

Assessing the Impact of the New FIFA Football Agents' Regulations on the African Football Market

Julius Ben Emunah

Sports Law and Management, ISDE Law and Business School, Barcelona, Spain.

Corresponding author: emunahben.julius@gmail.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.62154/ajsps.2025.04.01014>

Abstract

The implementation of FIFA's Football Agent Regulations (FFAR) has affected football markets globally, with distinct implications for African football. This study assessed the impact of the FFAR on the African football market, focusing on player-agent relationships, transfer transparency, and participation of local agents. A mixed-methods approach was used, combining survey data from 68 players in Ghana and Nigeria, interviews with 10 football stakeholders, and analysis of FIFA transfer records. Descriptive and thematic analyses were conducted to examine key trends and responses. Findings showed that 67.7% of players viewed agents as important, yet 29.1% reported poor agent relationships. Only 49.2% supported commission caps, and 77.7% believed the cap would affect service quality. Licensing requirements and capped commissions were reported as major barriers to agent participation, particularly in low-resource settings. Interviews highlighted concerns about uneven enforcement across African associations and the risk of regulatory exclusion for small-scale agents. Survey data revealed that players preferred open-ended agent contracts (39.1%) but expressed concern over limited legal support and representation. The study concludes that while the FFAR may enhance professionalism and reduce exploitation, it may also restrict access to agent services for African players. Recommendations include reviewing the commission cap system, expanding agent training programs, supporting gender inclusion, and strengthening regulatory enforcement by African football associations. These measures are necessary to align global regulatory standards with local realities and ensure fair participation in international football markets.

Keywords: FIFA, Football Agents Regulations, FFAR, African Football, Football Transfers, Player-Agent Relations, Sports Governance, Transparency.

Introduction

The worldwide football industry has been greatly impacted by the recent adoption of the new FIFA Football Agents Regulations (FFAR), especially in the African market, which has long been a hotbed of talent and an essential part of the international transfer ecosystem. In order to assess the possible impact of the new restrictions on the African football market, this research paper examines both the potential opportunities and the challenges that may arise.

The rules governing FIFA agents have evolved in response to the growing complexity and vulnerabilities in the global football market. In earlier regulatory regimes, football agents

operated with limited oversight, leading to widespread corruption, player exploitation, and opaque financial dealings (Ioannidis et al., 2024). In a bid to restore trust and integrity to the system, FIFA introduced the FFAR, a framework aimed at enhancing transparency in player transfers, capping excessive commissions, and professionalizing agent services (FFAR, 2022). These regulations impose strict requirements for agent licensing, including mandatory exams, financial audits, and continuous professional development. Furthermore, FIFA implemented a new centralized mechanism for clearing payments and resolving disputes, intended to ensure fairness in contractual relations between agents, players, and clubs.

Although these reforms have been applauded in some quarters, they have sparked strong opposition from many stakeholders, including agents, clubs, and national associations, especially within developing football economies. FIFA has, in response, suspended certain elements of the FFAR (FIFA Circular no. 1873). Despite this, the FFAR remains a landmark shift in global sports governance, especially for regions like Africa where the football economy plays a central role in youth development, socioeconomic mobility, and international representation (Darby & Solberg, 2010).

A significant gap persists in existing academic literature concerning how these global regulatory reforms are received, interpreted, and implemented in the African football context. Most studies have focused on broader issues such as player migration (Darby, 2013), corruption in African football governance (Chiweshe, 2014), and general critiques of agent practices (Esson, 2015), but few have directly addressed the institutional, economic, and legal implications of FIFA's new agent regulations for African stakeholders. While a growing body of literature examines agent regulation in European or North American contexts (Poli, Ravenel & Besson, 2022; Brannagan et al., 2023), there is limited scholarship investigating the compliance burden, access to licensing, or structural readiness among African football associations and intermediaries (GFA, 2023; Naira metrics, 2023). Particularly lacking are empirical investigations that capture the perspectives of local agents, clubs, and players who must navigate these new rules within resource-constrained environments. This research seeks to address that gap by assessing how the FFAR affects agency practices, transfer mechanisms, and regulatory alignment within Africa's evolving football marketplace.

By grounding this analysis in both qualitative and quantitative data, including stakeholder interviews, survey results, and FIFA transfer reports, the study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how global policy shifts shape local football realities. It also provides evidence-based recommendations for making such regulations more contextually responsive and practically enforceable across diverse African football associations.

Statement of the Problem

The introduction of FIFA's new Football Agents Regulations (FFAR) has sparked concerns in the football industry, particularly in the African football market, about its potential effects on the transfer market. While aimed at increasing transparency and reducing corruption, the regulations could unintentionally destabilize the market, raise costs, and reduce

competitiveness (Nick, 2023). This study explores how these rules impact agent business models, player transfers, and the broader football ecosystem. Agents are essential in negotiating deals for players who face clubs with legal teams and experienced negotiators. FIFA reinstated licensing and introduced mechanisms like dispute resolution, reversing its 2015 deregulation. However, many agents criticize FIFA for not consulting them while formulating the rules, which some view as a move to weaken player representation (Nick, 2023).

A key issue is the "Service Fee Cap" introduced under Articles 14 and 15 of FFAR, limiting agent fees to 3% of a player's salary or up to 6% in dual representation cases. This is a significant reduction from the 5-10% fees agents traditionally charged, potentially undermining agents' earnings and shifting the financial burden onto players. Moreover, the cap encourages agents to represent clubs rather than players, which could disadvantage athletes in negotiations. Legal challenges to this cap are expected, as FIFA has yet to justify the measure convincingly. While some stakeholders welcome the changes as steps towards fairness, many agents argue the cap devalues their role, was implemented without their input, and could lead to additional fees being charged to players. In Africa, where thousands of transfers generate millions in transactions, analyzing these regulations' effects on players, agents, and clubs is critical. Stakeholders must align expectations to ensure effective implementation within this dynamic market.

Research Purpose

1. Evaluate the specific changes introduced by the new FIFA Agents Regulations.
2. Analyse the impact of these regulations on player-agent relationships.
3. Investigate how the regulations will affect transfer financial transparency.
4. Assess the perceptions of stakeholders (players, agents, clubs) towards the new regulations.
5. Identify any unintended consequences that may arise from the implementation of this regulations in the African member associations.
6. Evaluate the overall challenges and benefits of the new FIFA agents' regulations on the African Football market.

Research Questions

1. How will the new FIFA agents' regulations influence the economic dynamics of player transfers from African leagues to European clubs?
2. What are the potential challenges and benefits for African football agents under the new FIFA agents' regulations?
3. To what extent will the new FIFA agents' regulations improve the transparency and fairness of transfer dealings in the African football market?
4. What role will African football associations play in enforcing the new FIFA agents' regulations, and how does this impact local transfer markets?

5. How will the new Agents regulations affect player-agent relationships in the African Football Ecosystem?

Literature Review

FIFA's New Football Agent Regulations and Their Global Context

The new regulations of FIFA on football agents have received wide attention worldwide since they attempt to change how agents operate in the sport. As Aigba (2023) relates, the regulations are meant to provide a standardized system that is more transparent and less about money for agents, with the best interest in football integrity in the transfer of the game. Central to these reforms is the capping of agent commissions, which FIFA argues will reduce conflicts of interest and prevent excessive fees that could distort the transfer market. According to Aigba, while these regulations may be well-meant, they could lead to undue friction in football markets, where agents are usually crucial to negotiating contracts, transfers, and wages for players.

In the wider global context, these regulations seek to create a level playing field, particularly for small or less well-off football markets. Wand (2022) adds that while FIFA's regulations are expected to benefit established leagues, they might present significant challenges for players and agents in underdeveloped football regions, such as Africa. The prevailing limiting of agent commissions in these regions could reduce their ability to offer essential services to players from poorer backgrounds, heavily reliant on agents who navigate complex networks to connect local players with opportunities in the richer leagues of Europe. Regulation may favour wealthier markets, where agents are more mature and better equipped to deal with the new compliance requirements, at the expense of smaller markets, which might not have the infrastructure to support this change.

Recent reports like the FIFA Global Transfer Report 2023 draw attention to these discrepancies, demonstrating that despite their substantial contributions to international player transfers, African countries continue to get a disproportionately small amount of agency commissions (FIFA, 2023). According to The Guardian (2023), strong markets such as Europe and Saudi Arabia are driving an increase in agent commissions worldwide, while African football systems have challenges with access and compliance.

The Role of Agents in African Football

In African football, football agents are essential since they operate as a middleman between players and clubs, especially when African players are looking for possibilities in European leagues. Abisa (2013) examines the increasing significance of agents in African football in his research on football agencies in Ghana. They frequently serve as crucial intermediaries between local teams and the more prestigious international leagues for young, talented players in nations like Ghana. Abisa claims that agents frequently spend money on non-transfer-related services including career management, financial guidance, and even legal support. This is particularly crucial in areas where athletes might not fully comprehend international contracts and laws.

The growing dependence on agents is not without its setbacks, as outlined in Esson's 2015 study on trafficking in West African footballers. According to Esson, many young African footballers desperate to sign international contracts often fall prey to unscrupulous agents who take precedence in profit over the interest and welfare of the player. This trafficking phenomenon has often been referred to as being related to the less-than-adequate regulation and less effective oversight that leaves many a young player opens to manipulation. Although FIFA's new agent restrictions are intended to stop these kinds of exploitative practices, Esson contends that they could not go far enough in addressing the systemic problems in African football that permit these abuses to persist. He makes the case that because football is poorly governed in many African nations, agents are not always called to order, creating an environment that is ideal for exploitation.

Agents' role is further complicated by the economic realities of African football. Toulson (2015) underlines that agents are often key players in enabling African players to make the move from local leagues to European football, where the economic rewards are much greater. However, Toulson also reveals how such economic asymmetries between African football markets and those in Europe are thus capable of laying out imbalances of power in the agent-player-club relationship. Most African players have to rely on agents for securing their professional futures, and this can make them particularly vulnerable to any changes in the agent regulations that would restrict the agency's scope to negotiate favorable preconditions on their behalf. This potential power dynamic could be further exacerbated by FIFA's new commission caps, reducing the financial incentives for agents to actively represent African players in a competitive market.

