

The Frame Analysis of a Global Sporting Event: A Systematic Review of the 2022 FIFA World Cup

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Abstract

This study examines the nature of scholarship in the area of coverage of the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar. The analysis is based on twenty-two articles retrieved from database of Google Scholar. A qualitative, quantitative and mixed method analysis of twenty-two open-access journal articles were retrieved to examine the issues discussed in the articles as well as the methods used in addressing the issues in the articles. The articles identified were published between 2021 and 2025. Content analysis data were thematically discussed to answer the research questions. The major themes identified in the study include human rights, Islamophobia, sportswashing and soft power. The review further identified twelve empirical studies out of the twenty-two articles retrieved. Researchers focused more on exploratory (qualitative) than explanatory (quantitative) research methods. This review paper is the first of its kind. Hence, it will provide a significant contribution to literature in the area of framing in the coverage of the 2022 FIFA World Cup since there seems to be no systematic review in the said area.

Keywords: framing, global, sporting event, Qatar, World Cup, FIFA

1. Introduction

A global sporting event like the FIFA World Cup is used as a tool for social change and promote global development, reducing poverty, increasing gender equality, improving health and well-being, and promoting peaceful coexistence among different countries. Moreover, the World Cup is a global institution and arguably, the most popular sporting event. Some people use it to mark time, connect with their heritage, find camaraderie with their family or neighbors, or simply create community at a time when community is so hard to come by (Rosenblatt, 2022). It is a unifier, and it is a dream for players, a pinnacle for fans, and to many, the ultimate source of entertainment and pride. People, understandably and fairly, want to watch the World Cup. They want to gather at homes, in bars, fan parks, and watch with friends and family, cheering on the teams from their country of their parents and ancestors or just a team that touches their imagination. They want to see best players in the world, the euphoria in and outside the stadia, unbridled emotion of national pride, as they have been seeing for decades (Rosenblatt, 2022).

Therefore, hosting of the FIFA World Cup has become avenue for economic growth, urban development, and enhancing a country's international reputation, enticing both developed and developing countries to host such event (Rehman & Jibril, 2023). It is one of several strategies used by cities and governments to bring about improvements in a places image and recognition (Kenyon & Bodet, 2018). According to Rehman and Jibril (2023), one of the principal objectives for host nations of mega sports event involve showcasing their traditional culture to the rest of the world. Consequently, these countries, or cities invest considerable efforts in self-promotion, with the media playing a crucial role as a promotional tool. The hosting of such event also offers a big opportunity to change global perceptions towards the host countries as they attract attention and publicity

due to international media coverage. Besides, it can also be seen as a foreign policy strategy to improve the country's power position globally through what is termed as "soft power" (Kiani & Nazari, 2025).

Some existing research shows that hosting mega sporting event can lead to positive results, including nation branding, economic growth, infrastructure development, image enhancement, and tourism attraction (Al-Kubaisi, 2023; Katyal, 2022; Kerry et al., 2024; Shin et al., 2016). However, some studies have also found no substantial improvements in the host nation's image following mega sporting events (Bonsu, 2025; Rehman & Jibril, 2023), because media outlets demonstrate negative picture surrounding the host nation during coverage of sports event resulting in the host nation losing its credibility (Ahmad & Al-Zoubi, 2025; Marco & Ozdemir, 2024). Previous studies have indicated that non-Western events host face significant challenges in enhancing their images in Western media (Ozormina & Mannin, 2020; Swart & Hussain, 2023). Research have also shown that framing is being influenced by culture, especially of non-Western hosts in Western media, ensuing in certain stereotypes being highlighted in Western media over other frames that are more positive to the host country (Shah & Islam, 2023; Sobral et al., 2022).

2. Framing Research

Presently, framing studies are dominant in Journalism and Political communication (Entmann & Usher, 2018; Asiamah et al., 2022). Most studies on framing are approached in two ways; by exploring the content of news (frame building) and examining the effect news has on the audience (frame setting) (Lechelere & De Vreese, 2019; Lukyanova, 2018; Thankachan & Thomas, 2021). Regarding frame building, a surfeit of empirical studies have been conducted exploring the framing of issues such as public health (Chiang et al., 2020; Ogbodo et al., 2020); politics, elections and politicians (Araujo & Prior, 2021; Lambert, 2018) environmental issues (Olsen, & Osmundsen, 2017; Weathers & Kendall, 2016); social movements (Snow et al., 2018; Zhigadlo, 2023) and conflict/war (Vladislavjevic & Voltmer, 2017; Atanesyan, 2020). Other studies (Anderson, 2022; Anipah, 2017; Asiamah et al., 2022) have also addressed generic issues.

