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TOURIST CONSIDERATIONS IN HOSTING A MEGA SPORT EVENT: 2010 FIFA WORLD CUP

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Abstract: Tourism enterprises can create public viewing areas where shared enjoyment and heightened emotive experiences could arise, as well as sentiments of patriotism, and ownership of the event itself. But, they must keep their base business happy; to ensure long term loyalty of existing customers.

Key words: Tourism, mega sport event, 2010 FIFA World Cup

1. Introduction

There are only two mega sport events namely the FIFA World Cup and the Olympics based on the scale of media interest (Davies, 2009:33-34, Pillay, Tomlinson & Bass, 2009:5). FIFA owns the event and provides the entertainment extravaganza in the form of football, for profit generation. Their costs are covered mainly by television broadcasting and marketing rights. Host cities are required to provide the infrastructure and services. Hosting the event promises to the nation, not only the excitement of the media exposure, but the expectation of a positive return on the considerable investment. However, this may not result to growth benefits in the short term, for one, because of displacement of business-related tourism. But, the success South Africa (SA) wish to attain is the longer term intangible and ambiguous benefit of reducing the widespread legacy of Afro-pessimism, by proving that it can manage the event to world standards (Czeglédy, 2009:294). This cannot be done through marketing campaigns, but only through lived experiences of such an event.

This paper will endeavour to elicit the risk of not living up to visitor expectations. It will focus on the experience of visitors to a comparable event in SA and their perception of the destination. In order to do so the paper is structured as follows: firstly a brief overview will be given of hosting mega events, followed by a description of the motives of event tourists, and then the challenges of delivering the desired experiences. The significance of the contribution lies in synthesizing various theories from a visitor perspective to elucidate challenges in preparation for 2010, and in contextualising international literature. The findings can be used to iron out problems and to promote experiences that are deliverable.

2. Hosting a mega sport event

Given the capacity to draw visitors mega events has become a prominent component of many economic develop-

ment plans (Kotler, Haider & Rein, 1993). They are likely to have long-term positive consequences for the cities and communities that stage them and provide opportunities for increased international publicity and recognition, by attracting attention to the locality (Deccio & Baloglu, 2002; Keller, 2001:31). They can also be strategically leveraged for business and investment development (O'Brien, 2006:241).

However, Crompton (1995) is of the opinion that the validity of many economic studies is less than reliable. In this regard, Tomlinson (2009:33) refers to lack of transparency, and Pillay et al. (2009:6) to deliberate misrepresentation. The benefit calculations thus cast a dark shadow on the return on investment claims. For example, studies mainly relate to the expenditure associated with the tourists who are attracted to the event, and care is needed in measuring the amount of expenditure that would not have occurred in the absence of the event. Lee and Taylor (2005:596-602) did that when they estimated the impact of the 2002 World Cup, by using an input-output model, but conclude that measuring all the economic impacts associated with a mega event is an impossible task. According to Daniels (2007:335) meaningful economic impacts seldom result from mega events such as the World Cup, because site options are narrowed by the necessity of sophisticated infrastructure and significant public investment. Central cities consequently gain more than remote ones because of their location. Sport tourism may thus exacerbate regional imbalances in development (Pillay & Bass, 2009:11,77). Daniels (2007:344) therefore suggests that planners of mega sport events should work closely with Destination Marketing Organisations (DMOs) from different areas, to ensure that all areas realize an equitable share of the event's cost and benefits. Rogerson (2009) supports this argument, but base it on the size of the enterprises and not the cities.

On the enterprise level, there are also risks. For example, accommodation occupancy the eight weeks before and after a mega event may be down compared to the same time the previous year, as was the case in Germany in 2006 (Du

Plessis & Maennig, 2009:68; Van Meerendonk, 2009:2). But, revenue per available room will be up because of rising prices. A study among operators in the major source markets also ascertained fear about disrupted supply and displaced business as a result of the 2010 FIFA World Cup, and only 56% of SA-based operators thought the event would be good for their business (*Now Media*, 2009:27).