Corruption, Development, and Regulation in African Football

Corruption is one of the most serious issues facing African football. Chiweshe (2023) cited corruption that permeates all levels of the game, from a local football association to a national governing body, as the primary cause of hindering football development in the continent. Corruption often manifests in the form of mismanagement of funds, bribery, and nepotism, with local football administrators and agents sometimes implicated in these illicit practices. These challenges in governance have created an unstable environment in which African football is less able to benefit from the economic opportunities presented by the global transfer market.

Chiwehse posits that while the new regulations by FIFA are meant to bring into place greater transparency, a lack of infrastructure and weak governance in many countries on the African continent could mean that these regulations will have limited effectiveness in curbing corruption on the continent. FIFA's regulations require strong local enforcement mechanisms, and without robust oversight from African football federations, the risk of corruption remains high. FIFA's global rules may provide a framework for combating corruption, but without addressing the root causes of governance issues within African football, the impact of these regulations may be limited. To this end, Chiweshe stresses the importance of enhanced capacity-building within the structures of African football agencies

as necessary for ensuring that reforms are not only implemented but also sustained over time.

CAF and Local Federation Dynamics in African Football Governance

The effectiveness of FIFA's new Football Agent Regulations in Africa depends heavily on enforcement by the Confederation of African Football (CAF) and national football federations. Nonetheless, CAF continues to suffer structural obstacles that make it difficult for it to regularly enforce compliance throughout the continent, such as political meddling, a lack of autonomy, and an excessive reliance on FIFA money (Okeke, 2023). National federations in nations like Ghana and Nigeria frequently lack the institutional infrastructure to adequately regulate football agents. Mensah (2023) draws attention to structural problems that permit unlicensed agents to function with little control, including out-of-date agent registrations, insufficient oversight procedures, and shoddy digital infrastructure. This discrepancy between international rules and local application restricts FIFA's reforms' usefulness. African football is still susceptible to unofficial agent networks and uneven rule enforcement, according to Baako (2024), unless there is a concerted investment in local enforcement mechanisms and improved CAF leadership.

Theories Related to the Impact of FFAR on the African Football Market

Several theoretical frameworks shed light on how the FIFA Football Agent Regulations (FFAR) impact the composition of football markets in Africa. Regulatory Governance Theory (Hood et al., 1999) states that the goal of these international regulations is to increase sports markets' fairness and openness. Nonetheless, according to Scott (2008)'s Institutional Theory, ineffective local mechanisms impede successful implementation in Africa. Depending on their interests, agents, players, clubs, and regulators react to FFAR in different ways, as explained by the Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984). According to Policy Transfer Theory (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000), resistance frequently results from Eurocentric programs like FFAR colliding with African reality. Lastly, FFAR may marginalise informal yet competent African agents, but it is framed as an attempt to formalise agent practice by Professionalisation Theory (Abbott, 1988). These theories collectively demonstrate how FFAR brings about both change and upheaval in the African football landscape.

Research Methodology

A mixed-methods approach was used in the study to provide a thorough evaluation of the effects of the new FIFA Agents Regulations on African football. This approach combined qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. Triangulation is made possible by this method, which increases the findings' validity and comprehensiveness (Creswell, 2014).

Data Collection Methods

To collect primary data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, such as African football agents, club executives, football players, and regulatory

organizations (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). This approach offers deep, comprehensive insights into how they view and interact with the new rules. To measure the opinions and experiences of a bigger group of football players, structured questionnaires were sent out. The survey questions evaluated competence areas such career management, financial effects, and contract transparency. To provide contextual depth and comprehend the localized implications of the regulations, a few African football markets—Nigeria and Ghana—were examined.

Also, results from the primary data were further enhanced by the examination of relevant secondary sources.

The policy framework and desired results were fundamentally understood through an analysis of the new FIFA Agents Regulations and associated publications. The theoretical framework of the study will also be informed by a survey of academic publications, business reports, and media coverage about FIFA laws and their historical effects on football.

Data Analysis

Qualitatively, thematic analysis was used to find recurrent themes and patterns in the data from case studies and interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To assess the FIFA Agents Regulations' wording and instructions considering African football contexts, content analysis was used on policy documents.

On the quantitative side descriptive and inferential statistics, as well as software programs such as SPSS, were utilized to analyze the survey responses. The impact of the regulations on variables, including agent revenue, player transfers, and contractual disputes, was examined in this investigation.

Sampling Strategy

Participants in the study included both qualitative and quantitative components. Ten stakeholders—including football agents, club CEOs, team managers, and TMS managers—were interviewed for the qualitative portion. Specifically, four club executives and two TMS managers from Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Sweden were interviewed, together with three FIFA-licensed football agents and one international agent. To represent a cross-section of practitioners directly involved in the regulation, application, and effects of the FFAR across African football structures, this sample was chosen. The purposeful selection of case study and qualitative interview participants was based on their expertise and pertinence (e.g., national TMS Managers of Ghana and Nigeria, agents licensed under the new system). The sample size was adequate to provide data saturation in qualitative topics and to record the opinions of multiple stakeholders in the regulatory environment of African football (Namey et al., 2023).

The study's quantitative component comprised responses from 66 players who took part in the structured survey. Players from male football teams in Tanzania, Nigeria, and Ghana were selected. Participants were chosen based on their interest in the study's goals and their active participation in competitive football. For the survey, stakeholders were

randomised by region and role (players) to ensure representativeness. Despite the original goal of 100 respondents, it was determined that the final sample size of 66 was adequate to detect important patterns in knowledge, opinions, and experiences of FIFA agent regulations and football governance.

This approach aligns with recent recommendations that focused, well-targeted samples can yield valid insights into sport governance surveys, especially when supported by rich qualitative data (Davis et al., 2022). and to capture multi-stakeholder perspectives within the African football regulatory landscape.

Data Validation and Reliability Measures

A thorough validation technique was used in the study to guarantee validity and reliability across both qualitative and quantitative components. To evaluate their clarity, cultural relevance, and consistency with the study's goals, a small sample of participants participated in a pilot study of all research instruments, including interview guides and structured surveys.

Two separate researchers performed topic coding on the verbatim transcriptions of the interviews for the qualitative component. To guarantee consistency in identifying new patterns, inter-coder agreement was assessed. To confirm the interpretation of the responses from the chosen participants, member-checking was also carried out. To use methodological triangulation, perspectives from TMS managers, club executives, and agents in various scenarios were compared.

The completeness and internal consistency of the 66 survey respondents' answers were examined for the quantitative component. To guarantee consistent data collection, closed-ended question forms were used in their design. Reliability indicators and descriptive statistics were used as needed. Stratified sampling by competitive division, gender, and nation further enhanced representativeness and lessened selection bias. This multi-method validation methodology improved the findings' dependability, credibility, and confirmability, guaranteeing that both datasets were strong and that the outcomes were reliable for a wide range of stakeholder groups.

Ethical Considerations

Sensitive information was protected by maintaining secrecy and anonymity. Institutional review boards and the Declaration of Helsinki's research ethical requirements were followed in this study.

Limitations

Stakeholders may object to sharing financial information since it is a sensitive subject. The findings may not be as broadly applicable due to the diversity of football markets throughout Africa.

Justification of Methodology

Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches guarantees thorough and advanced comprehension of the subject. According to Gillespie, Glăveanu, and de Saint Laurent (2024), integrating these methods through a pragmatist lens enables researchers to generate both quantifiable insights and contextual depth, allowing for more comprehensive and actionable findings.

Results and Data Analysis

Global Dynamics of Football Agents' Activities in 2023

Using FIFA's 2023 data on agent activities in international transfers (see Figure A1 in Appendix 1), this analysis assesses the impact of the FIFA Football Agent Regulations (FFAR), which were put into effect in 2023 and introduced a framework to standardize football agent activities and mitigate financial and regulatory disparities across global football markets. The licensing system introduced under the FFAR is a key pillar of this framework. According to the data, only 32.6% of the 9,207 applicants who sat for the football agent exam passed, highlighting the significant barriers to entry introduced by the new regulation. This underscores the FFAR's emphasis on raising professional standards but also raises concerns about accessibility and regional disparities—particularly in developing markets such as Africa. By comparing the African market's response and challenges to global trends and data on licensing outcomes, this analysis contextualizes the unequal impact of the FFAR and calls attention to the need for tailored implementation strategies that address local capacity and structural limitations.

Global and African Football Agent Ecosystem

Global Trends in Agent Activities

In 2023, the service fees paid by club agents for international transfers reached a record USD 888.1 million, representing over 10% of total transfer expenses globally (see Figure A2 in Appendix 1). This figure demonstrates the increasing commercialization of football and the significance of agents in player transfers, particularly in men's football. However, local transfers and player-agent fees are not included in these figures, suggesting that agents' global earnings are significantly higher. Women's football, on the other hand, displayed much lower financial results. FIFA (2023) reports that over 125 international transactions involving club agents, teams paid slightly less than USD 1.4 million in agency service fees. This glaring disparity highlights the underdeveloped and marginalised women's football market, which has been brought to light by academic studies on gender inequality in football.

Agent Involvement and Transfer Value: A Disparity in Participation

Club agents were involved in 2,051 international transfers in 2023, continuing the trend of third-party representation in international football transactions (see Appendix 1's Figure A3). The information shows that the more the transfer price, the more involved the agent

becomes. Although engaging club agents were only present in 4.8% of non-fee transfers, this percentage increased significantly to 56.5% for moves totaling more than USD 5 million (see Figure A4 in Appendix 1). This pattern is indicative of the increasing formalisation and monetary power of agents in high-value transactions in more developed football economies. By contrast, in this global framework, the African football market continues to be mostly peripheral.