Several reviews have also been conducted on framing studies. For example, Grak and Rai (2023) conducted a systematic review on the coverage of protests using framing theory. They systematically reviewed 50 research papers. They identified that the nature and extent of protest movements are greatly influenced by the mass media, the study concluded that a protest's effectiveness and involvement in the broader political process are also influenced by how the media perceives and presents it. Vladislavjevic (2015) critically reviewed the literature on media and conflict by exploring how contemporary media framed various forms of political conflict. The author's findings revealed a fractured field where most of the literature examined how western media framed foreign conflicts whilst little focus was placed on the media's framing of domestic conflicts within non-Western contexts. Dan and Raupp (2018) systematically reviewed frames used in reporting health risks in 37 journal articles pruned from the Communication & Mass Media Complete database on EBSCOhost. Lopez-Rabadan (2021) also conducted a systematic review of seventy-eight scientific articles from Google Scholar from 2011 to 2021 to examine the influence of social media on evolution of framing studies.

Some reviews have also been conducted in the area of global sporting events. For example, Choudhary (2018) through case studies, and multiplier analysis, input-output modeling and computable general equilibrium (CGE) methodologies conducted a systematic review on the economic impact of mega sports events. The study concluded that by addressing challenges and leveraging opportunities, stakeholders can enhance the sustainability and legacy of mega sports events; Banjo (2011) reviewed global perceptions of mega sports events like the Olympics and FIFA World Cup, emphasizing their perceived socio-economic benefits across cultures. The article finds predominantly positive attitudes towards these events, underscoring their role in cultural revival, infrastructural development, and tourism promotion; Bocarro et al. (2017) systematically reviewed literature on mega sporting events and their legacies, offering insights into the varied impacts and outcomes across different contexts; Haojue and Yu (2025) adopted the scoping review method to comprehensively sort out the impacts of the 2018 FIFA World Cup and the 2022 FIFA World Cup on the host countries, with a particular reference to the economy, culture, infrastructure, and tourism, and Salido-Fernández and Muñoz-Muñoz (2021) conducted a systematic review of the literature on the coverage of women at the Olympic Games. The study concluded that there is lack of fairness in the amount of coverage, coupled with gender differentiation in the representation of women's sport.

Though there have been reviews on literature with respect to global sporting events, there appears to be non-application of framing concept/theory in the studies. Moreover, no systematic review has been conducted on the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar. This study will therefore fill the gap by employing framing analysis on systematic review during the coverage of the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar to help identify gaps and make suggestions for future research. Based on the review of available literature, this study is guided by the following research questions:

Q1. What are the issues discussed in the selected articles?

Q2. What were the methodological approach employed in the selected articles?

2.1 Framing Concept

At the center of news construction lies the concept of framing, where journalists not only present factual information but also provide frames that help the public understand complicated issues. These frames influence how audience learn, interpret, and evaluate information about issues and events (De Vreese, 2005). Framing theory is rooted in Psychology and Sociology. Under sociology, the theory began with Gregory Bate in 1955 and was further built on by Erving Goffman in his book titled *Frame Analysis* (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). Goffman (1974) posits that people struggle to make meaning and interpret their personal experiences and environment. They, therefore, refer to already existing schemas (primary frameworks) in their heads which aid in grouping and making meaningful interpretations of new events and encounters.

To frame, therefore, means to select and make salient, aspects of perceived reality within a specific communication context by defining the problem, interpreting the cause, making moral evaluation and suggesting recommendations for the identified problem (Entmann, 1993). Framing theory assumes that how media cover an issue and the meaning they give to such issues influences the audience's perception of issue (Lukyanova, 2018). Therefore, journalists and media organizations frame to simplify complex issues and event (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007).

