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## **Legacies and Benefits of mega-events from the perspective of volunteer co-creators: A Case Study on 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympic**

Item Type	event;event
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Download date	2026-04-13 20:11:47
Link to Item	<a href="https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14394/49151">https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14394/49151</a>

# Legacies and Benefits of mega-events from the perspective of volunteer co-creators: A Case Study on 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympic

## Introduction

Mega-events have been shown to affect the hosting place, with transformative changes (Preuss, 2015). Cities have been motivated to host mega-events, expecting the positive changes that the events bring, and the legacy of these changes have been investigated (Ferrari & Guala, 2017; Gratton & Presuss, 2008; Kaplanidou, 2012). Tourism researchers have focused on the legacy of mega-events because of the opportunity to develop tourism-related infrastructure and media attention (Densero & Puttilli, 2010; Ferrari & Guala, 2017; Li & McCabe, 2013). However, legacies are not always positive (Kaplanidou & Karadkis, 2010), and the effect differs for every event. To maximize the positive legacy as a result of a successful hosting, support and work of stakeholders are essential (Kaplanidou & Karadkis, 2010, Karadkis & Kaplanidou, 2012). This is the reason that researches examined the legacies from the stakeholders' perspective, but mainly from residents' perspectives. Researchers should also keep in mind that without unpaid work of volunteers, it is difficult to offer a unique experience to athletes and visitors (IOC, 2019). According to IOC (2019), volunteers are the backbone of the event, and without them, the Olympics would not be able to function. This makes them the most important stakeholders and co-creator of the event. Despite their important role, there are limited studies on understanding what they think of their legacy, the Olympic legacy, and other aspects of the Olympics. Moreover, previous studies on event volunteering rather focused on one-dimensional perspective that is investigating the volunteering experience and legacy of their volunteering (Doherty, 2009; Nichols & Ralston, 2012). By learning their perspective, Olympic organizations can better prepare in terms of volunteer recruitment and retainment which according to Bang, Lee and Swart (2014) is essential parts of operating and managing meg sport events.

Here we use the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympic as a study site, exploring whether each event might bring different legacy effects. The 2018 Winter Olympic is an especially striking event because of its significant image as a Peace Olympic, that initiated discourse amongst countries that have had long-term political tension (Yoon & Chung, 2018). The event was considered significant for a few other reasons: 1) hosting the Winter Olympic was South Korea' long-cherished desire; and 2) it recorded the largest number of participants in terms of countries and athletes in the history of the Olympics. For these reasons, the legacy effect of this event might be different from past Olympics. Therefore, this study aims to explore the legacy of the 2018 Winter Olympics as the most recent and unique Olympics by expanding and building on the previous studies of the legacy from the perspective of the co-creator, volunteers.

## Study background

### *Legacies of Mega-events*

The concept of legacy was first mentioned in 1956 when Melbourne, Australia prepared for the Olympiad (Leopkey, 2009). Since then the concept has gained the attention of both academics and practitioners (Kaplanidou & Karadkis, 2010). Primarily, much attention has been given to understand the definition of legacy (Preuss 2015) and measuring the legacy for the hosting country and city (Karadkis & Kaplanidou, 2012).

In terms of defining legacy, the most commonly used term is by International Olympic Committees (IOC), which stated in the IOC Charter "to promote the positive legacy from the Olympic Games to the host cities and host countries" (International Olympic Committee, 2007 p.15). However, this definition has been criticized by Cashman (2005), who states that it only focuses on the positive side