FIFA (2023) reports that in 2023, just 22 moves involving engaging-club agents and 31 involving releasing-club agents were documented from Africa. The region only contributed USD 173,600 in total agent service fees, which translates to USD 125,800 for engaging-club agents and USD 47,800 for releasing-club agents. This underscores the low level of engagement and negligible revenue flows in the continent. This sharp discrepancy highlights the unfair effects of the new FIFA Football Agent Regulations (FFAR), which could improve standards worldwide but run the risk of widening the gap between football markets with ample resources and those with little resources, such as Africa. This extremely small market size suggests that there aren't many options or financial resources available to African football. African clubs often serve more as talent incubators for European markets than as hubs of business activity, according to Poli et al. (2022).

Licensing and Regulation: A Step Towards Transparency

In 2023, FIFA's wider regulatory measures to improve professionalism and openness included a required licensing system for football agents. Clubs, players, coaches, or groups may only be represented in formal transactions by licensed agents beginning of October 1, 2023. 5,319 licenses were granted worldwide during the first licensing period, with a significant gender gap—95.2% of licensees were men. The average age of licensed agents was 42, indicating that seasoned professionals continue to dominate the field. Brazil, Spain, Italy, and France were the next most common nations among recently licensed agents, after the United Kingdom. The system may exacerbate access and representational inequalities even while it brings much-needed standardisation and monitoring, especially in underdeveloped areas like Africa where smaller agents would find it difficult to comply with regulations (FIFA, 2023).

Results of Quantitative Survey Data (On the Perceptions about Football Agents and regulations By Male Footballers in Ghana, Nigeria and Tanzania).

Player-Agent Relationships

The results showed that 67.7% of players would advise using an agent for their moves, demonstrating the importance of agents in football careers. This implies that agents are viewed as helpful middlemen in promoting job advancement, notwithstanding objections on the other hand, the 32.3% who indicated ambivalence or a lack of interest in working with an agent again might be expressing concerns about exploitative methods or discontent with the calibre of services obtained. (See

Quality of Relationships

There are differing opinions shown in the comments when evaluating player-agent interactions. Even though 56.5% of respondents thought the relationship was "good" and 14.5% thought it was "very good," a noteworthy 29.1% said it was poor or awful. The large percentage of affirmative answers show how much players value the part agents play in their careers. On the other hand, the sizable proportion who voiced discontent points to possible points of contention, like disputes about commissions, a lack of openness in discussions, or a sense that the services provided were not worth the money.

Impact of Cap on Agent Commissions

Only 49.2% of players express outright support for the commission cap, but 77.7% of them (those who agree, entirely agree, or fairly agree) understand that it may influence their financial situation. This implies an understanding of the financial ramifications of the rule, which may result in lower agent fees but may also have an impact on the calibre of services that agents offer. Some scholars contend that such regulations could unintentionally push agents toward unofficial dealings to recover lost revenues, which may explain why 8 respondents disagreed with the cap and 9 others expressed confusion about it. This conflict serves as an example of the difficulty in striking a balance between upholding professional standards and regulating agent activity.

Perceptions of Agent Charges Under Previous Regulations

While some players may have felt overcharged, others may not have found the fees excessive in relation to the services provided, as evidenced by the inconclusive responses to the question of whether charges under the previous regulations were too high (22 players answered "maybe" and 12 were unsure), with only 13 players explicitly agreeing and 15 disagreeing. This ambiguity highlights the subjective nature of value perception, as players in different stages of their careers may have had different experiences with agents.

Preferred Duration of Agent Representation

There is notable variation in the statistics on the desired length of agent agreements. Although open-ended contracts are preferred by 39.1% of players, limits are preferred by 26.6%, and a maximum of two years is supported by 14.1%. 21.9% of people are unconcerned. This implies that a sizable minority of players prefer flexibility, perhaps the ability to switch agents if they are not satisfied, even while many players value long-term continuity in representation.

Results of Qualitative Survey Data

The implementation of FIFA's Football Agent Regulations (FFAR) case study produced 18 sub-themes based on the opinions of football administrators, club officials, and agents. In order to highlight the impact of FFAR, the difficulties in the African context, and suggestions for its implementation, these sub-themes were organised into six major topics.

Key concerns about transparency, economic effects, and regulation were identified using thematic analysis, which also brought attention to problems including overregulation, financial limits, and low local ability. More flexibility, localised support, and cooperation with national organisations were suggested by the participants as ways to make sure the rules better reflect the realities of African football. The thematic framework is further explained in the parts that follow, which are based on stakeholder feedback.

Table 1: Thematic Analysis of Stakeholder Responses to FFAR Implementation

Main Theme	Sub-Themes
Regulation and Control by FIFA	i. Licensing, exams, and renewals ii. FIFA's central control over agent operations iii. Importance of regulating intermediary activities
Economic Impacts	i. Agent commission caps and their effects ii. Impact on African agents' profitability iii. Financial benefits for players and clubs
Transparency in Transfers	i. Role of the TMS (Transfer Matching System) ii. Importance of clear documentation in reducing exploitation iii. Potential for enhanced visibility of financial transactions
Challenges in African Football	i. Implementation difficulties for new regulations ii. Overexploitation of African players and clubs by agents iii. Limited financial capacity in African football markets
Mandatory Use of Agents	i. Compulsory agent involvement in domestic transfers ii. Recommendations for improving agent adoption in Africa iii. Opposition to mandatory agency in some transactions
Competence and Professionalization	i. Necessity for licensed and educated agents ii. Support for examinations as a qualifying criterion iii. Concerns about barriers to entry for new agents

Source: Author Interviews, 2025

Regulation and Control by FIFA

This theme investigates how football agents' operational environment has been influenced by FIFA's regulatory control. It is indicative of an increasing institutional drive for uniformity

and openness in international football transactions. The introduction of licensure and tests, FIFA's pivotal role in agent control, and the larger justification for regulating intermediary activities are some of the major sub-themes.

The results demonstrate that stakeholders see FIFA's regulatory reform specifically, the licensing and renewal requirements as an essential step towards professionalism. The objective of standardisation and the realities of various football markets, however, also seem to be at odds.

"The licensing exam isn't the problem, it's built on systems that work in Europe, not in Africa." — (Agent 3 in Football)

This supports criticisms that, particularly in Africa, global football governance frequently enforces uniform rules without taking local context into account (Yilmaz, 2023). Regarding FIFA's centralised control, participants had differing opinions. Some were concerned about national associations' decreased autonomy, while others recognised the advantages of increased accountability.

"We understand the need for oversight, but it feels like the rules are written without real input from African football bodies." — (Club CEO 2)

This underscores broader worries that regional dynamics may not be sufficiently reflected in FIFA's top-down governance (Ghana Football Association, 2023).

Furthermore, a few interested parties underlined how crucial it is to regulate middlemen in order to safeguard participants, particularly children. Long-standing ethical issues have been raised by reports of exploitative activities involving young African talents. Stakeholders concurred that the FFAR can decrease malpractice and advance player welfare if it is used with regional sensitivity (Morgan Sports Law, 2024). But they cautioned that too much bureaucracy can burden autonomous agents without institutional backing. These findings imply that although FIFA's changes are generally accepted in theory, unless they are specifically designed to meet the requirements of various football economies, their implementation may worsen structural imbalances. To ensure sustainability and justice in global football governance, a more inclusive regulatory strategy that recognizes regional disparities and actively incorporates local associations is necessary (FIFA, 2023).

Economic Impacts

This theme examines how financial ties in football, especially in African markets, have changed because of the FFAR. It focusses on three main topics: possible financial gains for clubs and players, agent commission caps, and their effect on agency profitability.

The commission limitations were criticized by many agencies who claimed they deterred investment in up-and-coming talent.

"These restrictions lessen our incentive to take on new talent—we invest months in players with no assurance of returns." — (Football Agent 4).

This reflects larger worries that consistent regulations don't consider the economic realities of emerging markets (Yeboah & Mensah, 2024).

Stakeholders also raised concerns about the new “client-pays” model, which shifts the financial burden onto players.

"The majority of our players don't even make enough money to pay for their own transportation—now they also have to pay agents?" (Club CEO 1)

Critics contend that this may restrict lower-income players' access to representation (Adeyemi, 2023). Nonetheless, several club officials applauded the modifications, pointing out that lower agent fees would allow for more funding for player development.

"Clubs can now invest more in our academies and player salaries because of this." — (Club CEO 3)

According to FIFA (2023), these improvements promote long-term financial sustainability. Inconsistent enforcement is still a problem. There were concerns about a regulatory imbalance after a UK panel ruled against the caps.

"We are at a disadvantage if certain nations abide by the rules while others do not." (Football Agent 4).

This highlights the need for globally coherent, yet regionally sensitive, policies (Morgan Sports Law, 2024).

Notwithstanding the FFAR's overall goal of advancing equity, stakeholders caution that universally applicable rules run the risk of exacerbating financial disparities. Ensuring equity in global football governance would require tailored implementation (Yilmaz, 2023; Ghana Football Association, 2023).

Transparency in Transfers

This theme examines how responsibility in the global transfer market is changing as a result of greater openness in football transactions brought about by FIFA's regulatory powers. It draws attention to three main points: the function of the Transfer Matching System (TMS), the significance of unambiguous documentation, and the possibility of increased financial transaction visibility.

The TMS was widely acknowledged by stakeholders as a beneficial advancement for reducing anomalies in international transfers.

"There is less opportunity to cheat the system because the TMS requires both clubs to report the same data." — (Club CEO 3)

This is a result of increased institutional efforts to lessen manipulation and standardise transfer procedures (FIFA, 2023).

However, issues with documentation standards surfaced, especially with relation to players' and agents' legal literacy in areas with fewer resources.

"Some of these boys are only instructed where to sign the contracts; they are unable to read them at all." — (Football Agent 1)

Exploitative transfers, particularly involving young African players, have long been facilitated by inadequate documentation procedures (Morgan Sports Law, 2024).