2.2 The Framing Process

After reviewing framing studies conducted within 75 years, Scheufele (1999) outlined that framing is a process involving four stages; frame setting, individual-level of frame effect and an association between individual frames and media frames. Thus, (1) "frame building," which focuses on the dynamics of how speakers, such as media outlets, choose specific frames in communication; (2) "frame setting," which concerns the effect of frames in communication on frames in thought and the precise psychological processes at work; (3) "individual-level effects of frames", which refers to the impact of frames in thought on subsequent behaviors or attitudes; and (4) "journalists as audiences," which looks at how citizens' actions affect the initial frame-building process. (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 101).

According to De Vreese (2005), frame building occurs through the constant interaction between journalists and elites or social movements, which manifests in the frames that are evident in news content. Frame building hinge on internal factors such as ownership, editorial policies, news values and external factors such as advertisement. Frame setting, on the other hand, projects the extent to which audiences reflect the frames made available to them through communicative texts such as news. Thus, the attitudinal and behavioral effects of the journalistic news frame the audience is presented to through the media (De Vreese, 2005).

2.3 Identifying Frames in the News (Methodological Approach)

In the context of news content, frames are used to describe, explain, and interpret events, helping audiences form a view of the world that extends beyond their personal experiences (Kee et al., 2010). When conducting any framing research, scholars frequently apply operational definitions that fit the purpose of their specific studies. For this reason, there appears to be little agreement on how best to identify frames in communicative texts (De Vreese, 2005). In gathering data from media outlets (especially news) to determine the frames used in projecting specific issues and events, researchers often employ content analysis of media texts (particularly news).

The content analysis of such texts can be approached either inductively or deductively. The inductive approach to content analysis involves the researcher going into the data with an open mind, intending to identify frames that will emerge from the analysis. Thus, the researcher begins the content analysis with "loosely defined preconceptions of the frame" (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, p. 94). This approach is qualitatively inclined and cannot be easily replicated.

On the other hand, the deductive approach involves the pre-definition of specific frames to establish their existence in the news stories to be analyzed (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). Going into the analysis with pre-determined frames prevents the researcher from forgetting some important frames should they depend solely on the inductive approach. The deductive approach is quantitative approach to frame analysis favored by most scholars (De Vreese, 2005). When frames are identified deductively, De Vreese (2005) recommends that the question "what news story constitutes a frame"? should always be posed.

Framing devices or techniques in communicative texts include metaphors, catchphrases, visual images, slogans, stories, traditions, slogans, jargon, artefacts, contrasts and spin (Bajarcharya, 2018). Similarly, some crucial areas for identifying news media frames proposed by Tankard (2010) include headlines, images, sub-headlines, photo captions, stories' leads, statistics and charts, selected sources, logos and quotes concluding statements and paragraphs. Frame selection is, therefore, not limited to the written texts alone messages.

3. Method and Procedure

This study employs a systematic review to address the research questions. A systematic review involves researchers employing publishing papers as data to answer specific research questions. It, thus helps to identify critical studies conducted in a specific field, appraises the quality of those studies and provides a summary based on predefined scientific measures (Mengist et al., 2020).

To better synthesize the literature on frame analysis of the coverage of a global sporting event specifically on Qatar 2022 FIFA World Cup, I adopted a systematic literature review that follows a clear-cut scientific procedure. This review type can aid in gaining more credible information about a subject. Another distinctive feature influencing a systematic review is that it employs detailed search strategies and procedures, which are derived beforehand to decide on the studies that will be selected for research (Uman, 2011). The key phases of systematic review are — mapping the identified field to ascertain what is known and unknown; conducting a comprehensive search on the topic; doing a quality assessment to identify the articles that will be included; extracting the data; synthesizing the data and coming up with a write up based on synthesis made (Mengist et al., 2020). In a similar vein, I mapped the area of framing on the coverage of the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar through literature review and identified that there was no review by researchers in that regard. I therefore did an in-depth search of studies on coverage of the 2022 FIFA World in Qatar. Through a systematic search, the articles that served as data was retrieved and analysis was done based on the research objectives to produce a write up.

3.1 Study Selection

The study selection followed a two-stage process of electronic search and manual screening. In order to identify the corpus of studies to be added to the systematic review, an electronic search was conducted on Google Scholar. The database of Google Scholar was searched using the keywords “coverage of the 2022 FIFA World Cup.” The initial search, which was done on 7th November, 2025 identified 421 results, consisting of dissertations from academic institutions, reports from organizations, book chapters, articles from conference proceedings and non-academic sites. However, the study was limited to open-access peer-reviewed articles. According to Mengist et al. (2020), academic peer-reviewed articles are the best data sources for systematic literature review.