of legacy. Next, researchers extensively examined what legacy should mean in mega sports events. Nevertheless, literature reviews indicate that there is no simple, clear and consensus definition of legacy (Agha et al., 2012; Preuss, 2007). Nevertheless, there is some level of agreement what should be considered in the legacy, such as Preuss's (2007, p. 211) 'legacy cube' of planned and unplanned, intangible and tangible, and negative and positive (Kaplanidou & Karadakis, 2010; Dawson & Jöns, 2018). These dimensions have become the index to determine the legacy effects. However, scholars have attempted to examine the effect in a more sophisticated way. This leads to the classification and/or categorization of legacies. The pioneer categorization of legacies is suggested by Cashman (2003): 1) economic; 2) built, physical, and environmental; 3) sport; 4) symbol, memory, and history; 5) information and education; and 6) public life, politics, and culture. While scholars have used and adopted the earlier classifications (i.e., Chappelet, 2008; Thoohey, 2008), some have added new categories. For example, many scholars highlighted the opportunities for the tourism industry; to develop tourism-related infrastructure (i.e., hotel and transport) and service structure (i.e., tour products, guild system) of the hosting cities, as well as free marketing via increased awareness utilizing international media (Chalip, 2002; Karadakis & Kaplanidou, 2012).

Furthermore, the literature points out that legacy effects could differ for the hosting city and country. For example, according to Kaplanidou (2010) and Deccio and Baloglu (2002), the hosting city and non-hosting city residents feel differently about the legacy. In line with the notion of a different effect, some places enjoy long-term positive effects while others only experience short-term spill-over effects. More specifically, every event differs because of size and inputs (budget and investment) (Ferrari & Guala, 2017). Moreover, these effects are also seen as distinct depending on from whose perspective the legacies are evaluated. While legacies have been evaluated by key stakeholders, this was mainly limited to capture the residents (Karadakis & Kaplanidou, 2012) or members of organizations directly or indirectly involved with the Olympics (Kaplanidou & Karadakis, 2010). As every event differs in how stakeholders are involved and benefit from it, it is important for researchers to investigate its effects, considering the particularity of the hosting place and including the stakeholder's view, who are relatively neglected in this line of research to comprehensively understand the mega sports events.

### ***Volunteer as co-creator***

Hosting the Olympic Games, which is the world's largest event, is not possible without the collaboration of a variety of stakeholders from different areas, including both public and private stakeholders. Therefore, these stakeholders' perspectives on the Olympic Games have been of great interest to researchers. To date, researchers have explored the perspectives on Olympic Games from multiple stakeholder views by covering destination marketing organizations (Sant, Mason, & Hinch, 2013) and news medias (Sant & Mason, 2015, Yoon & Chung, 2018), as these reflect the view of key stakeholders and publics, both private and public (Knott, Fyall, & Jones, 2015), as well as local residents perspectives (Kaplanidou, 2012; Kaplanidou et al., 2013; Karadakis & Kaplanidou, 2012). However, there has been limited research addressing the volunteers' perspectives on Olympic legacies, while the volunteer is one of the most important stakeholders and the key to a successful Olympics (Ahn, 2018; Fairley, Gardiner, & Filo, 2016; Green & Chalip, 2004). Volunteers help to reduce the cost of mega-events by providing a significant amount of unpaid workforce (Firley, Gardiner, & Filo, 2016); without volunteers, hosting events of such a size becomes impossible.

For this reason, volunteers are the co-creators of mega sporting events. In marketing research, co-creators' roles were identified as: to be engaged and involved in any stage of production, as well as promotion and distribution (Vargo & Lush, 2004). In mega sporting events, especially in Olympics, volunteers are employed in various areas to provide information about the games, operations, interpretation, and media center (PyeongChang, 2018). Moreover, one of the volunteers' motivations in a

sporting event is leisure (Strigas, 2001), which means that their evaluation of the event and hosting place can influence others' decisions about whether to visit the place. Therefore, Olympic legacy literature, volunteers' perspectives as co-creators of the Olympics should be explored. Moreover, to widely investigate how the event can be sustainable with long term legacies and benefits, the event needs to be examined from the perspective of the volunteers, who are usually the most involved and supportive group.

Emphasizing the role of volunteers at events, there have been studies attempted to understand the volunteer from various aspects (Nichols & Ralston, 2012; Holmes, Nichols, & Ralston, 2018). Scholars have dominantly looked at re-volunteer intention, recruitment, volunteering motivation, and their work environment. More recently, there have been several studies focusing the volunteering legacies (Doherty, 2009; Holmes, Nichols, & Ralston, 2018) which were related to the volunteering achievement and accomplishment. However, to the best of author's knowledge, studies have not investigated the Olympic legacy from a volunteer perspective.