The ramifications of financial openness, particularly regarding the disclosure of agency fees and club expenditure, were also examined by the stakeholders.

"While publishing transfer fees may seem like a good idea, small clubs are exposed and under constant pressure." — (Club CEO 4).

According to Adeyemi (2023), although transparency is meant to discourage corruption, it may also impose unforeseen costs on clubs and middlemen that lack robust institutional backing.

However, some participants commended the visibility improvements for enhancing stakeholder trust.

"We can now see where the money is going. This facilitates negotiation and planning." — (TMS Manager A)

This is consistent with FIFA's overarching goal of encouraging football worldwide to be equitable and financially responsible (FIFA, 2023).

Uneven implementation, however, is still a problem. Despite the system's theoretical soundness, some participants cautioned that enforcement varies greatly.

"If one nation has complete transparency and another does not, the entire market is distorted." — (Football Agent 4).

This demonstrates the necessity of a well-rounded regulatory strategy that upholds international norms while honouring regional contexts (Yilmaz, 2023; Ghana Football Association, 2023).

Stakeholders stress the significance of flexible implementation, even though transparency measures are generally accepted in concept. Even well-meaning systems, such as the TMS, may exacerbate current inequalities rather than address them if regional adaptation is not implemented.

Challenges in African Football

This theme draws attention to the main difficulties African football suffers because of the new FIFA Football Agent Regulations (FFAR). Three major subthemes surfaced: trouble with implementation, player exploitation, and restricted funding.

Numerous participants contended that FIFA's changes were out of step with African realities.

"The licensing exam isn't the issue; it's based on systems that aren't compatible with African systems." — (Football Agent 3)

This is in line with the critique of a one-size-fits-all strategy (Yilmaz, 2023).

Exploitation is still a major worry.

"With false promises, we've seen agents take boys overseas, there's no protection when things go wrong." (Club CEO 1)

Due to inadequate oversight, ethical issues continue to exist (Morgan Sports Law, 2024). Low-income players were criticized for being under financial strain by the new "client-pays" model.

"The majority of our players make insufficient money to pay for their own transportation." — (Club CEO 2)

This might make it harder to get representation (Adeyemi, 2023). Finally, clubs have trouble with scarce resources.

"How can systems designed for billion-dollar leagues be implemented?" (Club CEO 4)

This emphasizes the necessity of implementing policies with consideration for local conditions (Ghana Football Association, 2023).

In conclusion, despite the FFAR's theoretical support, stakeholders emphasize the necessity of customized solutions that consider Africa's distinct football environment.

Mandatory Use of Agents

This theme examines the effects of requiring agents to be involved in football transactions, especially in African markets. It centers on three themes: recommendations for boosting agent adoption, instances of opposition to required agency, and mandated agent uses in domestic transfers.

The necessity of mandatory agent participation in domestic transactions was questioned by several stakeholders, particularly those at lower levels.

"Some players only want to transfer to another local club for a base salary; they don't need an agent." — (Club CEO 2)

The growing concern that such regulations would overregulate basic transactions is shown in this (Yeboah & Mensah, 2024).

Others made suggestions like public education and subsidized services to increase agent adoption.

"FIFA should make awareness and training investments if they want more players to use agents." — (Football Agent 2)

According to stakeholders, support systems are essential for broad compliance (FIFA, 2023).

Additionally, there was unmistakable resistance to requiring the agency in every situation, especially among grassroots clubs.

"Players cannot be forced to utilize agents when many of them cannot even buy boots." (Club CEO 1)

The danger of keeping low-income participants out of formal systems is highlighted by this (Adeyemi, 2023).

In conclusion, stakeholders caution that without a mandate is customized to local conditions and backed by access and education, formalising agent involvement may not increase professionalism.

Competence and Professionalization

This theme explores efforts to raise the bar for football agents, especially in relation to licensing and educational requirements. It addresses the requirements for competent agents, examination support, and issues with new entrants' access. In order to improve industry standards, stakeholders generally agreed that having agents who are trained and licensed is essential.

The system has been abused by far too many inexperienced individuals; professionalism begins with the right training.

"We've seen too many unqualified people exploiting the system—professionalism starts with proper training." — (Football Agent 1)

This reflects a growing consensus on the value of formal qualifications (FIFA, 2023). A lot of participants agreed that licensure examinations were a fair approach to determine competency. The test is required. Perhaps you should not be representing players if you are unable to pass it. (Manager B of TMS)

According to Morgan Sports Law (2024), the tests are viewed as a step in the direction of increased accountability and legitimacy. Barriers to admission were a worry, nevertheless, especially for prospective agents from underfunded backgrounds.

"A major problem, particularly for those of us in Africa, is the cost and accessibility of prep materials." — (Football Agent 3)

Equity in entry to the profession is called into question by this (Yeboah & Mensah, 2024). To sum up, stakeholders back the push for professionalism through licensing, but they emphasize that fair access to tests and training is necessary to prevent the exclusion of competent but underfunded agents.

Analysis of Key Themes Emerging from Qualitative Interviews on FIFA Football Agent Regulations

A bar chart illustrating the frequency of mentions for each major theme resulting from the qualitative interviews is presented in Figure C16 (see Appendix C). According to the chart, which measures each theme's importance, "Regulation and Control by FIFA" is the most mentioned issue, followed by "Economic Impacts" and "Transparency in Transfers." Other topics like "Mandatory Use of Agents," "Challenges in African Football," and "Competence and Professionalisation" were brought up less frequently but are still important in the larger conversation. Thematic emphasis as assessed by interviewees is succinctly summarised in this image.

Additionally, the thematic map in Figure C16 (included in Appendix C) shows the relationships between the many sub-themes found in the qualitative study of how the FIFA Football Agent Regulations affected the African football market. Concepts like "Education for Agents," "Challenges in African Football," and "Economic Impacts" are interrelated within larger thematic clusters, as the picture illustrates. The visual arrangement offers a structured perspective of the theme landscape arising from stakeholder interviews and aids in conceptualising the connections between important issues including agent competency, overexploitation, documentation, and commission caps.

Inductive Analysis of All Data (Both Quantitative and Qualitative)

To assess how the 2023 FIFA Football Agent Regulations (FFAR) would affect African football, we need to incorporate the information from interviews, FIFA transfer data, and a footballer questionnaire. Economic dynamics, agency operations, player-agent

interactions, and the larger structural issues facing the African football ecosystem are all examined in the paper. This analysis is geared towards responding to the research questions of this research. As such a detailed analysis of the three sources of data under each research question was developed as follows.

Discussion of Findings

Economic Dynamics of Player Transfers from African Leagues to European Clubs

Significant economic differences between the African and international football markets are highlighted by the FIFA 2023 transfer data. Agent fees accounted for \$888.1 million worldwide, or over 10% of all transfer expenses. African clubs, on the other hand, only paid \$173,600 for agent-related expenses (FIFA, 2023). These numbers are supported by the interviews, which highlight the financial limitations faced by African teams, who frequently put player development ahead of expensive transfer discussions. Furthermore, 67.7% of athletes who responded to the survey said that agents were crucial middlemen in their professional development.

Poli et al. (2010) characterize African clubs as "export economies" for talent rather than hubs of commercial activity, which is consistent with the global dominance of European leagues in player acquisitions. Because African clubs are unable to keep or effectively capitalize on their finest talent, this dynamic reinforces dependency. Due to their low resources, smaller African agents may find it difficult to comply with the FFAR's more stringent licensing criteria, which could further concentrate power in wealthier areas. However, studies indicate that standardizing procedures through laws may improve the bargaining power of African players and lessen transfer exploitative practices. Therefore, even if the FFAR may initially widen economic gaps, if it is accompanied by capacity-building initiatives, its long-term effects might encourage equal participation.

Challenges and Benefits for African Football Agents

Due to the strict licensing requirements imposed by the 2023 FFAR, just 32.6% of applicants worldwide passed the FIFA exam. Concerns over the logistical and budgetary obstacles caused by these regulations were expressed by African agents interviewed. While most gamers (49.2%) supported the commission cap, 22% were unsure or opposed, indicating concerns about the quality of service under lower costs, according to questionnaire results. The difficulties African agents encounter is like the criticism of regulatory homogenization in unequal markets made by (Agbisa, 2013). Even though licensing regulations are meant to make the industry more professional, they may disadvantage smaller agencies in areas with weaker economies. Strict rules in developing markets frequently serve to exacerbate pre-existing imbalances. African football transfers have historically been marred by unethical methods; nevertheless, the FFAR offers opportunity to improve professionalism and responsibility. FIFA must make investments in locally relevant solutions, such subsidized training programs for African agents, to promote diversity within the regulatory framework and balance these dynamics.

Transparency and Fairness in Transfer Dealings

A move toward greater transparency is represented by FIFA's licensing and the increased use of the Transfer Matching System (TMS). According to stakeholder interviews, these steps are crucial for lowering corruption and guaranteeing more equitable player contracts. Nevertheless, the survey's results showed persistent problems, as 29.1% of athletes complained about their agents, frequently pointing to a lack of openness or communication. In football governance, transparency is crucial, especially in Africa, where exploitative behaviors have historically been made easier by lax legal frameworks (Darby, 2013). According to studies on institutional changes in sports, the FFAR is in line with global governance best practices by standardizing agent activities and mandating increased accountability through TMS. Its efficacy in Africa, however, hinges on resolving regional issues including disparate enforcement capabilities and inadequate technology infrastructure. As suggested by stakeholders, extending TMS coverage to domestic transfers could offer a thorough understanding of financial movements, lowering opacity and promoting confidence between agents and players.