Selection of papers identified by the database search was conducted in three phases using the exclusion and inclusion criteria. In order to refine results, inclusion and exclusion criteria was defined, with the purpose of eliminating all publications which was seen as clearly irrelevant when it comes to answering the research questions.

3.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

I used inclusion and exclusion criteria to select the articles. A paper was considered as an inclusion when it met the following: paper written in English language, empirical papers, review papers, conceptual/theoretical papers and open-access peer-reviewed papers that relates to the topic. The criteria for excluding an article were as follows: paper not written in English language, non-empirical, non-conceptual/theoretical papers, and non-review papers that do not relate to the topic. The number of articles from the database was depicted in a table. To select best-fitted articles, I removed duplicates and then apply the exclusion and inclusion criteria to minimize the number of articles for the study, I also did a thorough reading of the title and abstract to further minimize the articles. Afterwards, a deep investigation on the results part of each of the articles that were found to be very relevant to this research was chosen and I proceeded to conduct content analysis of the articles that fit into the inclusion criteria of the study by reading the articles severally to familiarize myself with their content.

Table 1. Inclusion and exclusion criteria on the coverage of the 2022 FIFA World Cup (2021-2025)

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Language	Paper in the English language	Any other language apart from English
Population	Papers conducted on 2022 FIFA World Cup	Comparative studies that do not include data on 2022 FIFA World Cup
The paper type	Empirical, conceptual/theoretical and review papers	Any paper apart from empirical, conceptual/theoretical and review papers
Access	Open-access peer-reviewed papers	Any paper that did not give access to full papers
Context	Papers that pertain to the coverage of the 2022 FIFA World Cup	Papers that do not pertain to the coverage of the 2022 FIFA World Cup

4. Findings and Discussions

This section discusses the study's findings which aim to map research on coverage of the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar. The paper answers the research questions: What are the issues discussed in the selected articles? What methodological approach was employed in the selected articles? To begin, I provide Table 2, which gives an overview of the twenty-two articles reviewed for the study.

Table 2. Published journal articles on the coverage of the 2022 FIFA World Cup (2021-2025)

Name of Author/Year	Journal Name	Methodology	Focus of Study (issues discussed)
Gerschewki, J. et al. (2024)	Plos One	Quantitative analysis	Sportswashing
Shubham, J. (2024)	German Law Journal	Theoretical paper	Human rights violations
Dun, S. et al. (2022)	International Journal of Sport Communication	Content analysis	Moral halo
Nikhil, K. (2023)	International Journal of Novel Research and Development	Conceptual paper	Human rights violation
Hady, H. (2023)	Journal of Imam Al-Kadhum College	Conceptual paper	Qatari cultural heritage
Putra, A. (2023)	Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization	Qualitative method	Islamophobia
Alfarizi, M, H., Kirthie, R. M., & Lago, C. M. (2023)	Jurnal Penegakan Hukum dan Keadilan	Qualitative content analysis	Human rights violation
Thani, A. M. (2021)	International Journal of History of Sport	Content analysis Interview with respondents	Soft power
Lejeune, J. H., & Workneh, W. T. (2024)	Communication and Sports Journal	Qualitative content analysis	Human rights violation
Gaafar. M., et al. (2024)	Journal of Physical Education	Quantitative content analysis 411 questionnaires	Nation branding
Al-Kubaisi, H. A. (2023)	Journal of Arabian Studies	Conceptual paper	Sports diplomacy
Bergkvist. L., & Skeiseid, H. V. (2024)	International Journal of Advertising	Theoretical paper	Sportswashing
Bonsu. N. I. (2025)	Social Science Quarterly	Content analysis	Human rights violation
Katyal, A. (2021)	Athens Journal of Sports	Conceptual paper	Sports diplomacy
Kerry, L. et al., (2024)	Frontiers in Communication	Quantitative content analysis	Nation branding
Dun, S., & Rachdi, H. (2023)	Journal of Islamic Marketing	Theoretical paper	Moral halo
Marco, B., & Ozdemir, NM. (2024)	Sociology of International Journal	Qualitative content analysis	Sportswashing