### ***Purpose of the Study***

Rather than focusing on the Olympics from a unidimensional perspective, this study examines the volunteer's perspective to understand the benefits and contribution of the Olympics in a holistic manner. More specifically, this study investigates 1) whether and why volunteers think of the Olympics as successful or not; 2) What is the legacy of their volunteering to the Olympics; and 3) What is the contribution of the Olympics at the individual, social, and national level?

### **Methodology**

Data were collected from convenience samples of volunteers from 2018 PyeongChang Olympic with assistance from the Korea Volunteer Center and PyeongChang 2018 Organizing Committee that were in charge of recruiting and training the volunteers. An online survey link was sent by Korean Volunteer Center in May 4, 2018 about to 16,200 volunteers who registered as domestic Korean volunteers, and the survey link was only available until May 30, 2018. The survey was written in Korean and consisted of open-ended questions asking volunteers' perception of legacies (e.g., How do you think of a success of PyeongChang Olympic Games? What do you think of the legacy outcome of your volunteering? What are the contributions of the PyeongChang Olympics to our society?) as well as demographic questions (e.g., place of residence, gender, age, education, etc.). The survey questions and answers were translated from Korean to English and back-translated English to Korean by bilingual researchers. A total of 1991 volunteers responded to the survey. Table 1 is the profile summary of the respondents.

Table 1. Profile

	Value	Freq.	%		Value	Freq.	%
Gender	Nonresponse	22	1.1%	Education	Nonresponse	4	0.2%
	Male	560	28.1%		Less than High School	24	1.2%
	Female	1404	70.5%		High School graduate	657	33.0%
	Other	5	0.3%		Some college degree	117	5.9%
Age	Nonresponse	6	0.3%	Bachelor's degree	1078	54.1%	
	Less than 19	402	20.2%	Graduate degree	88	4.4%	
	20-29	1230	61.8%	Doctoral degree	23	1.2%	
	30-39	43	2.2%	Place of Resident within Korea	Nonresponse	59	3.0%
	40-49	57	2.9%		Seoul (capital) and Capital area	1078	54.1%
	50-59	98	4.9%		Kang Won area	208	10.4%
60+	155	7.8%	Chung Chung area		155	7.8%	
Place or Resident	Nonresponse	7	0.4%	Ho Nam area (inc. Jeju)	133	6.7%	
	In Korea	1950	97.9%	Yeong Nam Area	358	18.0%	
	Overseas	34	1.7%				

The study adopted a qualitative content analysis approach and grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006) to capture the legacies and contributions of volunteers' perspectives. The data was first coded manually with open-coding technique based on the researcher's interpretation of data, which later arranged and interpreted to the primary themes. The primary themes for coding were guided by previous studies' classifications and typologies of sport event legacy (Agha, Fairley, & Gibson, 2012; Karadakis & Kaplanidou, 2012; Preuss, 2007, 2015). Legacies identified in the previous studies served as the guiding themes that coders used for previously identified legacies as reference points.

## Results and Discussion

### *Opinions on the success of the Olympics*

Respondent generally felt that the Olympic were successful: The average score was 6 when they are asked to indicate the success of the Olympics on a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 is not successful at all and 7 is very successful. There were 50 open codes, and those were categorized to 10 primary categories. Table 2 illustrates the primary themes and majority of sub-themes from open-coding. The Table does not include the reasons that volunteers felt it was not successful because the reasons were mainly not having to treat the volunteers fairly in terms of accommodation and transportation. Very few mentioned a lack of guidance systems for international visitors.