With respect to the less tangible benefits, *Rogerson* (2009:337) is of the opinion that mega events are increasingly significant phenomena because they can generate long-term outcomes for the host locality by enhancing and regenerating it, and promoting or re-creating its image. For example, the UK redefined soccer in the 1990 World Cup, by using Pavarotti's *Nessun Dorma* as the BBC's theme tune, and moved it away from its former associations with violent masculine thuggery (Whitelegg, 2000:803). However, previous studies suggest that mega events may not translate into image enhancement that translate into tourist visitation (*Smith*, 2005:227) and may have profound negative impacts as they are likely to result in such problems as traffic congestion, difficulties of law enforcement, and increased crime. They may damage the image of the host destination or diminish its attractiveness because of inadequate infrastructure, poor facilities or improper practices (*Keller*, 2001:40; *Mihalik*, 2000; *Ritchie*, 1984). Negative impacts are often ignored prior to hosting a mega event while glorifying the expected benefits (*Kim, Gursoy & Lee*, 2006:88). To limit this risk, it is necessary ascertain cautionary pointers from a visitor perspective, prior to hosting a mega event and to establish what motivates them to attend.

3. Motives of event tourists and intent to attend

Event spectator appeal will affect the visitor attendance (*The Economist*, 2002:2), and the destination development that an event engenders is largely driven by the attendance it is expected to generate (*Kim & Chalip*, 2004:695). Estimating visitation is not an easy task. For example, the actual foreign arrivals of 403,466 to the 2002 World Cup was 37% less than the 640,000 the organising committee predicted, and of these, only 57.7% (232,800) were direct football tourists (*Lee & Taylor*, 2005:599,601).

Travel intentions are influenced by both pull and push factors (*Crompton & McKay*, 1997:425; *Yoon & Uysal*, 2005:54). Pull factors are related to external sources, including destination attributes, and push factors are commonly studied with reference to reasons, or motives for travel, but motivation is an insufficient basis for understanding the drivers of sport event attendance. The most common response obtained by sport motivation researchers, why visitors attend, is that it is *fun*, but fun explains nothing (*Green & Chalip*, 1998:287); the relationships between motives and behaviour are complexly determined (*Crompton & McKay*, 1997:427). A conceptual model of event interest and intent to attend is

depicted in figure 1. Besides demographic variables, there are five other types of travel motivations: fan motives, travel motives, event interest, travel constraints and attendance intentions. Fan motives are multidimensional which include aesthetic experience (beauty and grace of soccer), vicarious achievement (sense of personal achievement, or status a spectator feels when his team wins), eustress (stimulation and arousal from watching soccer), interest in

players (fan of one or more players) and identification with the national team (degree to which spectators consider themselves to be a fan). The event interest captures the celebratory atmosphere that is common to mega events. This is one of its key appeals to attendees, and the aspect that media coverage is least able to capture (*Kim & Chalip*, 2004:703).

Green and Chalip (1998:276) suggest that the flow of tourists to sport events is equivalent to the historic religious pilgrimage and argue that spectators come together to celebrate the subculture they share. It is a statement about who they are; a shared and valued identity. Sport events create situations, or extended occasions in encapsulated spaces, for spectators to affirm their personal identity, for socialisation and camaraderie. The fundamental attraction is neither the place nor its people; it is the players and other spectators that participate. These findings are confirmed by *King* (2002:107) who expressed the opinion that travel is increasingly more about experiences, fulfilment and rejuvenation than about *places* and *things*. The hardware is less important than the benefit. The DMO's role is to facilitate the connection between the visitor and the experience they are seeking; to convert tourism products into relevant tourism experiences.

Only a small portion of the total revenue from mega sport events comes from ticket sales (*Davies*, 2009:34). Visitors typically spend money in eight categories; transportation, accommodation, food and beverage, recreation/entertainment, tour/sightseeing, game tickets, retail shopping, services (such as laundry), and miscellaneous (*Daniels*, 2007:339; *Daniels, Norman & Henry*, 2004:185-186; *Lee & Taylor*, 2005:598). Economic impact research revealed that visitors who travel greater distances to an event typically spend more than tourists from nearby and that first time event visitors spend considerably more than repeat visitors (*Qi Tang & Turco*, 2001:33). Similarly, the perceived attractiveness of the host community (i.e. alternative attractions,