Mustafa, O. I. (2023)	International Journal of Membrane Science and Technology	Theoretical paper	Islamophobia
Naess, H, E. (2023)	Frontiers in Sports and Active Living	Conceptual Paper	Soft power
Waheed, A., & Jan, A, M. (2024)	Pakistan Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences	Mixed Method	Soft power
Pratama, S, R, F., & Jannah, S. (2024)	Asian Journal of Law and Humanity	Qualitative content analysis	Human rights violation
Shash, H., & Islam, S. (2023)	Global digital & print media review	Theoretical paper	Islamophobia

4.1 Research Rate

Six (27.3%) out of the twenty-two articles were on human rights, three (13.6%) out of the twenty-two articles were on sportswashing, and the same percentage (13.6%) was recorded for soft power, and Islamophobia. Two (9.1%) out of the twenty-two articles were on issue of moral halo, while the same percentage (9.1%) was recorded for nation branding and sports diplomacy. And one (4.6%) on Qatari cultural heritage which appeared once.

The analysis also revealed that out of the twenty-two papers retrieved, twelve (54.5%) were empirical studies, whereas the remaining ten (45.5%) were conceptual and theoretical papers respectively.

4.2 Issues Discussed

Analysis of the retrieved articles indicates that studies on the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar were centered on human rights, sportswashing, soft power, Islamophobia and other issues such as moral halo, nation branding, sports diplomacy and Qatari cultural heritage. In the analysis of issues, the theme of human rights ranked first with six (27.3%) out of the twenty-two articles. Three (13.6%) on soft power, three (13.6%) on sportswashing, three (13.6%) on Islamophobia, two (9.1%) on moral halo, two (9.1%) on nation branding, two (9.1%) on sports diplomacy and one (4.6%) on Qatari cultural heritage that appeared once.

4.2.1 Human Rights Violation

Human rights violation is the disallowance of the freedom of thought and movement to which all humans legally have a right (Kusi, 2026). Papers that examined issues of migrant workers abuses and LGBTQ+ were categorized under human rights. According to Alfarizi et al. (2023), the 2022 FIFA World Cup held in Qatar is considered to have violated the human rights of many migrant workers, most of whom come from South Asia. They stated that as many as 6,500 workers died because of the lack of security and supplies for workers. They pointed out the Kafala Sponsorship System as the main source of the problem. There were widespread of labor abuses of migrant workers who helped to put up infrastructures such as the eight stadia, multiple hotels, expansion of airports, and a new metro towards the hosting of the tournament. The abuses ranged from wage theft, workers being kept in extremely small living spaces, while working without breaks and being whipped or beaten if they do not work at the required pace (Nikhil, 2023). Most of the migrant workers were governed by the kafala (sponsorship) system, which gave employers excessive control over their lives.

A study by Bonsu (2025), Pratama & Jannah (2024) and Shubham (2024) also revealed that challenges such as the Kafala Scheme, increase in unregulated recruitment agents, religion and Qatar's tradition inhibit efforts that had been put in place by different actors towards enhancing human rights before the tournament. FIFA granted Qatar the hosting right in 2010, with no human rights due diligence and no set conditions about protections for migrant workers who would be needed to construct the massive infrastructure. FIFA also failed to examine the human rights concerns for journalists, or systematic discrimination that women, LGBTQ+ people face in Qatar (Lejeune, 2023).

4.2.2 Sportswashing

Sportswashing is define as the deliberate attempt by an entity to exploit a sports property to counteract negative information (Bergkvist & Skeiseid, 2024). One interpretation of calling Qatar's bidding and hosting of the 2022 World Cup is 'sportswashing' implying that the country's goal in hosting the tournament was to deflect attention away from human rights abuses within its territory. Qatar has been accused of using the World Cup to distract from its poor record on restrictions on freedom of speech and assembly, its treatment of women and LGBT people, and its lack of fair trial rights and allegations of bribery for winning the right to host the tournament

(Marco & Ozdemir, 2024).

To some, the entire event exemplified the concept of ‘sportswashing’ — using sport as a tool, to clean up (and distract from) a murky political or humanitarian reputation. For example, the Qatari government spent at least \$220 billion on infrastructure projects, from new rapid transit systems and luxury accommodations to revamp highways and airports. Some news reports devoted considerable coverage to the country’s economic and technological feats as compare to the negative issues surrounding the tournament (Gerschewki et al., 2024).