Quantitative analysis showed that the volunteers felt great about the Olympics' success as discussed in previous literature; however, there are three noticeable reasons. The economic benefit is the foremost popular topic in the Olympics, and it is a primary motivation to host the event. Unfortunately, recent Olympics have been a financial disaster (i.e. Sochi and Rio Olympics); the locals in Calgary, Canada rejected a proposal to bid the 2026 Winter Olympics. However, the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympics were financially beneficial with a small budget but high efficiency. Therefore, this result is of value to the IOC as it refutes the Olympics' negative reputation of being costly and involving heavy investments. This can help governments persuade the public to host the Olympics.

Surprisingly, many volunteers described personal reasons for the Olympics' success. In their opinion, the Olympics were successful because of their hard work, devotion, and passion. Moreover, they stated that their personal satisfaction and reward is the reason to think that the Olympics were successful. This result indicated that involvement at the personal level is very important for the volunteers in evaluating the success.

Finally, the unique point is that previous Olympics did not show the role of the Olympics in facilitating peace. Here, the host country is in a unique political situation because of political unrest between South Korea and North Korea. The conflict and complicated relationship have resulted in negative impacts, and people consider South Korea as unsafe to visit (Kim, 2008). The marching of South Korea and North Korea team together at the opening events and the two leaders seating side-by-side at the opening event sent the message to the world that the Korean peninsula is beginning to work toward the peace and end the war. This peaceful mood may only seem to be politically successful; however, it is inter-related with safety and security which also led to the success of the tourism industry. There will be more tourism with more perceived safety (Schroeder, Pennington-Gray, Kim & Lui-Lastres, 2018).

Table 2. Reasons for considering the 2018 Winter Olympics to be successful.

Primary reason for Olympic Success	Sub-themes
Personal success	Volunteers' devotion and passion, personal satisfaction, rewarding feeling, broaden the network with others
Winter Sport related success	Opportunity to highlight and grow winter sports, improve and establish infrastructure for winter sport, quality of facilities (compliments of ice quality), no-biased judgment for games
Success based on objective evaluation (3rd person's evaluation)	Foreign officers' and visitors' (international and domestic) positive comment, positive press from international and domestic media, IOC evaluation of Olympic, in situ reaction of visitors
Management/Operational success	Opening and closing ceremony (showcase the technological advancement and beautiful performance), ability to control the norovirus, creation of the popular Olympic mascot hosting and operating ability
Economic success	Small budget and high efficiency, broke even-point for investment, financial gain, promotion of Korean business via sponsor booths
Political success	Peaceful mood in Korean peninsula and in the World, united team (South and North Korea), promoting peace and harmony
Tourism business	Improve the country image, promote the host city and country, attract visitors
Safety and security	No terrorism, no major incidents and accidents
Social success	Improve self-esteem of residents and Korea nations, everyone enjoyed the festival and felt like a member of the global community, pride to host the first Winter Olympic

### ***Legacy of volunteering***

While the volunteers were able to identify the legacy of their volunteering to the Olympic, many volunteers seemed to have trouble finding the legacy to their action. Some volunteers could not distinguish their own legacy from the legacy of the Olympics that they considered the facilities built for the Olympics like the Olympic plaza, park and stadia built as their legacy. However, those sport and other infrastructures are clearly the legacies of the Olympic investment (Agha et al., 2012) rather than volunteers' legacy. The legacy of volunteering had shown to be more related to intangible such as the personal and emotional capitals which match with the result of previous studies (Fairley, Gardiner, & Filo, 2016; Nichols & Ralston,

2011). The legacy of volunteering that 2018 Winter Olympics' volunteer identified is briefly illustrated in Table 3. The finding provided that the legacy of volunteering is more meaningful and noble that portray personal, emotional and spiritual growth. On the other hand, the volunteers identified the mementos like souvenir, badge, uniform as their legacy. While the mementos are tangible things, they are deeply connected to the intangible memory that they remind of their experience. This finding indicates that these intangible aspects are the reasons that people would like to and continued to volunteer for. These finds can be helpful to those plans to recruit the volunteers for the sports mega-events.

