

# INTERNATIONAL SOCCER FANS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE 2013 AFRICA CUP OF NATIONS (AFCON) IN PORT ELIZABETH-SOUTH AFRICA

SIYABULELA NYIKANA<sup>1</sup>, TEMBI TICHAAWA<sup>2</sup>, KOFI ACHEAMPONG<sup>3</sup> & KAMILLA SWART<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Walter Sisulu University, East London, South Africa

<sup>2</sup> Walter Sisulu University, East London, South Africa

<sup>3</sup> Walter Sisulu University, East London, South Africa

<sup>4</sup> Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Cape Town, South Africa

<sup>1</sup> snyikana@wsu.ac.za, <sup>2</sup> ttichaawa@wsu.ac.za, <sup>3</sup> kache@wsu.ac.za, <sup>4</sup> [swartk@cput.ac.za](mailto:swartk@cput.ac.za)

## Abstract keywords

Major events, sport, fans, Africa Cup of Nations, tourism marketing

## Aim of abstract/paper - research question

This study aims to determine the perceptions of international soccer fans who attended the 2013 AFCON in host city - Port Elizabeth, South Africa in order to identify the potential tourism benefits of hosting major events in one of South Africa's poorest provinces. The research will in part, give indication of whether the drive to host events, and major events in particular in the developing context, where the public funds could have been channelled in addressing other social issues, is justified. Moreover, this study will contribute to a limited body of knowledge on Africa's primary football event, linked to the profile, motives, expectations and overall perceptions of international soccer fans at the event.

## Theoretical background or literature review\*

Major events have served to attract sport fans that invest much time and other resources in sport, and thus engage in frequent and distant travel in order to participate at such events (Smith & Stewart, 2007). Despite that the event is the primary motive for travel, other factors such as the attractiveness of the destination and its surrounds play an important factor in the final decision to travel (Kim & Chalip, 2004; Walmsley, 2008). The understanding of visitors' and soccer fans' behaviour in a sport event is thus a critical component of sport tourism marketing because motives, past experiences, perceptions and behaviours with an event play a role in the decision to revisit a destination in future (Taks, Chalip, Green, Kesenne & Martyn, 2009). Africa's major football event, the AFCON, was hosted in South Africa in 2013 with a view to continue on the springboard set by successfully hosting the 2010 FIFA World Cup and other previous major events in the country. The event was seen as an opportunity to continue on the exposure gained through the 2010 FIFA World Cup especially amongst African fans who were not hugely represented among the 2010 FIFA World Cup attendees (Nyikana, Tichaawa, Swart, Turco & Bob, 2012).

## Methodology, research design and data analysis

A mixed method research design (qualitative and quantitative) was adopted for the study. A spatially based systematic sampling method was used to gather data from the international soccer fans during the course of the 2013 AFCON in Port Elizabeth. Face to face interviews were carried out by trained fieldworkers using a semi-structured questionnaire survey at the Nelson Mandela Bay Stadium and its precinct on all match days. In total, three hundred and eighty six (386) soccer fans were interviewed. The data was coded, captured and analysed by means of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

## Results, discussion and implications/conclusions\*\*

The data set is currently being tested with the aid of a registered statistician. The key findings will be elaborated upon during the conference and recommendations proposed which could serve to illuminate on the dynamics of soccer fans and the hosting of major events in the developing context.

## References

- Kim, N. & Chalip, L. (2004). Why travel to the FIFA World Cup?: effects of motives, background, interest, and constraints. *Tourism Management*, 25:695-707.
- Nyikana, S., Tichaawa, T., Swart, K., Turco, D. & Bob, U. 2012. Visitors' perceptions of the 2010 FIFA World Cup: a case study of the host city Nelson Mandela Bay/Port Elizabeth. *Sport and the Global South II: legacies, possibilities, transformations International Conference. Paper presented on 12-14 November 2012 at George Mason University in Fairfax, VA (USA)*.
- Smith, A. & Stewart, B. (2007). The travelling fan: understanding the mechanisms of sport fan consumption in a sport tourism setting. *Journal of Sport & Tourism*, 12(3-4):155-190.
- Taks, M., Chalip, L., Green, B., Kesenne, S. & Martyn, S. 2009. Factors affecting repeat visitation and flow-on tourism as sources of event strategy sustainability. *Journal of Sport & Tourism*, 14:121-142.
- Walmsley, D. (2008). *Sport tourism: strategies for successful development*. Sport Business Group. <http://www.sports+tourism+strategies+for+successful+development&og.html> [04 June 2011].