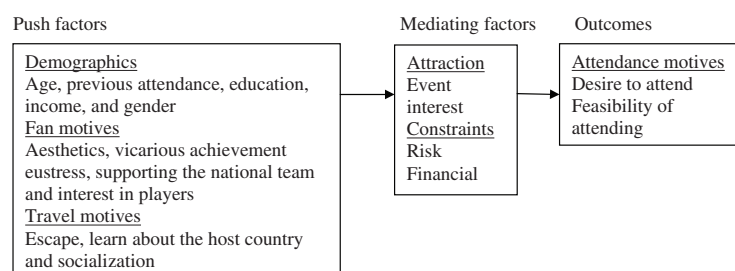


Figure 1. Conceptual model of event interest and intent to attend
Source: Adapted from *Kim and Chalip*, 2004:698-701.

climate, proximity to relatives, friends, etc.) may elicit larger visitor groups, and the nature of its tourism accommodation may stimulate more spending.

With respect to activity patterns, first time visitors spend more time at the attraction and visit more attractions. They are inclined to explore more possibilities and the difference in their activity patterns is moderated by the use of information about the available activities (Kemperman, Joh & Timmermans, 2003:1-6). In addition, many other exogenous factors may influence activity patterns such as economic considerations, accessibility and the reputation of the destination. For example, SA has gained a reputation for being an unsafe place to go on holiday; especially going out after dark and using public transport (George, 2003:576,581).

4. The challenges in delivering on the desired experience

South Africa is to host the 2010 FIFA World Cup which has the potential to raise its profile as a tourist destination, if it delivers on the desired experience (Williams, 2006:493). This is in line with the broader objectives for tourism in SA, namely to ensure a lasting social legacy, to advance the competitiveness agenda, to maximise tourism value during the event, and to maximise value for SA after the event; in sustainable GDP growth, redistribution and transformation (SA Tourism, 2008:91-97). SA Tourism concedes to the following ten challenges for 2010: 1) poor access to channels of tourism information, 2) insufficient accommodation, and 3) compelling attractions and activities, 4) inadequate service levels and skills shortage, 5) inadequate public transport, 6) insufficient focus on tourist safety and security, 7) limited institutional capacity, 8) managing expectations, 9) demand management and 10) displacement of general tourists.

The support of the host community is also important for success (Gursoy & Kendall, 2006:604). According to a survey by FIFA (2009:4), 83% of the respondents felt SA will be ready to host the 2010 Cup, and 94% were proud that SA is hosting the event, 89% said it would bring long term benefits to the country, 92% believed it will lead to an upgrade in infrastructure, notably public transport, roads and telecommunications, and 86% said their interest were unaffected by the performance of the national team). Whilst 90% believed it would improve SA's image abroad, 59% had a concern for inflated prices, and 58% thought crime would be a concern for visitors, and anticipate increased congestion problems.

In the opinion of SA tour operators *Value for money experiences* is the main consideration (91%) for travellers considering SA as a destination, and according to them, *crime reduction* (78%) and *better priced air access* would

help increase business (Now Media, 2009:26). By contrast, *value for money* was a strength (96.77%) in terms of SA's competitiveness, among 150 inbound tour operators, about a decade ago, (Saayman & Du Plessis, 2003:60).

5. The purpose of the empirical study, research method and sample

The primary purpose of the research was to ascertain if the target market for a mega sport event, namely the 2010 FIFA World Cup were of the opinion that SA could host it successfully, and if not, what had to be improved upon prior to the event. The secondary purpose was to uncover how the target market experienced a similar sport event, namely the SA 2009 FIFA Confederations Cup.

The study is based on secondary sources, supplemented by an empirical study. It is an exploratory, descriptive, and predominantly qualitative study, and the sample was a non-probability, convenience sample. Spectators to the penultimate match were interviewed, whilst waiting to enter the stadium, and completed the questionnaire with the assistance of fieldworkers. It was piloted, and improvements were made; especially with respect to directing questions specifically to SA residents or foreigners. A total of 205 spectators took part in the study and the composition is reflected in *table 1*.