Table 3. Legacy of volunteering list

Legacy of volunteering	Sub-themes
Unforgettable memory and experience	Enriching personal experience, once life time memory,
Memento	AD card, photos, video clips, badge, uniform, certificate
Volunteer group	People, network, international friends
Personal growth	Enhancing self-esteem, communicating skill, practicing language, opportunity to challenge, broadening a view of the world, sense of accomplishment, self-respect
Volunteer spirit	Corporation, devotion, passion, glory
Contribution to world and country	Patriotism, being a foundation for bringing peace and harmony, contributing to something greater oneself

### ***Legacy of 2018 Winter Olympics***

The volunteers were asked to describe the legacy of the 2018 Winter Olympics in different levels to better understand the legacies. The Olympics' legacy at the personal level were almost identical as the legacy of volunteering as shown in the previous section. In terms of community and national level legacy, the sense of community, increased awareness/reputation, and opportunity to promote tourism to the host region and country as well as the opportunity for economic development were identified. These legacies were often discussed in the sport event legacy studies (Agha et al., 2012; Grix & Lee, 2013; George & Swart, 2012). While previous studies discuss investment in the infrastructure of sport facilities and social infrastructure like transportation facilities as one of sport-event legacies (Agha et al., 2012; Ahlert, 2006), this was only shown at the community level because South Korea overall is a highly developed country.

One important legacy of the 2018 Winter Olympics is that it was the Peace Olympic (Lewis, 2018). The volunteers frequently mentioned the peaceful mood between South and North Korea. They considered the Olympics to be the foundation of a peaceful mood. This finding should be emphasized by the IOC because peace is an important Olympic spirit. Throughout the Olympics, the ICO hopes to promote unity, friendship, and fight for peace (IOC, 2019).

Table 4. Legacy of Winter Olympics at the personal, community, and national levels.

Personal level	Community (PyeongChang and Kangwon region) level	National level
Rethinking of volunteer experience, self-respect/self-esteem, opportunity to watch the game in person, being a part of important world historical event, sharing, personal growth, new	Promoting and marketing of the host city, growth of tourism industry, tourism opportunities, showcasing culture and environment, establishing and improving basic infrastructure	Economic development and growth, national happiness, hope for united Korea, inter-Korea summit, initiate south/north dialogue, enhancing the nation's reputation, the ability to show

<p>experience, formation of life value, motivation for life, broadened world view, broaden personal connectivity, opportunity to be involved something better than oneself, educational, growing inspirational sprit, opportunity to meet world class athletes in person, rethinking of future career, something to tell people (something to be proud of), grow social skill, spirit to challenge, foreign experience, learning opportunity, opportunity to infuse patriotism, turning point for the life, skill to communicate, rethink of personal capacity.</p>	<p>(transportation infrastructure) for the hosting city, regional economy, sense of community, enhancing patriotism, infusing community pride, cultural exchange opportunity for locals growth of local business, local people's interest in sport, increase of leisure facilities, opportunity to work together as one community (act as one big family), revitalizing culture, learn to sacrifice personal need and want for community, capture international attention.</p>	<p>South Korea's power in winter sports, promoting Korean food and culture, showing Korea as a friendly and safe place, removing political tension between South and North Korea, establishing peaceful mood, increase awareness, promoting tourism opportunity, promoting peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula, bringing national harmony and unity, promoting Korea, constructing good quality sport facilities, emphasizing important of winter sports, promoting Korea's beautiful traditions and culture, enhancing ability to host international level event via repeated experience, increasing sense of pride for Koreans, increase Korea's reputation, showcasing Korea as a winter sport powerhouse, forming a bond as one nation, Showing the importance of hosting international-level events as a country, sports diplomacy, promoting Korea's technology, and promoting Korea's popular culture.</p>
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## Conclusion

This study examined the outcome of the 2018 Winter Olympics from multiple perspectives. The legacies and contributions were collected from volunteers' viewpoint as co-creators and stakeholders. This approach used a modified version of content analysis. This study offers theoretical contributions to the literature related to sport-event legacy and co-creation. It also offers practical contributions to the IOC and potential hosting cities by providing details on volunteers' motivation. The conclusions only briefly summarize the study due to the word limits but will be comprehensively discussed in the future.

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