4.2.3 Soft Power

“When one country gets the other countries to want what it wants might be called co-optive or soft power in contrast with the hard or command power ordering others to do what it wants.” (Nye, 2004, p. 9-10). Qatar used the tournament to improve its image by launching persuasive campaigns through political, moral, and cultural attractions to counter negatives surrounding the country and enhance its relations with other countries, more specifically, the importance of Qatar as a geopolitical actor has increased with the World Cup (Thani, 2021). Most importantly, Qatar had just emerged from a three-and-half-year diplomatic and transport blockade led by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and wanted to end its isolation and improve its relation with its neighbors. The event provided the political space to do just that (Naess, 2023; Thani, 2021). For example, UAE leader Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan made a surprise visit to Qatar on December 5, 2022, while Saudi crown prince Mohammed bin Salman attended the opening ceremony. Later, Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the crown prince of Dubai, officially congratulated Qatar for organizing the event. These concrete displays of friendship paved the way for even greater economic and diplomatic cooperation between Qatar and its neighbors and partners.

A research by Waheed and Jan (2024) indicated that more than 90 percent respondents declared the 2022 FIFA World Cup as the best, and they recommended Qatar for another hosting right, and as the future destination. They concluded that Qatar successfully used the World Cup to advance its political goals, markedly advancing its soft power and epitomizing how the small state has become an influential player in global affairs.

4.2.4 Islamophobia

Islamophobia refers to fear or hatred of Islam or Muslim. Articles under this theme tackled issues on anti-Muslimism, intolerance against Muslims, and anti-Muslim prejudice. On this theme, some authors hit back at the scrutiny surrounding the tournament, accusing some critics of racism and Islamophobia. Others also observed double standards in the condemnation of Qatar and see it as a deliberate campaign against the State of Qatar and the Arab world by the Western media due to ignorance, unprofessionalism and bias.

Mustafa (2023) indicated that Islam is the official religion in Qatar, and the regime and government are linked to Islamic Sharia. Hence, the widely condemnation by the western media on Islamic values are unacceptable, because uphold of bans on LGBT, sale of alcohol to the public, and offensive dressings at the World Cup was just an effort to protect religious values and maintain the social integrity of society.

From the beginning to its stunning end, the World Cup in Qatar has been politicized by western coverage (Putra, 2023). More salient than the storylines of the footballers taking to the pitch and more striking than the magnitude of the moment to the Middle East, this coverage has shaped the identity of this World Cup in western discourses; and until its final moment, dressed it with bigoted indictments and double standards. He added that the noble human values in Al-Quran-Hadith which have been misunderstood so far have led to the marginalization of Muslims.

A study by Shah and Islam (2023) underscored the biased portrayal of Islam, exemplified by the term “Islamophobia”, perpetuated by Western media. This bias extends to the coverage of the 2022 FIFA World Cup, where criticisms of Qatar’s cultural and religious values were viewed through an imperialist lens. The study questions the universality of Western values, asserting that the West should acknowledge and respect the cultural diversity of non-western nations. The study stresses the need for a more nuanced and culturally sensitive approach in Western media coverage. It calls for a recognition of diverse perspectives and challenges the imposition of Western values on non-Western nations.

4.2.5 Moral Halo

Moral Halo is a bias where an initial impression of a person or entity’s morality causes observers to assume they possess other, unrelated positive traits. This frame refers to uncritical admiration and the excusing of unethical behavior, it borders on issues of morality (Kusi, 2026). The findings of Dun et al. (2022) study on ‘perceptions of FIFA men’s World Cup 2022 host nation in Twittersphere’ revealed that the public perception of the host nation in certain countries was not defined by the efforts of nation branding, or enhancing soft power. Instead, many online discussions have focused upon the violation of human rights among migrant workers and other negative topics such as corruptions and bribes during the bidding process.

Another issue on moral halo was the controversy that arose when Qatar officially banned alcoholic beverages from sale within the eight stadia. The ban was applied to regular fans, but alcohol was still available to FIFA officials and wealthy guests. On this issue, Dun and Rachdi (2023) examined the ethical dilemmas that Qatar faced because of FIFA's insistence on alcohol sales at the World Cup stadia. They concluded that a framework should be developed that would enable FIFA and host countries to negotiate mutually agreeable conditions and avoid placing future host nations in ethically compromising situations, which is especially timely as FIFA expands the hosting rights into Islamic countries.