Table 1. Composition of the sample

Gender %	Age %	Language %	Matches attended	Duration of visit	Country of origin
Male 82	15-25 20.3	English 21.7	1 41.2	3-5 days 25.9	SA 18.4
Female 18	26-35 43.5	African 16.5	2 21.4	6-8 14.8	Rest of Africa 4.5
	36-45 23.7	European 7.5	3 16.6	9-11 7.4	Europe 10.5
	46-55 9.7	Oriental 5.4	4 7.0	12-14 18.5	East 5.4
	56-65 1.4	Afrikaans 1.9	5 4.3	15-21 7.4	Americas 5.4
	66 + 1.4	Undisclosed 47.0	6+ 9.5	longer 26.0	Undisclosed 55.8
100	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

n=205

The questions posed were both fixed response and open ended, and for purposes of this paper can be grouped into three categories. The first encapsulated the demographic and geographic profile of the respondents and included questions about gender, age, home language, matches attended, duration of visit and country of residence. These are disclosed in *table 1*. The second category uncovered visitors' perceptions about SA as a host and tourist destination, on a 5-point Likert scale which ranged from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5), and the intensions of overseas spectators to revisit SA for the 2010 FIFA World Cup, or recommending it. The last category of questions elicited their most positive and most negative experience and suggestions for improvement.

6. Findings: Perception of sa as a host to a mega sport event and tourist destination

A brief overview of the most pertinent findings will be given. Visitors were asked to express their opinions on SA's

ability to successfully host the 2010 World Cup. A summary of the perceptions is reflected in table 2. The sample size for statements varies as it consolidates the responses of domestic and foreign visitors and some applied to the latter only. The highest weighted average of 93.9% was received for the belief expressed by 205 respondents that SA will be able to successfully host the 2010 FIFA World Cup, and the lowest score, for the how well 192 spectators believed transport was well organised and easy to use. The average rating of all the statements was a high 84.1%.

Table 2. Perception of SA as a host to a mega sport event and tourist destination

Statement about SA's ability to host a mega event	Respondents	1	2	3	4	5	Weighted ranking
I believe SA will successfully host the 2010 World Cup	205	1	3	5	40	156	93.9%
I really looked forward to visit SA	73	2	1	3	16	51	91.0
The matches were well organised	204	2	1	11	68	122	90.1
Services provided by the airports are good	19	0	1	1	5	12	89.5
I was impressed by SA as tourist destination	78	0	3	1	25	42	87.2
Services in SA are good	20	1	1	1	5	12	86.0
Services provided by private businesses such as accommodation and restaurants are good	164	2	4	24	52	82	85.4
My perception about SA has changed positively during my stay	83	0	2	11	35	35	84.8
I felt safe in general	202	5	7	24	71	95	84.2
Services provided by information bureaux are good	56	0	0	13	20	23	83.6
I have heard good things about SA	86	2	4	10	32	38	83.3
It was easy to obtain adequate tourist information	126	1	9	29	50	37	78.0
Services provided by the public sector such as transport are good	176	7	11	42	52	64	77.7
Transport was well organised and easy to use	192	11	13	42	58	68	70.3
Weighted average							84.1%

Respondents were of the opinion that the matches were well organised (90.1%). As was expected, the services provided by private businesses were perceived to be delivered better than those provided by the public sector. The comparative figures were ranked 85.4 and 77.7%, by 164 and 176 respondents respectively. In order to triangulate/validate the findings, respondents were asked to rate their overall experiences during the SA 2009 Confederations Cup on a scale of 1 to 10 where ten was the highest, and the average rating was 7.84.

7. Most positive experience of visitors

Visitors were asked to describe their most positive experience during the SA 2009 Confederations Cup. Foreign visitors were also asked if they would revisit SA for the 2010 Cup, to substantiate why/ or why not, and if they would recommend visiting SA for the upcoming cup. The purpose was to uncover their emotional feelings; what was *good* and *fun* as this tells one more about the target market and what is the core product (*Green & Chalip*, 1998:286; *Yoon & Uysal*, 2005:54). In addition, this question elicits testimonials of promises that are deliverable as well as what spectators would tell their friends; if their experiences relegated pervasive images of the past of what Africa can, and cannot do, to the past. The answers may be used by DMOs as themes that would render promotional material truthful.

