

## Perceived football brand image: interpreted with brand model Case: FIFA world cup 2010 in South Africa

**Author:** Niklas Kuosmanen

**Institution:** Haaga-Helia University Of Applied Sciences,  
Sport Business School Finland

**E-mail:** kuosmanen.niklas@gmail.com

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Subject of the research was to discover football brand profile. Study was made in Cape Town during the FIFA World Cup 2010 in South Africa. The objective was to decipher what are the attributes that fans relate to football and things that motivate to follow the sport. The third theme was to figure out what fundamentally makes people travel and attend to these kinds of mega events. Means-End-Chain-interview model was used as study method which was executed by laddering-technique. Interviews were done at the Fan Fest –area that was specifically built for the games. Interviewees were international football tourists. There were totally 176 interviews conducted. Study type and approach was qualitative case-study. Thomas Gad's 4-D-branding theory model was used together with Shalom Schwartz's value theory to analyze the study data.

Thomas Gad's branding theory was chosen because it was more thorough than other points of views. For example the findings show that the main motivators differ from the football fan motivators that were introduced by Smith and Westerbeek. They are more focused on the functional and the mental dimensions. It seems that the social motivators may have even greater impact on people's minds than the other motivational groups discussed. This same study was replicated in Finnish national football league match and findings were that the value profiles and brand image between international and national football are almost the same. Therefore findings indicate quite accurate that the football brand image is very universal. That is why the FIFA World Cup is the best event to represent the universal football as its best.

Football is one of the most famous sports in the world, but there are not many studies about the attributes and consequences that connect football fans (and their values) to the sport, and especially what makes football (as brand) so attractive and famous. Practically, what things act as the connecting and determinative factors between a football fan and football? The basic reason to conduct research like this is to describe a phenomenon and find the reasons behind it. Through this research people have better ways and possibilities to create standards that mirror a successful football event when people are well aware of the football

brand profile. Research benefits at its best the whole football society, when the fan opinions and thoughts are regarded when developing the football image.

There were four adjectives (brand attributes) that got rated as most related to football in over half of the questionnaires. Those popped most often out in the interviews. The next step was to go through all the interviews in which at least one of these adjectives was mentioned. Then analysis continued by following the value-attribute-consequence chain of each characteristic all the way to football. The analysis was conducted with those interviews that had one or more of these four attributes. After this, the analysis of the value groups was continued deeper with Thomas Gad 4D-Branding theory. The football brand profile was finally found with a combined value theory.

From the interviews could be found that the most essential brand attributes that people attach to football were, according to the respondents; international, exciting, fun and colorful. Things that highly motivate people to follow football were social- and mental dimension motives. The most powerful motives were to meet other people and get emotional experiences. Domineering factors for people to take part in World Cup in South Africa were the unique nature of the event and the fact that the games gave people chance to experience Africa too. The games gave a possibility to be part of a huge international sport event. Overall, for the respondents, football represented humanity and many of its parts. The research results provided a possibility to encapsulate the football Brand Code that includes all the main things you need to know about present situation and the future aspects of the brand.

In the future it is possible to make most of the research data by finding out how the current brand profile information could be used for economic benefit. Added to this, later studies should find out how football brand image should be evolved and to what direction it should be taken. The following thesis provides deep and fresh viewpoint of football image in the minds of international football tourists. On ground of the research data football is all about "celebrating humanity, creating unity and togetherness". It can and should be used as the magic mantra for future branding.

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