

Chinese Predict "Brazil vs. Argentina" In The World Cup Final.

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Internet now an integral part of enjoying the World Cup

Though gloomy and stridently critical about their own soccer team and lamenting its absence from the World Cup, most Chinese are enthusiastic viewers of the ongoing competition in South Africa, according to a recent survey from TNS Research International, the largest customized agency in China, using the access panel of LightSpeed Research.

Conducted during June 14-22, the survey also finds that more people are watching matches via internet and sharing or commenting upon the World Cup via social media.

Enthusiastic about the World Cup, but not positive toward China's performance

Despite China's absence from the soccer championship, the country seems to be in a strong grip of the World Cup fever, with nearly 3/4th of the adults expressing a strong interest in following what is happening and 13 % who claim to be crazy about the event.

Expectedly the interest will increase steadily as the game progresses and nearly 3/4th have already watched at least one of the group matches and the audience is likely to peak towards the end of the game as more than 90% of Chinese soccer fans have already marked July 12th for the final match in their calendar.

The final match, according to 28% of Chinese, is expected to take place between Brazil and Argentina, however 15% of people believe it will be Brazil playing against Germany in the final.

44% of Chinese football fans believe Brazil will take the World Cup home, 27% people bet on Maradona's squad from Argentina, 11% think the German team will do their country proud.

Winner of 2006 World Cup Italy, which stopped its advance in the group match, seem not so favored by Chinese with only 4% placing their bets on them before June 24th.

Favorite stars for this year are Lionel Messi of Argentina, Kaka of Brazil, and Cristiano Ronald of Portugal. England's Beckham and Brazil's Ronaldo, who are not taking part in this year's World Cup, are still mentioned by 10% and 9% of Chinese as their favorites.

However the relatively poor performance of Chinese team seems to have bitterly disappointed the fans who gave a rating of 2.6 (out of ten) to their team.

Only 11% of people believe China will be qualified for the World Cup within 4 years, 25% of them have a hope for this to be realized within 8 years, and one fifth of Chinese soccer fans just shake their head and are unable to comment upon when their dream will be realized.

TV dominates but internet a powerful companion now

It is not unexpected that television still remains the dominant medium through which people enjoy the World Cup. According to the survey, 77%, 34%, and 37% of respondents reported that they had watched either live or recorded matches or commentary on TV.

40% of people read the related news or writings in newspaper or magazines, and 16% said that they had listened to live commentary on radio.

However, what is worth noting is the extent to which internet and social media are enhancing the consumer experience of the World Cup. By June 22nd, people watching the live or recorded matches, or following the games on internet via computer were 49%, 35%, and 56% respectively.

28% chatted with friends via instant messengers like MSN, or QQ; 19% joined the BBS/forums for discussion and comments; 17% commented on social networking sites like Renren and Kaixin; and 10% shared quick information through their micro-blog accounts.

The results also show that the usage of internet and social media will increase further as the competition moves towards its climax.

How are the sponsors doing

Just as popcorn plays a major role in enhancing consumer experience in the cinema, snacks and drinks seem to add to the consumer thrill of watching the games on the telly - 50% of them have soft drinks and 32% alcoholic drinks when watching matches.

It might be good news for World Cup sponsors like Coca Cola and McDonalds, who invested huge sums of money to display their names on the bill boards around the football fields.

The survey reveals that 72% of Chinese know Adidas is the official sponsor of the World Cup, 65% of them can recognize Coca Cola, followed closely by VISA and SONY with awareness of 61% and 58%. McDonalds, ranking the fifth among all the sponsors, has been identified by 47% of Chinese consumers.

The solar energy company Yingli Group, first Chinese brand to sponsor this worldwide game, has become familiar to 20% of the match audience. Not an insignificant achievement considering it was practically unknown to most before the games kicked off.

It is interesting, however, to get consumers'™ recognition without paying any sponsorship fee. 45% of Chinese feel NIKE is also one of the sponsors of the World Cup 2010 with Pepsi also getting an echo of 38% from the media noise.

KFC, competing with McDonalds for the share of consumers'™ stomach, also seems to have secured a share of their mind and is wrongly perceived by over 20% of consumers as a sponsor.

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