces and in digital content. The symbols and logos that were prevalent during the Games were no longer observed. Although some visitors expressed a positive impression of the city and a desire to revisit Oran in the future during initial interviews conducted during and immediately after the event, subsequent monitoring after a period revealed hesitation and reconsideration among other visitors. Some expressed no intention to return, while others indicated conditional intentions based on specific improvements in tourism offerings, accommodation facilities, or service quality. These results reveal a discrepancy in satisfaction levels during and after the event, and the failure of immediate satisfaction among all participants to translate into genuine loyalty or sustained attachment to the destination. However, in the absence of official reports or accurate data showing whether this event actually contributed to an increase in tourist numbers, it is difficult to determine the extent to which these intentions materialized in reality, particularly regarding the evolution of domestic tourist numbers. Some available indicators suggest that tourist traffic quickly returned to the same normal levels seen before the event, without a sustained increase in tourist flows after the conclusion of the Games. This highlights the limited lasting impact of the event on revisit intention, as the positive momentum observed during the competition days faded.

## **Discussion:**

The findings indicate that substantial investments in infrastructure, sports facilities, and tourism amenities reflect a clear orientation toward producing an urban and tourism legacy that extends beyond the short-term scope of the event, aiming to enhance future tourism reception. Hosting the Mediterranean Games contributed to bolstering Oran's image as a tourist destination, consistent with previous literature demonstrating that event attributes directly influence destination image (Kaplanidou, 2006; Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2007; Florek et al., 2008; Kaplanidou et al., 2012; Deng & Li, 2013; Lai, 2016; Watanabe et al., 2018).

Oran successfully demonstrated its ability to provide an organized and comfortable experience for visitors, as reflected in multiple indicators, including positive impressions among delegations regarding service quality, ease of mobility within the city, accommodation facilities, and the overall level of organization. This reinforced Oran's image as an attractive tourist destination with distinct appeal. This can be explained by the fact that the Oran Games introduced new diversity within the city's tourism

offerings. Moreover, media coverage and accompanying event activities opened a broad window for promoting Oran's tourist and historical landmarks. Additionally, the significant interest shown by local residents and youth in ensuring the success of the event—whether through volunteering, launching digital applications and informational services for visitors, or promotion via social media—clearly contributed to shaping a timely and positive image of the city during the event. These elements fall within the realm of tourism information technology.

However, this impact remained limited in duration after the event concluded, due to a noticeable decline in the media and societal dynamics that had previously contributed to forming a temporary image of Oran. References to both the city and the event significantly decreased in media and digital platforms to the extent that the legacy of the Games was scarcely mentioned. Furthermore, the intensive offerings presented during the event were solely tied to its immediate momentum and were not part of an integrated strategy aimed at building a sustainable destination image.

Consequently, symbolic gains gradually faded over time, eroding Oran's tourism identity capacity to continue building awareness among domestic tourists and failing to maintain the level of attractiveness that distinguished it during the Games. This reflects a gap in capitalizing on the event's benefits and converting visitors' positive experiences into repeat visits after its conclusion—contrary to the assertion of Chalip et al. (2003) that media coverage of a sporting event is a critical element in shaping destination image.

The absence of building a strong brand for the city of Oran is the most decisive factor in explaining this gap. The event was not leveraged as a strategic opportunity to develop a unique tourism identity for the city, to define its competitive positioning, or to integrate elements of historical and cultural heritage, local traditions, natural beauty, and local community interaction into a sustainable marketing plan. Nor were integrated marketing communications employed to effectively convey the destination brand promise to tourists and build lasting relationships with them, which would help solidify a coherent and sustainable image.

This explanation highlights the lack of planning for this event, which focused merely on showcasing capabilities during the event without a sustainability strategy fundamentally linked to Oran as a destination. This indicates that the problem is structural, relating to the absence of a sustainable tourism offering, and that satisfaction with the "exceptional event" did not translate into loyalty to the city of

Oran. The image of the sporting event alone was insufficient to be a strong determinant in the relationship between destination image, satisfaction, and revisit intention some time after the Games concluded—contrary to the findings of Li et al. (2021) in the context of sporting events, which confirmed the validity of the theoretical sequence positing that event image enhances destination image and positively influences visitor satisfaction and revisit intention.