Role of African Football Associations

The important but limited role that African football associations (AFAs) play in carrying out FIFA regulations was highlighted in the interviews. Their capacity to successfully enforce compliance is hampered by a lack of administrative and financial resources. More cooperation with FIFA was demanded by administrators to bring local customs into compliance with global norms. As a bridge between local reality and FIFA's global governance, AFAs play a crucial role. Their difficulties reflect more general problems with resource distribution and governance in African sports organizations (Darby, 2010). The empowerment of these groups through capacity-building programs, such as funding and technical training, is essential to the FFAR's success. Local context is crucial when applying global standards, according to studies on regulatory enforcement in developing countries. AFAs could improve the overall efficacy of the FFAR in Africa by fortifying their enforcement procedures through collaborations with international organizations.

Impact on Player-Agent Relationships

Diverse viewpoints on player-agent relationships are revealed by the questionnaire data. Although 56.5% of players thought these connections were "good" or "very good," 29.1% were unhappy, pointing to things like exploitative tactics and poor communication. Regarding contract length, players likewise expressed conflicting attitudes, with 26.6% choosing restricted durations and 39.1% favouring open-ended deals. The FFAR's goals of improving trust and justice are centered on the player-agent dynamic.

According to research by Darby, (2013) preserving healthy player-agent relationships requires open communication and reciprocal trust. The discontent among African athletes, however, suggests structural problems including uneven power relations and a dearth of legal protections. Some of these concerns are addressed by the FFAR, which regulates

contract terms and caps commissions. However, strict caps may encourage agents to engage in informal transactions, undercutting the desired outcomes. FIFA should think about implementing procedures for routine agency agreement reviews to reduce these risks and promote flexibility and responsibility in player-agent contracts.

Broader Implications: Gender Disparities in Football Transfers

With women's football earning only \$1.4 million in agent fees compared to \$888.1 million for men's football, the 2023 FIFA data demonstrate glaring gender discrepancies. Cultural and economic constraints in Africa make these disparities worse, as seen by the low level of funding for women's football and the low number of female agents. Football governance studies have shown that the marginalization of women's football reflects larger trends of gender inequality in sports. To address this gap, specific interventions are needed, such as programs to train female agents and financial incentives for clubs who invest in women's football. The UN's Sport for Development and Peace framework supports international initiatives to advance gender parity in sports, which these actions support.

Future Research Directions and Potential Policy Adaptations in Africa

The 2023 FIFA Football Agent Regulations (FFAR) and its long-term effects on African football are still developing issues that call for more research and context-specific policy solutions. With an emphasis on gender disparities, domestic transfer dynamics, informal market reactions, and agent licensing outcomes, future research should examine how African stakeholders adjust to the new regulatory framework. It may be possible to learn more about whether the FFAR promotes professional development among African agents or perpetuates current disparities through longitudinal research.

Also, African football associations and regional organisations must actively modify the FFAR to local conditions at the policy level as opposed to only reacting to its consequences. This entails enhancing institutional capacity for enforcement, creating subsidised licensing and training programs that are adapted to the various settings of the continent, and extending the Transfer Matching System to include domestic transfers. Furthermore, broad stakeholder involvement and equity-driven incentives can guarantee that the regulatory framework promotes sustainable football development throughout Africa in addition to enhancing governance.

Recommendations and Conclusion

Recommendations

FIFA's new Agent Regulations (FFAR) present a revolutionary chance to improve African football's openness, professionalism, and equity. Nevertheless, there is a chance that local agents will be marginalised, and inequality will worsen if these principles are not modified to fit the local environment. To make FFAR a driving force for fairness and sustainable growth throughout the continent's football ecosystem, this report identifies five crucial reform areas:

- i. **Capacity Building:** FIFA may enable African agents, particularly those from low-income families, to compete professionally and fairly by funding specific training programs and lowering license fees. This will improve the agent environment and foster inclusive growth.
- ii. **Financial Transparency:** By extending the Transfer Matching System to include domestic transfers, we can improve accountability, lessen corruption, foster confidence in the football market, and make sure that financial transactions support a more robust and open sector.
- iii. **Commission Cap Reform:** Establishing a tiered, adaptable commission structure will strike a balance between player protection and equitable agent remuneration, assisting in the upkeep of a long-term financial system that benefits all parties.
- iv. **Local Enforcement:** Building up African football associations' regulatory capabilities is essential to guaranteeing the uniform and efficient implementation of FFAR, encouraging local ownership of the regulations, and raising governance standards across the continent.
- v. **Gender Inclusion:** Addressing historical gender inequities through encouraging female agents to participate and funding women's football would foster diversity and equity that enhance the football community and increase opportunities for everyone.

Furthermore, by bringing FFAR into line with the unique realities of Africa, these reforms will work together to strengthen local agents, advance equity, enhance governance, and aid in the long-term growth of football on the continent.

Conclusion

The African football market has both potential and challenges because of the new FIFA Agents Regulations. Although the rules are intended to improve transparency, professionalize the agent sector, and stop unethical behavior, their outcomes will differ according to the unique institutional, social, and economic circumstances of each location. The difficulties are especially severe for African football, as local clubs and agents face a lack of resources, restricted access to professional development programs, and the possibility of being left out of the international transfer market.

A more flexible commission cap structure increased financial transparency, capacity-building programs, and more robust regulatory enforcement by African football associations are just a few of the important areas for change that the research findings point to. To guarantee that the new rules accomplish their objectives without inadvertently hurting local agents and players, these suggestions are crucial. To further promote a more inclusive and equitable football environment, it is imperative to address the gender gaps in the football agent market.

The effective application and modification of FIFA's rules will determine the future of football transfers in Africa. FIFA, African football associations, and other stakeholders can establish a more open, equitable, and long-lasting football transfer system that benefits all

players in the African football ecosystem by tackling the issues raised by this study and putting the suggested recommendations into practice.

References

- Abisa, A. (2013). *The rise of football agency and its impact on football in Ghana* (Doctoral thesis). Ashesi University. <https://air.ashesi.edu.gh/server/api/core/bitstreams/72591a74-62ce-4fe8-91a3-969b5063d8ed/content>
- Aigba, A. (2023). A review of the FIFA Football Agent Regulations. <https://sololaakpana.ng/publications/#>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Darby, P. (2013). Africa's role in global football: A critical analysis of the exploitation of African football talent. *Soccer & Society*, 14(2), 157–174. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14660970.2013.768245>
- Darby, P., & Solberg, H. A. (2010). The African football transfer market: Challenges and opportunities. *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, 12(1), 7–24.
- Dolowitz, D., & Marsh, D. (2000). Learning from abroad: The role of policy transfer in contemporary policy-making. *Governance*, 13(1), 5–23. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0952-1895.00121>
- Esson, J. (2015). Better off at home? Rethinking responses to trafficked West African footballers in Europe. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 41(3), 512–530. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2014.957174>
- FIFA. (2022). *FIFA Football Agent Regulations (FFAR) 2023 Overview*. <https://inside.fifa.com/legal/football-regulatory/agents/national-football-agent-regulations>
- FIFA. (2023a). *FIFA Transfer Market 2023: Statistics and trends*. <https://www.fifa.com/legal/media-releases/club-spending-on-international-transfer-fees-reaches-all-time-record-in-2023>
- FIFA. (2023b). *Football agents in international transfers 2023*. Fédération Internationale de Football Association. <https://www.fifa.com/legal/media-releases/agent-service-fees-reach-all-time-high-in-2023>
- FIFA. (2023c). *FIFA Football Agent Regulations to fully enter into force as of 1 October*. <https://inside.fifa.com/transfer-system/agents/media-releases/fifa-football-agent-regulations-to-fully-enter-into-force-as-of-1-october>
- FIFA. (2024). *Circular No. 1874: FIFA Football Agent Regulations – Licensing updates*. <https://digitalhub.fifa.com/m/76cc8bb9b9d90413/original/Letter-from-the-FIFA-Secretary-General-ad-interim-Circular-no-1874.pdf>
- Forbes. (2023, November 6). *How FIFA's new agent regulations could change the transfer market*. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/steveprice/2023/11/06/how-fifas-new-agent-regulations-could-change-the-transfer-market/>
- Freeman, R. E. (1984). *Strategic management: A stakeholder approach*. Pitman.
- Ghana Football Association. (2023). *FIFA Football Agent Regulations (FFAR) comes into force*. <https://www.ghanafa.org/fifa-football-agent-regulations-ffar-comes-into-force-gfa-to-pass-its-new-national-football-agent-regulations-nfar-before-31-july-2023>
- Ghana Law Hub. (2023). *Requirements to become a Ghanaian football agent under FFAR*. <https://ghanalawhub.com/new-fifa-football-agent-regulations-requirements-to-become-a-ghanaian-football-agent>
- Gillespie, A., Gläveanu, V., & de Saint Laurent, C. (2024). Mixing qualitative and quantitative methods. In *Pragmatism and methodology* (pp. 117–134). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009031066.007>
- Hood, C., Rothstein, H., & Baldwin, R. (1999). *The government of risk: Understanding risk regulation regimes*. Oxford University Press.

