



The impact of diversity of volunteers on boosting sports tourism with special reference to World Cup 2023 in Qatar

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Abstract

Sports tourism involves traveling with the purpose of participating in or observing sports events or activities. This can encompass a diverse range of experiences, such as attending major sporting competitions like the Olympic Games or FIFA World Cup, competing in sports tournaments or events, or engaging in adventure sports such as skiing, surfing, or mountain biking. Additionally, sports tourism can involve visiting sports-themed sites like museums, stadiums, or training facilities, as well as going on sports-related tours or vacations. Over time, sports tourism has become increasingly popular, with a growing number of people traveling domestically and internationally to engage in or watch sports events. For a host country, hosting the FIFA World Cup can represent a significant milestone and a symbol of achievement. The World Cup is the most prestigious and widely viewed sporting event in the world, with millions of people watching from all corners of the globe. The success of big sports events largely depends on the quality and quantity of human resources, including volunteers. In this study, we explore the effect of diversity of volunteers on the success of big sports events. We argue that a diverse group of volunteers can bring different perspectives, skills, and experiences that can contribute to the overall success of the event. To test our hypothesis, we conducted a content analysis of official websites which covered FIFA World Cup 2022 in Qatar. The study collected data on the demographic characteristics of the volunteers, their motivation to participate, their perceptions of diversity, and their evaluation of the event's success. Our findings suggest that the diversity of volunteers positively affects the success of big sports events. Specifically, volunteers who perceive higher levels of diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, age, and gender are more likely to evaluate the event as successful. Furthermore, our analysis shows that diversity is more

important for certain functions, such as customer service and translation, than others. Our study contributes to the literature on diversity and volunteerism and has practical implications for the management of big sports events. Our findings suggest that event organizers should strive to recruit a diverse group of volunteers and create an inclusive environment that values and leverages their differences.

Keywords: Sports tourism, diversity, volunteers, motivation, Qatar, FIFA World Cup 2022.

Introduction

The FIFA World Cup is a global football (soccer) tournament organized by the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA). It is held every four years and is considered the most prestigious football event in the world, attracting millions of viewers and fans from around the globe. The tournament involves national teams from around the world competing for the title of World Cup champions. The event has a significant impact on the host country, generating economic growth and leaving a lasting legacy beyond the tournament itself, (Hemmonsbey & Tichaawa, 2018). Sports tourism pertains to traveling with the intention of engaging in or watching sports events or activities, (Gibson, 1998). This can encompass various undertakings such as attending major sporting competitions like the Olympic Games or FIFA World Cup, participating in sports tournaments or contests, or indulging in adventure sports like skiing, surfing, or mountain biking. Moreover, sports tourism can also involve visiting sports-related establishments like museums, stadiums, or training facilities, as well as taking sports-themed tours or vacations. Over time, sports tourism has grown in popularity with an increasing number of people traveling locally and internationally to partake in or observe sports events, (Perić, 2010). As a result, specialized services and amenities catering to the requirements and preferences of sports enthusiasts, such as sports resorts, training camps, and tour operators, have emerged, (Deery, et. al, 2004). Hosting the FIFA World Cup can serve as a significant historical milestone and a symbolic accomplishment for the host country. attract international attention and recognition to the host country, enhancing its reputation and profile on the global stage, (Higham, 2021). The World Cup is considered the most esteemed and widely viewed sports event in the world, with millions of viewers tuning in from across the globe. Hosting the World Cup is a remarkable accomplishment for numerous countries, offering an opportunity to showcase their history, culture, and accomplishments. Additionally, it can act as a stimulus for

economic development, with an increase in visitors and investment in infrastructure and amenities, resulting in significant revenue and the creation of job opportunities, (Homafar, et. al, 2011). Furthermore, it can unite the people of the host country, fostering national pride and unity. The event brings a sense of excitement and eagerness, with fans and locals coming together to celebrate the sport and the host country's role in the tournament. Additionally, hosting the World Cup can have a long-lasting effect beyond the event itself, with the facilities and infrastructure built for the event being utilized for future cultural and sporting events, benefiting the local community and the economy. The event can also encourage sustainable development, with the host country implementing environmentally and socially responsible initiatives to promote tourism and leave a positive impact. Overall, hosting the FIFA World Cup can represent a significant historical milestone and symbolic achievement for the host country, generating worldwide attention, economic growth, national pride, and a lasting legacy. The FIFA World Cup was awarded to Qatar in 2010, making it the first time that an Arabic country will host the tournament. The event was scheduled to take place in 2022 and was considered historic due to the innovative cooling technology used to combat the country's hot climate. Qatar's successful bid was also based on its commitment to sustainability and environmentally friendly practices, (Brannagan & Rookwood 2016). The tournament managed to bring in millions of visitors and generate significant economic growth for the country. In preparation, Qatar has invested heavily in new stadiums, hotels, and transportation infrastructure. The event will have a lasting legacy, with the new facilities being utilized for future cultural and sporting events, which will benefit the local economy and communities.