4.2.6 Nation Branding

Nation branding is the strategic process of managing and shaping a country's international reputation (Kerr, 2013). Issues under the theme nation branding include cultural diplomacy and tourism. A study by Gaafar et al. (2024) showed that hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar has proven to have multiple positive social impacts on the state of Qatar and Qatari society, such as tourism attraction and cultural diplomacy which was strategic for greater global influence. Kerry et al. (2024) indicated that Qatari government resorted corporate communication to build trust relationships with their stakeholders before and during the tournament and, in this way, reinforce national branding.

4.2.7 Sports Diplomacy

According to Murray (2012) as cited in Al-Kubaisi (2023), 'sports diplomacy is the strategic utilization of sports individuals and events to effectively cultivate a positive perception among international audiences and organizations, with the aim of shaping their perspectives in a manner that aligns with a government's foreign policy'. Hosting the tournament was extremely beneficial for Qatar, it provided a substantial visibility to the host country and enhance its global influence. The tournament exposed the host nation to the millions of avid football fans who regularly tune in considering the tremendous success of Qatar's hosting of the World Cup, it was extremely beneficial for the country and the increased exposure had a significant positive impact on the state's image abroad, its tourism industry, and economy (Al-Kubaisi, 2023).

Katyal (2022) also indicated that securing the right to host the tournament increased Qatar's diplomatic visibility. Though one can argue Qatar has already achieved significant diplomatic visibility and leverage through club football alone thanks to Paris Saint Germain, pulling off the 2022 World Cup — especially considering the difficult circumstances that should have made hosting a near impossibility in the first place — becomes a resolute statement that Qatar is here to stay in most major interstate situations, whether its neighbors or other various adversaries like it or not. Sports has played a major role in reshaping Qatar's relationship with the world around it, and their success in becoming a global power player on a variety of fronts speaks to how insidious forces of capital can be, especially considering how easily they have contravened decades of diplomatic precedent simply at the whim of a state and the agenda of its investments.

4.2.8 Qatari Cultural Heritage

Cultural heritage is the legacy of tangible and intangible artefacts of a group or society. On the issue of the Qatari Cultural Heritage, Hady (2023) stated that the hosting of the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar marked the first time the tournament took place in the Middle East or any Arab country. Over the course of the tournament, nearly one million spectators traveled to the region, providing many with their first exposure to Arab culture. The 2022 FIFA World Cup is remembered not just as another milestone in the history of soccer but as a significant event with profound cultural and social implications for the people of Qatar, contributing to the establishment of a distinct identity within the broader Muslim and Arab states.

4.3 Methodology

Another study finding reveals that research works on the 2022 FIFA World Cup concentrated more on empirical studies than conceptual/theoretical papers, even though the difference is not huge. Of the twenty-two articles reviewed, twelve, representing 54.5%, were empirical studies, whereas the remaining ten (45.5%) were conceptual/theoretical papers. There were no review papers identified in the studies. Out of the twelve empirical studies, eight (66.7%) were approached qualitatively using content analysis with interview at a certain instance, whereas three (25%) articles approached the research using quantitative analysis, and one (8.3%) approached the research using mixed method. There is evidence of collaborative studies than single individual studies. Thus, twelve out of the twenty-two papers were co-authored whereas nine were single-authored.

5. Conclusion

The literature revealed that no systematic review has been conducted on the coverage of the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar. This study, therefore, aimed to synthesize and map works done in the area of coverage of the tournament. The search revealed twenty-two open access articles from database of Google Scholar. Twelve of the papers were empirical studies, and ten were conceptual/theoretical papers. Research works on the coverage

of the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar addressed more issues on human rights, sportswashing, soft power and Islamophobia. The observation made in this review point to more studies to be conducted on topical issues that relate to the hosting of the tournament such as cost and revenue, bribery and corruption, environmental issues, and restrictions of journalists which are also relevant to researchers. More studies are also needed in the literature review dimensions. Researchers focused more on qualitative than quantitative research methods. Hence, further studies on the application of quantitative and mixed methods are required. It is important to reiterate that this study was limited to only published open access peer-reviewed journal articles found online (specifically Google Scholar). There is the likelihood of identifying a work relating to the topic in print journals and other databases which I could not reach due to time limit.

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