- Ioannidis, G., Brannigan, M., Marth, S., & Marshall, L. (2024). The regulation of football agents by FIFA: A complicated affair. *International Sports Law Review*, 3, 18–25.
- Johnson, R. B., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2004). Mixed methods research: A research paradigm whose time has come. *Educational Researcher*, 33(7), 14–26. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X033007014>
- Lewis Silkin. (2023, January 6). *The new FIFA football agent regulations – What you need to know*. <https://www.lewissilkin.com/en/insights/2023/01/06/the-new-fifa-football-agent-regulations-what-you-need-to-know>
- Morgan Sports Law. (2024). *FIFA Football Agent Regulations: Legal commentary*. <https://www.morgansportslaw.com/articles/fifa-agent-regulations-2023>
- MSc sports. (2023, December 1). *The new FIFA football agent regulations*. <https://mscsports.co.za/2023/12/01/the-new-fifa-football-agent-regulations/>
- Nick, D. M. K. C. (2023). Legal implications and challenges in the FIFA agent regulations: A critical analysis. *Sports Law Bulletin*. <https://www.sportslawbulletin.org/fifas-football-agent-regulations-the-good-the-bad-the-ugly/>
- Poli, R. (2006). Migrations and trade of African football players: Historic, geographical and cultural aspects. *Africa Spectrum*, 41(3), 393–414.
- Poli, R., Ravenel, L., & Besson, R. (2022). *CIES Football Observatory Annual Report 2022*. <https://football-observatory.com/Reports/>
- Quartz Africa. (2023, August 14). *Africa is making waves in the global football transfer market*. <https://qz.com/africa-is-making-waves-in-the-global-football-transfer-1850052049>
- Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (2012). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Scott, W. R. (2008). *Institutions and organizations: Ideas and interests* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- The Guardian. (2023, December 14). *Saudi spree helps lift football agent payments to record £700m*. <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2023/dec/14/payments-to-agents-hit-record-highs-in-mens-and-womens-football>
- Toulson, D. P. (2015). *Brokers in the football players market: A review of the literature* (Master's thesis). The Catholic University of America. <https://www.academia.edu/34894259>
- Wand, T. (2022). Analysis of the football transfer market network. *Journal of Statistical Physics*, 187(3), Article 27. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10955-022-02945-4>
- Yeboah, M., & Mensah, D. (2024). The implications of FIFA's agent reforms on African youth development. *Journal of African Sports Studies*, 13(1), 104–121.
- Yilmaz, B. (2023). One-size-fits-all in football regulation? A critique of FIFA's global governance. *Sport and Society Review*, 11(4), 255–274.

Appendices

Appendix A – Questionnaire

6/29/25, 8:36 AM

PERCEPTION AND IMPACT OF THE NEW FIFA AGENTS REGULATIONS ON AFRICAN FOOTBALLERS

PERCEPTION AND IMPACT OF THE NEW FIFA AGENTS REGULATIONS ON AFRICAN FOOTBALLERS

1. Q.1 HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALLER?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 1-2 years
☐ 3-5 years
☐ 6-8 years
☐ over 8 years

2. Q.2 HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU ENGAGED AN AGENT IN YOUR CAREER?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ ONCE
☐ TWICE
☐ THRICE
☐ MULTIPLE TIMES

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/13-X66FXC_2VGiwz7ku4vBgP1swFzBY0OdVv2hHGfHA/edit

1/6

6/29/25, 8:36 AM

PERCEPTION AND IMPACT OF THE NEW FIFA AGENTS REGULATIONS ON AFRICAN FOOTBALLERS

3. Q. 3 HOW WILL YOU RATE THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE AGENT/S?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ BAD
☐ UNSAFTISFACTORY
☐ GOOD
☐ VERY GOOD

4. Q.4 WILL YOU ALWAYS RECOMMEND THAT A PLAYER ENGAGES AN AGENT?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ YES
☐ NO
☐ MAYBE
☐ NOT SURE

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/13-X66FXC_2VGiwz7ku4vBgP1swFzBY0OdVv2hHGfHA/edit

2/6

6/29/25, 8:36 AM

PERCEPTION AND IMPACT OF THE NEW FIFA AGENTS REGULATIONS ON AFRICAN FOOTBALLERS

5. Q.5 WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING RESPONSES DO YOU PREFER?

Check all that apply.

- ☐ LIMIT ON THE NUMBER OF YEARS AN AGENT MUST HAVE AN AGREEMENT WITH YOU
- ☐ THE AGENCY AGREEMENT MUST BE OPENED THROUGHOUT THE PERIOD OF YOUR CONTRACT WITH THE NEW CLUB
- ☐ THE AGENCY AGREEMENT SHOULD NOT BE MORE THAT TWO YEARS
- ☐ YOU DON'T REALLY BOTHER ABOUT THE NUMBER OF YEARS

6. Q.6 WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING RESPONSES DO YOU PREFER?

Check all that apply.

- ☐ AN AGENT REPRESENTING YOU AND YOUR NEW CLUB AT THE SAME TIME
- ☐ AN AGENT REPRESENTING YOU AND YOUR FORMER CLUB(RELEASING CLUB) AT THE SAME TIME
- ☐ AN AGENT REPRESENTING YOU ALONE IN THE TRANSACTION
- ☐ ALL OF THE ABOVE

7. Q.7 DO YOU THINK COMMISSIONS IN THE PAST CHARGED BY YOUR AGENTS WERE TOO MUCH?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ YES
- ☐ NO
- ☐ MAY BE
- ☐ NOT SURE

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/13-X86FXC_2VGIwz7ku4vBgP1lwFzBY0CdVv2hHGHA/edit

3/6

6/29/25, 8:36 AM

PERCEPTION AND IMPACT OF THE NEW FIFA AGENTS REGULATIONS ON AFRICAN FOOTBALLERS

8. Q.8 THE NEW REGULATIONS SETS A CAP ON COMMISSIONS FOR AGENTS AT 3% IF THE PLAYER'S ANNUAL SALARY IS MORE THAN \$200,000 AND 5% IF THE PLAYER'S ANNUAL SALARY IS LESS THAN \$200,000. DO YOU AGREE THIS WILL IMPROVE THE FINANCES OF PLAYERS AND REDUCE OVER EXPLOITATION?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ FULLY AGREE
- ☐ AGREE
- ☐ FAIRLY AGREE
- ☐ DISAGREE
- ☐ FULLY DISAGREE
- ☐ NOT SURE

9. Q.9 WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING RESPONSES DO YOU PREFER?

Check all that apply.

- ☐ DISPUTES BETWEEN ME AND MY AGENT MUST BE RESOLVED AT THE CIVIL LAW COURT ONLY
- ☐ DISPUTES BETWEEN ME AND MY AGENT MUST BE RESOLVED AT THE FIFA / NATIONAL TRIBUNAL
- ☐ I PREFER TO INCLUDE WHERE TO RESOLVE THE ISSUE IN THE REPRESENTATION AGREEMENT
- ☐ ALL OF THE ABOVE

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/13-X86FXC_2VGIwz7ku4vBgP1lwFzBY0CdVv2hHGHA/edit

4/6

6/29/25, 8:36 AM

PERCEPTION AND IMPACT OF THE NEW FIFA AGENTS REGULATIONS ON AFRICAN FOOTBALLERS

10. ASIDE YOUR HOME COUNTRY HAVE YOU BEEN TRANSFERED BY AN AGENT TO ANOTHER COUNTRY IN YOUR CAREER?

Mark only one oval.

☐ YES

☐ NO

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google.

Google Forms

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/13-X66FXC_2VGiwz7ku4vBgP1kwFzBY0QdVv2hHGIHA/edit

5/6

6/29/25, 8:36 AM

PERCEPTION AND IMPACT OF THE NEW FIFA AGENTS REGULATIONS ON AFRICAN FOOTBALLERS

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/13-X66FXC_2VGiwz7ku4vBgP1kwFzBY0QdVv2hHGIHA/edit

6/6

Appendix B – Semi-Structured Interview Guide

PERCEPTIONS AND IMPACT OF THE NEW FIFAAGENTS REGULATIONS ON MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS - TMS MANAGERS

- How long have you been a TMS manager of your member association?
- On an average how often do clubs or players in your member association employ the services of an agent?
- How will you rate the relationship with the agent/s?
- Will you always recommend that a player engages an agent?
- Do you think commissions in the past charged by agents were too much?
- The new regulations set a cap on commissions for agents at 3% if the player's annual salary is more than \$200,000 and 5% if the player's annual salaries less than \$200,000. Do you agree this will improve the finances of players and reduce over exploitation?
- What will be your recommendation to FIFA/CAF for the proper stabilization of this market environment?

PERCEPTIONS AND IMPACT OF THE NEW FIFAAGENTS REGULATIONS ON MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS – AGENTS

- How long have you been an Agent
- On an average how often do you engage clubs or players in a transfer?
- How will you rate the relationship with the players and clubs?
- Will you always recommend that a player engages an agent?
- Do you think commissions in the past charged by agents were too much?
- The new regulations set a cap on commissions for agents at 3% if the player's annual salary is more than \$200,000 and 5% if the player's annual salaries less than \$200,000. Do you agree this will improve the finances of players and reduce over exploitation?
- What will be your recommendation to FIFA/CAF for the proper stabilization of this market environment?

Appendix C – Figures and Tables

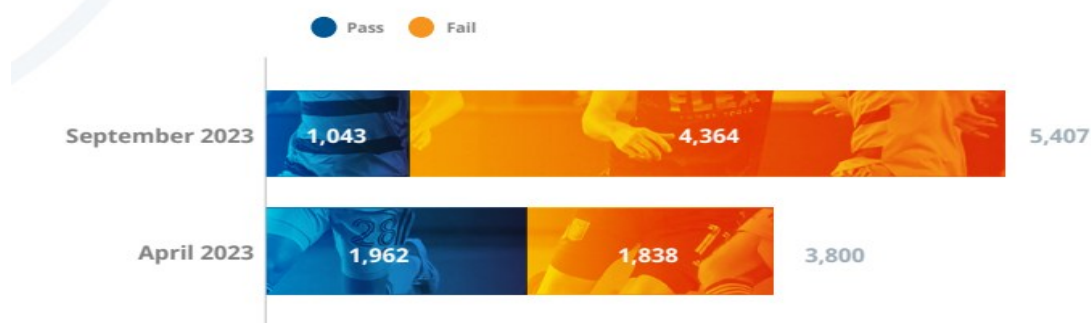


Figure C1: Licensing Exam Outcomes Under the 2023 FFAR and Implications for Agent Accessibility in Emerging Markets. *Source: FIFA (2023)*



Figure C2: Club Spending on Agent Service Fees in International Women's Football Transfers, 2023. Source: FIFA (2023)