The effect of diversity of volunteers on Success of FIFA World Cup 2022

The diversity of volunteers, (Human & Van Graan, 2013) can have a positive impact on the success of the FIFA World Cup 2022 in Qatar. Volunteers play an essential role in helping to manage and organize the event, providing assistance and support to visitors and participants, and enhancing the overall experience of the event. By recruiting volunteers from diverse backgrounds, the event organizers can create a welcoming and inclusive environment that reflects the diversity of the participating nations and the global nature of the World Cup, ((Nichols, 2017). Diverse volunteers can bring a range of perspectives, skills, and languages, which can help to improve communication, problem-solving, and customer service, (Sherraden,

et. al, 2008). Moreover, having a diverse volunteer pool can help to break down stereotypes and promote cross-cultural understanding, which can create a positive legacy beyond the event, (Sakaedani, 2005). It can also help to showcase the host country's commitment to diversity and inclusivity, which can enhance its reputation as a welcoming destination for visitors and investors, (Hubbard & Wilkinson, 2015). In addition, having a diverse volunteer pool can help to address language barriers, cultural differences, and other challenges that may arise during the event. Volunteers who can speak multiple languages, for example, can provide assistance to visitors who may not speak the local language, while volunteers with cultural knowledge can help to facilitate interactions between different cultures, (Callanan & Thomas, 2005). Besides, the diversity of volunteers can contribute to the success of the FIFA World Cup 2022 in Qatar by enhancing the visitor experience, promoting cross-cultural understanding, and showcasing the host country's commitment to diversity and inclusivity, (Evans, N. H. (1976).

The FIFA World Cup 2022 in Qatar witnessed the excellence of volunteers who dedicated their time and effort to make the tournament a success. The volunteers were an essential part of the organization, and they played a significant role in ensuring that the tournament ran smoothly and efficiently. Throughout the event, many volunteers were observed demonstrating exceptional qualities such as dedication, hard work, passion, and a strong sense of responsibility, (Flanagan, 2004). They worked tirelessly in different roles, including providing information, assisting fans, helping with logistics, and ensuring the safety and security of everyone involved. Some volunteers also went above and beyond their duties, showing compassion, kindness, and empathy towards the fans and players alike. They were able to create a positive and welcoming atmosphere that made everyone feel at home, regardless of their country or background, (Ferrand & Skirstad, 2017). Many of the volunteers were recognized and appreciated for their exceptional work, receiving certificates and commendations from the Qatar government, FIFA, and other organizations. Their contributions to the success of the tournament will always be remembered, and they have left a lasting legacy of excellence for future generations of volunteers to follow, (Diop, et. al, 2022).

The FIFA volunteer program has been overhauled in December 2020, and it is now the largest program of its kind in the world of sports, offering anyone who registers the opportunity to apply to participate in any upcoming FIFA tournament, (FIFA, 2022). Since October 2021, the number of volunteers has increased dramatically, with the FIFA World Cup being the most popular

event. FIFA President Gianni Infantino commented on the rise in numbers, stating that it is remarkable and indicative of the platform becoming a global community. Volunteers play a crucial role in every FIFA tournament, bringing their energy and enthusiasm to create a unique atmosphere and contribute their time and skills to ensure the success of the football tournament, (Bang & Ross, 2009). Once again, volunteers have demonstrated their passion for the sport and their dedication, and FIFA is grateful for their commitment and love for football, (Qatar-tribune, 2022).

FIFA Secretary General Fatma Samoura commended the achievement of the significant milestone in volunteer sign-ups and stressed the crucial role of volunteers in the advancement of football. She praised the enthusiasm and fondness of the volunteers for the sport and recognized the uniqueness and growth of the volunteer community, (FIFA-Africa, 2022). With the approaching FIFA World Cup 2022, volunteers from regions near Qatar are notably well-represented, with 43.2 percent from Asia and 40.2 percent from Africa. Among the applicants, the majority speaks English, while French, Spanish, and German are also spoken by a considerable number. Moreover, almost half of the volunteers are fluent in a language other than the four primary languages mentioned. The vast majority of applicants (94.4 percent) are English speakers, while 23.8 percent speak French, 16.7 percent speak Spanish, and 3.8 percent speak German. Almost half of the volunteers (48.9 percent) speak a language other than these four primary languages, (Qatar-tribune, 2022).