The responses were categorised in two dimensions, namely the games itself, and SA as tourist destination. Experiences about the games can be classified as either emotional or

cognitive/technical. The Confederations Cup created for the respondents moments of intense excitement, identity formation, and patriotism that transcended social cleavages. The positive emotional experiences can be classified as excitement (eustress) or belonging, which includes identification with the national team. Excitement was described by words such as: "The atmosphere was great, or electric, it was festive or awesome and the vibe at the stadiums enjoyable". The following words were used to describe belonging: "Bringing the nation together, the integration of people, having met lots of friendly and helpful

people, and seeing South Africans united." Identification with soccer and the national team was for some respondents the highlight, and to see SA going through to the semi-finals. For others it was the opportunity to watch international teams and to see real superstars on the field.

With respect to the technical service delivery, comments on the organisation of the tournament and the infrastructure were positive, especially the unique and striking stadiums. The smooth delivery and organisation was described by words such as: "Everything was well organised, smart and glamorous, everyone was working together to ensure success and safety in the stadium was

impressive. The park and drive initiative was brilliant". The most positive experience with respect to of SA as a tourist destination was for many foreign tourists the diversity it offers. SA was considered exceptional. Most of the foreign respondents (76) said that they would visit SA again in 2010. The reasons given were similar to the most positive experiences which validate the findings. All (86), but one foreign respondent indicated that they would recommend SA for the 2010 World Cup.

8. Most negative experience of visitors

With respect to the most negative experience and suggestions for improvement, the crime rate and public transport was by far the most disappointing. A few spectators reported poor service delivery. Smoking in the stands and the *vuvuzelas* caused a nuisance for many international visitors. Others mentioned the empty stands, and lack of support from volunteers. Some said that the pricing of tickets were too high and this could even be considered as exploitation. Transportation and internet access was also very expensive. Recommendations for improvement, confirmed these negative experiences.

9. Discussion and management implications

An overwhelming 93.9% of respondents believed SA will successfully host the mega event which is much more positive than the findings of the FIFA study (2009:4), where

83% felt their country will be ready to host it. This is congruent with the demographic push factors illustrated in figure I. FIFA succeeded in providing entertainment. The experience of respondents was very emotional in that it generated excitement and a sense of belonging and thus achieved one of the SA Tourism's objectives, namely to ensure a lasting social legacy. The results further confirms that the benefits spectators sought were all delivered in terms of fan motives; namely eustress, supporting the national team, interest in players and aesthetics. The fundamental satisfaction was derived from the mediating factor, namely the players and spectators of the event itself, not the place. This is in line with the findings of *Green and Chalip* (1998:286) that spectators come together to affirm their personal identity, for socialisation and camaraderie, as well as the opinion of *King* (2002:108) that tourists segment themselves in terms of who they are and the experience they seek. An overwhelming majority would recommend SA as a tourist destination, and many intends to come back to SA for the 2010 Cup. However, research indicates that destination revisit intention, based on satisfaction, is a short-term intention, because of novelty seeking (*Jang & Feng*, 2007:586).

Public transport remained to be a challenge as was elicited in the FIFA (2009:5) study. This perception tarnishes the image of SA as a tourist destination since the turn of the century and requires serious interventions before 2010. This is also one of the FIFA infrastructure requirements (*Davies*, 2009:34). It would seem as if event organisers are able to make visitors feel safe whilst at the event, even though SA suffers from the general perception of being crime ridden (*George*, 2003:576, *Saayman & Du Plessis*, 2003:60).

10. Concluding remarks

SA must get the basics right in terms of world-class facilities and services if it wants to achieve the legacy that had only been vaguely defined at the outset. The major challenge lies in the improvement of public services such as transport, safety and security. In order to deepen the destination brand and to ameliorate, rather than reinforce geographical and enterprise differentiation, it is suggested that extended length packages be developed outside the match days because most spectators will be coming from outside Africa. Transient leisure travellers attending matches may combine the trip with sight-seeing and other tourist related activities, and first-time visitors are inclined to explore more possibilities than repeat visitors.

Tourism enterprises can create public viewing areas where shared enjoyment and heightened emotive experiences could arise, as well as sentiments of patriotism, and ownership of the event itself. But, they must keep their base business happy; to ensure long term loyalty of existing customers. The changed economic climate will impact on the performance of hotels during the 2010 event and the ability to outperform competitors will depend on the revenue management experience of tourist enterprises.

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