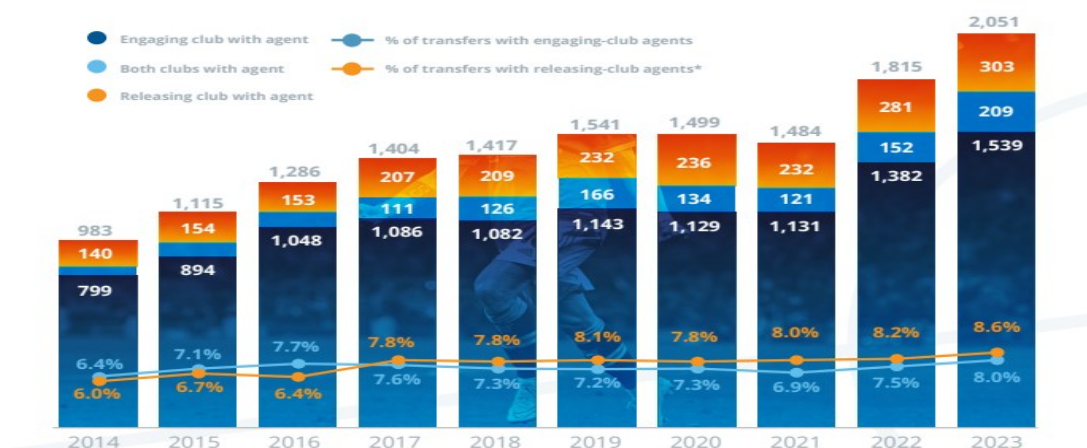


Figure C3: Number and percentage of international transfers with club agents Source: FIFA (2023)

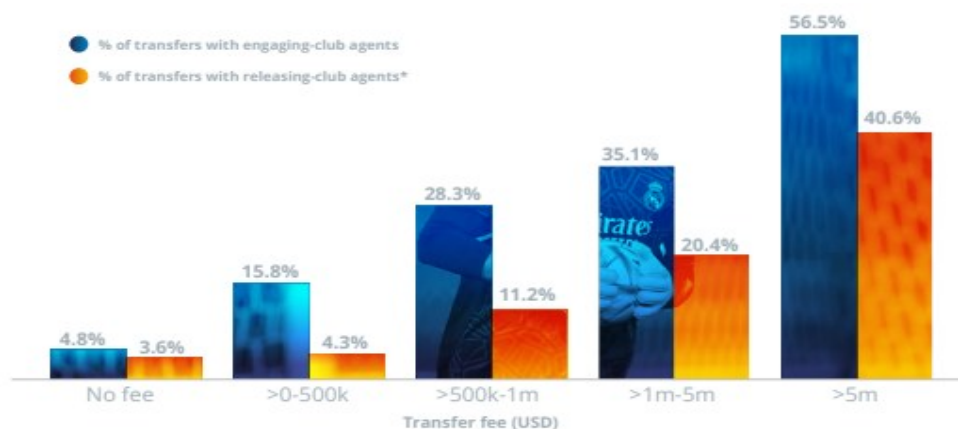


Figure C4: Percentage of international transfers with club agents by size of transfer fees (YTD). Source: FIFA (2023)

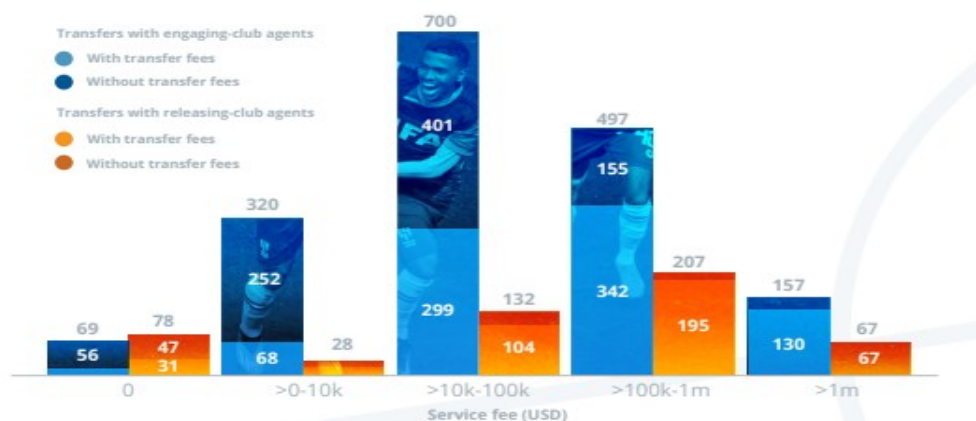


Figure C5: Number of Transfers with club agents, by transfer fee, size of agent service fees paid by clubs (YTD). Source: FIFA (2023)

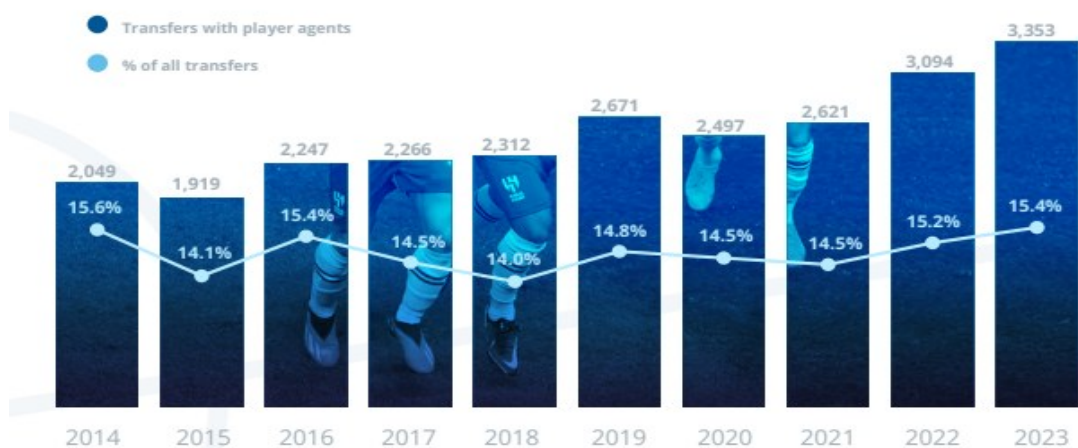


Figure C6: Number and percentage of international transfers with player agents. Source: FIFA (2023)

Graphical Representation of Various Responses from Players

Q.1 HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALLER?

66 responses

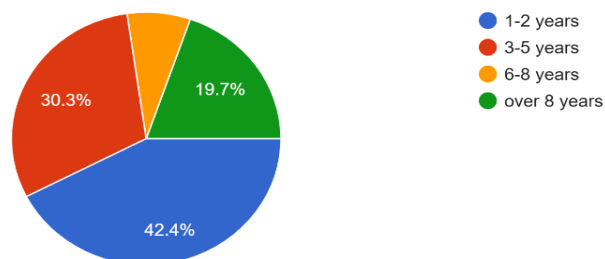


Figure C7: Duration of Professional Football Career Among Respondents. Source: Author (2025)

Q.2 HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU ENGAGED AN AGENT IN YOUR CAREER?
61 responses

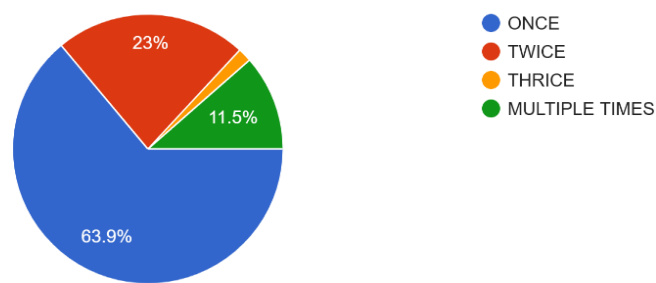


Figure C8: Frequency of Agent Engagement in Football Careers. Source: Author (2025)

Q. 3 HOW WILL YOU RATE THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE AGENT/S?
62 responses

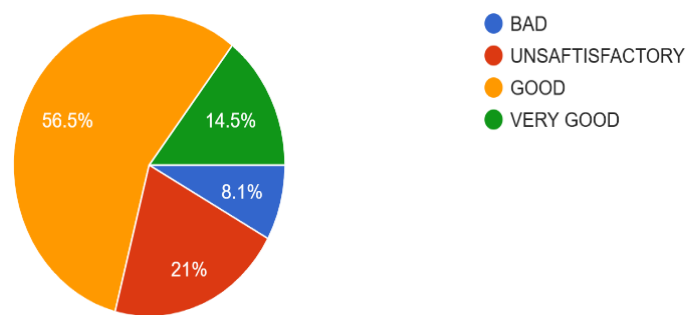


Figure C9: Ratings of Relationship with Football Agent(s). Source: Author (2025)

Q.4 WILL YOU ALWAYS RECOMMEND THAT A PLAYER ENGAGES AN AGENT?
65 responses

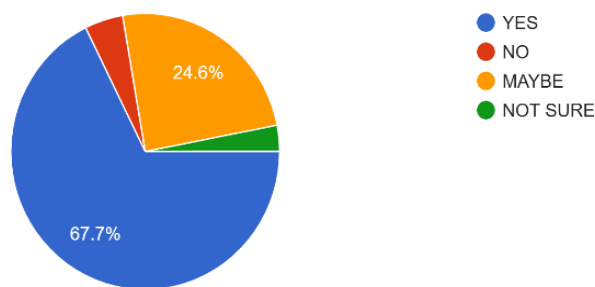


Figure C10: Recommendation of Agent Engagement to Players. Source Author (2025)