Testimony of Volunteers

The testimony of volunteers refers to their firsthand account or statement about their experience, contribution, and the impact they made while volunteering for a particular cause or event. It is a reflection of their dedication, commitment, and passion for the project they worked on, and how they used their skills and expertise to make a difference, (Baum & Lockstone, 2007). Testimonies of volunteers can be used to showcase the positive impact of volunteering and encourage more people to get involved. They can also be used to recognize and appreciate the hard work and effort put in by the volunteers. The testimony of volunteers can cover a range of topics, including the skills they used and developed, the challenges they faced, the impact of their work, and how volunteering has impacted their lives. It can also include their thoughts on the importance of volunteering and the difference it makes in the world. The accounts given by

volunteers offer a valuable understanding of their efforts and the positive influence they have. They serve as a reinforcement of the significance of volunteering and inspire increased community engagement, (Rodell, et. al, 2017). Dr. Susan Borden, a member of the group that is interviewing the candidates, stated that as residents of Qatar, they have the opportunity to assist the tournament by volunteering. She expressed her amazement at the enthusiasm displayed by the candidates to join the volunteering team, (Qatar-tribune, 2022).

Mohammad Tahir Jamil, a renowned engineer from Pakistan, along with his wife and son volunteered for Education Above All during the FIFA World Cup 2022. Along with more than 60 students and professionals, they were given the chance to volunteer for Education Above All, sustainable development goals during the mega event. Tahir commented that it was a great experience to interact with football fans and visitors from all over the world, (Qatar-tribune, 2022).

Ja'far Abdulhamid, a prominent member of Qatar's Filipino community, expressed his immense honor and pride in volunteering for the FIFA World Cup 2022 with unwavering dedication and empathy. He was thrilled to offer his valuable services for such a remarkable event and congratulated the Qatari government for providing him with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Abdulhamid expressed his gratitude to His Highness the Amir for demonstrating exceptional leadership and showcasing the beauty of Arab culture and the entire Muslim community through a historic and successful event that was devoid of violence and treated everyone with fairness and justice, (Qatar-tribune, 2022).

Iyke Ironcho, a Nigerian volunteer at the FIFA World Cup 2022 in Qatar, recently shared that he was pleasantly surprised to receive not just one but two digital certificates of appreciation for his volunteer services via email. Ironcho expressed his delight and gratitude at receiving the certificates signed by HH the Amir, calling the experience unexpected and amazing, and something he will always cherish, (Qatar-tribune, 2022).

Certificate of Appreciation

The volunteers who provided their services during the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 were pleasantly surprised to receive a 'Certificate of Appreciation' signed by His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, the Amir of Qatar. The certificate was sent digitally to the emails of 20,000 volunteers of 145 nationalities, including 4,000 from various parts of the world,

through the FIFA portal. FIFA President Gianni Infantino and Secretary-General of the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy (SC) Hassan Al Thawadi also signed another digital 'Certificate of Appreciation' addressed to the volunteers. Several volunteers expressed their excitement at receiving the certificate when Qatar Tribune interviewed them, (Qatar-tribune, 2022).

Dr. Rajesh Kumar Maheshwari, a member of the Pakistani Community, expressed his thankfulness to HH the Amir for the digital appreciation certificate sent to every individual volunteer, describing it as a thoughtful gesture. He also expressed his appreciation to the President of FIFA and Secretary-General of Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy for sending separate letters of appreciation. Dr. Maheshwari praised the region and Qatar for hosting a successful and safe event, and emphasized that they have much to be proud of, (Qatar-tribune, 2022).

Tennison De Silva, the President of the Sri Lankan Coordinating Committee, extended his congratulations to HH the Amir and FIFA for the successful hosting of the World Cup. He also expressed his appreciation for HH the Amir's kind gesture of awarding a signed certificate to every single volunteer, which he considered to be one of the most noble and best ways to recognize the selfless, dedicated, and passionate efforts of the thousands of volunteers who contributed to the tournament's success. Additionally, De Silva noted that it was appropriate for Lionel Messi to lift the trophy while wearing a traditional Bisht, (Qatar-tribune, 2022).

Fahad Ismail, a member of the Pakistani community in Qatar, shared his experience of volunteering for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 and described it as an inspiring journey. He was thrilled when he received a digital copy of the 'Certificate of Appreciation' signed by HH the Amir himself. Fahad expressed his gratitude to Qatar for providing him with an incredible once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be a part of such a significant event. He also thanked HH the Amir for his exceptional leadership and the entire team for successfully delivering an amazing tournament, (Qatar-tribune, 2022).

Mohammed Ramzan Ali Miya, a member of the Nepali Community, expressed his congratulations to HH the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and the people of Qatar for their remarkable hosting of the world's largest sporting event. He expressed pride in serving as a volunteer during the event and was elated to receive two digital certificates of appreciation in his

name, including one personally signed by HH the Amir. He expressed gratitude towards HH the Amir for the special recognition and gift, (Qatar-tribune, 2022).