Similarly, Osti, Disegna, & Brida (2012) indicated that a satisfied tourist is more likely to revisit the same destination. However, these mechanisms were not clearly evident in the case of Oran; the positive experiences recorded during the Games did not transform into sustained attachment to the destination after the event, highlighting a deficiency in converting immediate satisfaction into genuine loyalty.

Based on this, it can be said that the satisfaction expressed by some visitors during the Oran event formed a preliminary basis for future revisit intentions, consistent with the results of Koo et al. (2014). However, this effect did not clearly materialize in the form of tangible tourist flow after the Games concluded, reinforcing the hypothesis of the limited downstream impact of the event on the actual tourism behavior of domestic visitors.

Here, the influence of the time factor on satisfaction level is apparent through the gradual fading of the positive experience effect. A decline in positive impressions was observed some time after the event, and the current satisfaction among some domestic tourists was insufficient to influence their revisit intention due to the absence of stimuli to reactivate or support those intentions.

Additionally, these intentions were affected by several factors, including the lack of sustained media coverage, the failure of some tourism offerings to maintain a high quality level, and visitors' desire for new offerings and services that enhance future visit experiences. This indicates that immediate satisfaction alone does not guarantee sustained loyalty or attachment to the destination.

In contrast, the results of the study by Ait Challal, Ghidouche, & Ghidouche (2024), according to its abstract published in the *\*Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events\**, provided important support as it addressed the same event and city. Its findings confirmed that the alignment of event and city image has a direct positive impact on destination image and visitors' behavioral intentions. Although this support remains partial due to its focus on evaluation during the event (as opposed to the post-event phase), it forms a strong and necessary basis that justifies exploring the same relationship

within a later and extended timeframe, and logically supports the hypothesis of an interactive effect of event image in tourism models.

## **Conclusion:**

This study offers an important research perspective, particularly given the limited studies on the impact of sporting events in the Algerian context. It sought to explore the potential role of the image of the Oran 2022 Mediterranean Games in shaping destination image and enhancing satisfaction and revisit intention among domestic visitors from outside the city some time after the conclusion of the Games.

The results show that organizing this event contributed to forming a positive image of the city during the event period, benefiting from the quality of sports and tourism infrastructure, the level of organization, and positive interaction from various stakeholders. This was reflected in a high level of immediate visitor satisfaction. However, this effect remained short-term; it declined over time, and the gains of the event's legacy gradually faded, leading some visitors to express no intention to return later, while others linked their decision to improvements in service quality and tourism offerings.

These results reveal a clear gap between the temporary impression left by major sporting events and the ability to sustain their impact after conclusion, due to the absence of a sustainable strategy for marketing the city based on effective information systems.

The practical implications of these findings necessitate a multi-tiered strategic approach focused on the sustainable enhancement of tourism services and infrastructure, activating the unique attributes of the destination to create a positive synergy and exchange between the event and the location—one that extends beyond the momentum of the event period. For example, integrating authentic local cultural and culinary elements into the visitor experience can contribute to fostering long-term positive impressions, deepening emotional connections to the destination, and encouraging future tourism behaviors.

Additionally, building a cohesive destination and event brand is essential for solidifying a place in tourism memory. This can be achieved through designing a harmonious logo, crafting a unified visual identity narrative, and launching promotional campaigns that periodically evoke the event's legacy across local and international media platforms to prevent its image from fading.

Addressing structural, regulatory, and operational deficiencies is also critical to enhancing the visitor experience in subsequent trips and boosting the city's competitive appeal. Furthermore, it is vital to

transform digital and on-site experiences into sustainable symbolic capital by developing a robust information infrastructure, activating digital marketing communications, and leveraging available visitor data to inform future marketing strategies.

On an academic level, this study contributes to broadening the discourse on the marketing effectiveness of major sporting events, demonstrating that their impact is neither linear nor necessarily sustainable unless integrated into a long-term strategic vision for destination development. The study's findings can be generalized to similar urban contexts, with strategies adapted according to local characteristics and event nature.

Finally, the study recommends future research employing longitudinal designs capable of tracking the evolution of destination image, tourist satisfaction, and behavioral intentions over time. It also suggests expanding samples to include international visitors and emphasizes the importance of adopting a mixed-methods approach that combines quantitative and qualitative analysis, thereby enhancing the ability to more accurately interpret the mechanisms through which the legacy of major sporting events exerts its influence.

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