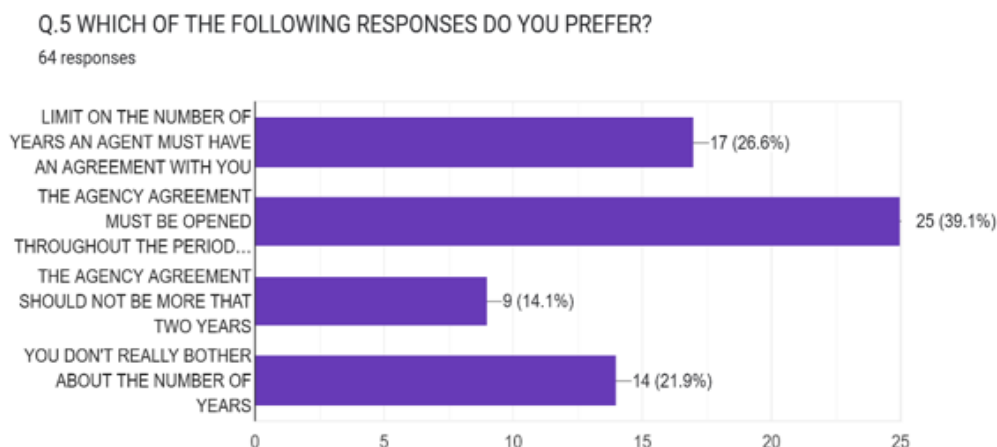


Figure C11: Preferences on Duration and Transparency of Agency Agreements. *Source: Author (2025)*

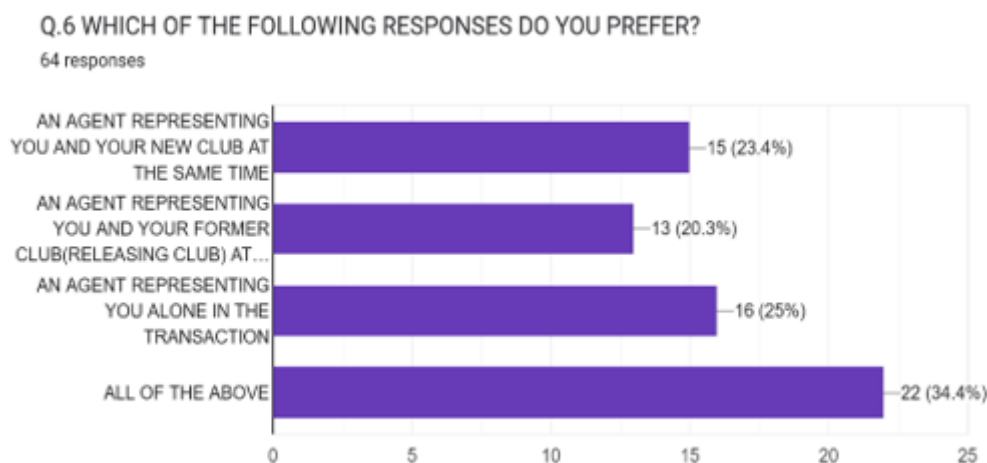


Figure C12: Preferences of Respondents Regarding Agent Representation in Football Transactions. *Source: Author (2025)*

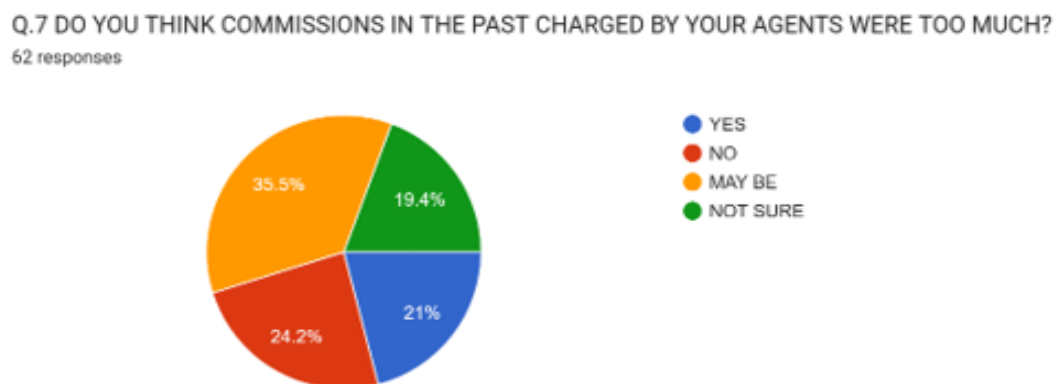


Figure C13: Perceptions of Agent Commission Charges Among Respondents. *Source: Author (2025)*

Q.8 THE NEW REGULATIONS SETS A CAP ON COMMISSIONS FOR AGENTS AT 3% IF THE PLAYER'S ANNUAL SALARY IS MORE THAN \$200,000 AND 5...OF PLAYERS AND REDUCE OVER EXPLOITATION?
63 responses

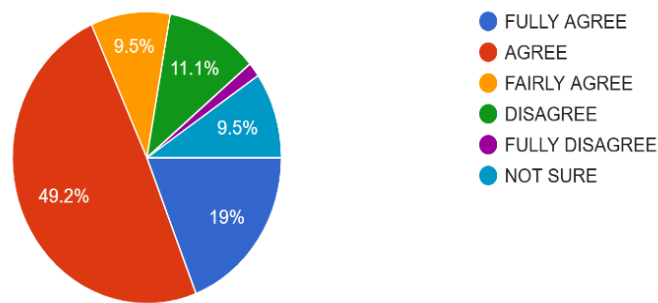


Figure C14: Opinions on Commission Caps and Exploitation in New Regulations.
Source: Author (2025)

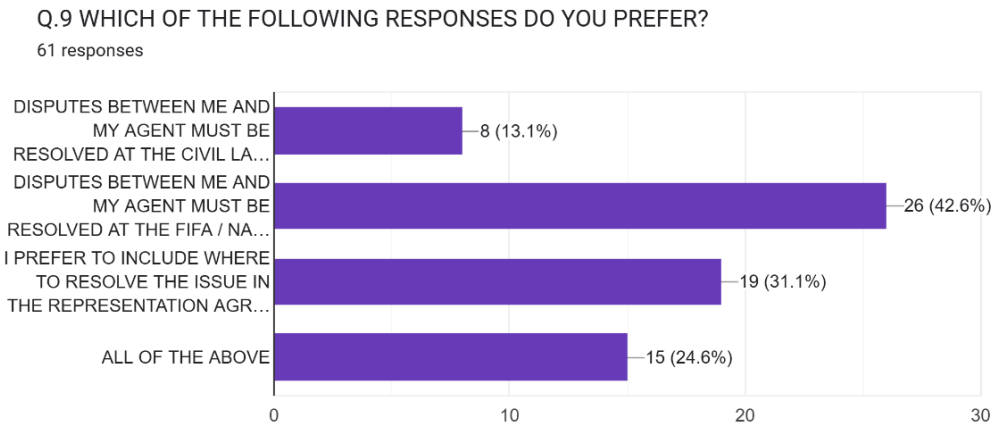


Figure C15: Preferred Dispute Resolution Methods Between Players and Agents
Source: Author (2025)

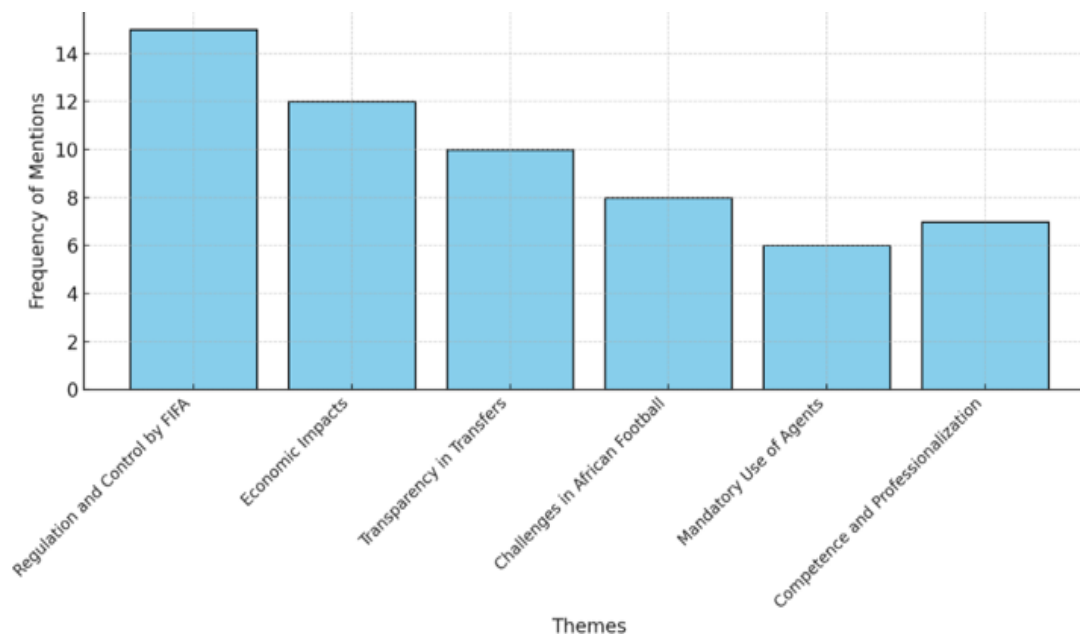


Figure C16: Theme Distribution by Frequency of Mentions. *Source: Author (2025)*



Figure C17: Thematic Network Map of Stakeholder Concerns. *Source: Author (2025)*

Code	Role	Affiliation/Region
Football Agent 1	FIFA Licensed Football Agent	Ghana
Football Agent 2	FIFA Licensed Football Agent	Ghana
Football Agent 3	FIFA Licensed Football Agent	Nigeria
Football Agent 4	FIFA Licensed Football Agent and Manager	Sweden (Africa-focused)
Club CEO 1	CEO, Premier League Club; Former Football Agent	Tanzania
Club CEO 2	Team Manager, National Team; CEO, Football Club	Ghana
Club CEO 3	TMS Manager for a Top-tier Club	Nigeria
Club CEO 4	CEO, Premier League Football Club	Ghana
TMS Manager A	TMS Manager	Ghana Football Association
TMS Manager B	TMS Manager	Nigeria Football Federation

Source: Author (2025)

Note: The above roles reflect the positions held by interviewees at the time of the study. Anonymization has been applied to ensure compliance with ethical standards and to protect the identity of participants.