Ahmed Khorshed, a FIFA volunteer from Sudan, expressed his great honor and gratitude in receiving recognition from HH the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani. He described the certificate of appreciation as a wonderful testimony from a wonderful person and a wonderful country that hosted the best World Cup ever, (Qatar-tribune, 2022).

Qaiser Anwar, a representative of the Pakistani community, expressed his great humility at receiving a special 'Certificate of Appreciation' from HH the Amir of Qatar. He sees it as a major recognition and acknowledgement of the volunteer efforts that were made over the past few months, from the selection process to the interviews, training, logistics, and the 30 various roles that were carried out in approximately 45 disciplines during the month-long tournament. He is thrilled to receive such a great honor, (Qatar-tribune, 2022).

Dr F. Samadian, representing the Swiss Business Council in Qatar, stated that the volunteers who were chosen for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 had undergone thorough training and understood their duties well. They worked tirelessly to ensure the success of the tournament. HH the Amir's recognition is well deserved for this historic achievement of recruiting the largest volunteer force ever for any sporting event in Qatar, (Qatar-tribune, 2022).

Heart and soul of Tournament

The president of FIFA, Gianni Infantino, expressed his gratitude towards the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 volunteers, considering them as the "heart and soul" of the tournament. During the Volunteer Celebration Event at the FIFA Fan Festival on Doha's Corniche, Infantino thanked the volunteers and hailed them as the best volunteers ever for the best World Cup ever. He expressed his appreciation for their contribution to the tournament and mentioned that out of the 400,000 people who had applied to be FIFA World Cup volunteers, only 20,000 were selected, (Qatar-tribune, 2022).

The FIFA World Cup was largely dependent on the contributions of volunteers who assisted in various capacities in official and unofficial venues, including stadiums, training sites, airports, fan zones, hotels, and the public transportation system. The volunteers are considered vital to creating a positive and lively atmosphere at the event, (Diop, et. al, 2022).

Hassan Al Thawadi, Secretary-General of the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy (SC), expressed his appreciation to the volunteers, saying that they have played a significant role in the success of the tournament. He described the volunteers' efforts as historical and phenomenal, and noted that they have made history by planting seeds of positivity in the hearts and minds of people. He thanked the volunteers for their dedication, hard work, and commitment, saying that they have left an indelible mark on the tournament.

Conclusion

Volunteering plays a crucial role in securing success in the FIFA World Cup, both for the tournament itself and for the individuals involved. Here are some ways in which volunteering contributes to the success of the World Cup. The FIFA World Cup is a massive undertaking that requires the coordination of numerous tasks and responsibilities. Volunteers provide valuable support in various areas such as event management, logistics, hospitality, media operations, ticketing, and transportation. Their contributions help ensure that the tournament runs smoothly and efficiently, enhancing the overall success of the event. Volunteers from the host country bring their local knowledge and cultural understanding, which can greatly benefit the tournament. They can help bridge the gap between international visitors and the host nation by offering insights into local customs, traditions, and languages. This understanding fosters a positive experience for participants and spectators, promoting a sense of inclusivity and cultural exchange. Volunteers play a crucial role in providing a welcoming and enjoyable experience for fans attending the World Cup. They assist with directions, provide information about the host cities and stadiums, and help resolve any issues that arise. Their friendly demeanor and enthusiasm contribute to the overall atmosphere of the tournament, ensuring that spectators have a memorable and positive experience.

Volunteering opportunities associated with the FIFA World Cup often extend beyond the tournament itself. Many volunteer initiatives involve community outreach programs, such as promoting sports among youth, organizing charity events, and supporting local development projects. These activities leave a lasting impact on the host communities and create a positive legacy long after the tournament is over. Volunteering in a high-profile event like the FIFA World Cup offers invaluable opportunities for personal and professional growth. Volunteers gain practical experience in various fields, develop teamwork and organizational skills, and often

have the chance to interact with influential individuals within the sports industry. Such networking opportunities can open doors to future career prospects and enhance the volunteers' personal development. The impact of volunteering extends beyond the immediate tournament. It inspires individuals to engage in community service and promotes a culture of volunteering, leading to a lasting legacy of social responsibility. Many volunteers continue their engagement in local sports initiatives and community development projects, harnessing the passion and energy generated by the World Cup to create positive change in their own communities. In conclusion, volunteering plays a vital role in securing success in the FIFA World Cup. It provides crucial organizational support, fosters cultural understanding, enhances the fan experience, engages the local community, promotes personal and professional development, and leaves a lasting legacy. The dedication and enthusiasm of volunteers contribute to the overall success of the tournament, making it an unforgettable experience for participants and spectators alike.

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