

REVIEW PAPER

Youth Sports, Civilizational Advancement, and Human Communication: Lessons from the Qatar 2022 FIFA World Cup

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Abstract

This study examines the pivotal role of young athletes and youth stakeholders during the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar in advancing civilizational development and fostering human communication. The tournament represented an unprecedented platform through which Arab and Islamic identity was projected to a global audience in a balanced and contemporary manner, supported by the active engagement of young volunteers, administrators, and community initiative leaders. The study adopts the Scoping Review methodology following PRISMA- ScR standards, drawing on literature published between 2022 and 2025 across international and Arab academic databases. A total of 53 studies were identified and analyzed, covering themes of youth empowerment, national identity, sports diplomacy, volunteering, and sustainable development. Results indicate that the Qatar 2022 World Cup constituted a turning point in the global perception of Arab youth, enabling genuine leadership roles in organization, intercultural communication, and cultural influence. The tournament served as a space for embodying Islamic and humanitarian values of hospitality and coexistence, strengthening national identity and social capital. Youth volunteering emerged as a foundational pillar of civic participation, while media and cultural programs contributed to dismantling stereotypes and reshaping international discourse about Arabs and Muslims. Qatar's national strategies, aligned with Qatar Vision 2030, ensured the sustainability of the tournament's impact through extended sports and developmental initiatives. The study concludes that major sporting events can function as effective instruments of civilizational advancement when guided by a youth-empowering perspective that integrates sports with social, cultural, and developmental values. Recommendations include sustained investment in youth capabilities through sports education, cultural diplomacy, and sustainable leadership programs.

Keywords: *sports youth; civilizational advancement; human communication; Qatar World Cup 2022; youth empowerment; cultural diplomacy*

Introduction

In recent decades, the intersection of sports, youth policy, and urban development has emerged as one of the most dynamic frontiers of international discourse. The unprecedented global interest in harnessing major sporting events as vehicles for social transformation has shifted the paradigm of how nations concep-

tualize and invest in their youth capital. No longer confined to athletic achievement, international tournaments - particularly the FIFA World Cup - have evolved into comprehensive civilizational platforms that carry profound implications for national identity, intercultural communication, and the repositioning of nations within the global order. This evolution is not incidental; it reflects

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a deeper structural transformation in the values and priorities of the international community, one in which youth are no longer passive beneficiaries of development policies but are recognized as active architects of cultural change and human progress (Ulrichsen, 2023; FIFA, 2022; UNESCO, 2021).

Scholars and international institutions have increasingly acknowledged that major sporting events generate what may be termed a 'soft infrastructure' of human development - a web of skills, values, networks, and narratives that outlast the tournament itself. In this context, sports tournaments function as major platforms for embodying social transformations and fostering human bridges between nations, confirming that sport has become a fundamental catalyst for promoting dialogue, openness, and cultural tolerance at both the local and global levels (Ulrichsen, 2023; FIFA, 2022; UNESCO, 2021). The mechanisms through which this transformation occurs - volunteering, cultural programming, media engagement, digital activism, and youth leadership structures - constitute a rich field of inquiry that remains insufficiently theorized in the academic literature.

In light of these transformations, the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar emerged as an exceptional and historically unprecedented model of the active role of youth in shaping the features of a modern civilizational renaissance. For the first time in the history of the World Cup, an Arab nation assumed the role of global host, transforming the event from a mere sporting competition into a carefully orchestrated encounter between civilizations. Qatar harnessed all its national capacities - as outlined in its Qatar National Vision 2030 and in alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals programs - to invest in the tournament as a civilizational sports event and a pivotal turning point in the image of Arab youth before the world. The Vision 2030 framework, grounded in four interlocking pillars of human, social, economic, and environmental development, provided a coherent strategic scaffolding within which the World Cup was positioned not as an end in itself, but as a catalyst for long-term human capital formation (Kerry et al., 2024; Yaylali, 2025; Brannagan et al., 2023; Al Gheithi et al., 2024).

The manifestations of this strategy were visible across multiple dimensions of the event. Qatari and Arab youth participated extensively in leadership roles, organizational management, volunteering, and creative cultural expression, demonstrating a level of civic engagement and international readiness that challenged longstanding stereotypes about the Arab world's capacity for global event management. This active participation enhanced their presence in cultural dialogues, opened unprecedented avenues for human communication through social and digital initiatives, and contributed substantively to building a national identity and shared civilizational values at both local and international levels. The symbolic power of these youth-led contributions was amplified through digital platforms and global media coverage, which collectively reframed the narrative of Arab youth from one of marginalization to one of leadership and cultural pride (Kerry et al., 2024; Yaylali, 2025; Brannagan et al., 2023; Al Gheithi et al., 2024).

Despite the numerous partial studies that have examined the effects of the World Cup on various dimensions of Qatari and Arab society, there remains a significant gap in the literature: the absence of a comprehensive methodological framework that addresses the actual and structural contribution of young athletes to achieving civilizational advancement and activating human communication programs. This gap is particularly pronounced within the Arab context, which faces renewed and intensifying challenges in the domains of identity construction, international media representation, and the reclamation of cultural agency in global discourse. Most existing research has tended to concentrate

on organizational efficiency, economic returns, infrastructure investment, and geopolitical soft power, without delving into the social and cultural depth of the event or systematically examining the qualitative impacts of youth leadership on community cohesion, intercultural dialogue, and identity formation (Ishac et al., 2024; Bouatelli, 2025; Bettine & Ozdemir, 2024).

This methodological lacuna is not merely an academic concern; it has practical implications for policymakers, development organizations, and future host nations seeking to leverage sporting mega-events as instruments of human development. Traditional analytical frameworks have proven insufficient for capturing the multidimensional nature of youth contributions, which span the domains of sports management, community development, cultural diplomacy, digital communication, and civic leadership. The importance of addressing this gap is further amplified by the growing emphasis within international organizations and United Nations programs on youth empowerment as a core dimension of global development strategy, and by the explicit mandate - enshrined in multiple international frameworks - to maximize the civilizational outcomes of major sporting events (FIFA, 2023; United Nations, 2015; UNESCO, 2021). Closing this gap requires an integrative research approach that bridges the fields of sports science, cultural studies, youth policy, and international development, and that treats the 2022 World Cup as both a case study and a generative model for understanding the transformative potential of sport-based youth engagement.

In light of accelerating global demographic changes - in which youth now constitute the majority of the population in many developing nations - and the intensifying international competition for soft power, cultural influence, and developmental leadership, the Qatari experience emerges as a global source of inspiration and a model worthy of rigorous scholarly examination. Qatar succeeded in developing a socio-cultural sports model that integrates youth not merely as participants in a sporting spectacle, but as agents and leaders of civilizational change - influencers who operate simultaneously in the sports arena, in community development, in media production, and in local and international development programs (Sammour, 2023; Ekren, 2024; Parvez, 2024). This model challenges the conventional separation between sports and development, and demonstrates that when youth are granted genuine institutional agency within the framework of a major event, the outcomes extend far beyond the stadium.

The Qatari experience also carries significant implications for the ongoing global dialogue about the relationship between cultural authenticity and international integration. By asserting its Arab-Islamic identity while simultaneously embracing the universalism of the World Cup, Qatar offered a nuanced and provocative response to the often-binary framing of cultural difference in international discourse. The capacity of Qatari and Arab youth to navigate this complexity - to be simultaneously local and global, rooted and connected - offers a model of cultural leadership that transcends the specific context of the 2022 tournament and speaks to broader questions about the role of youth in shaping the cultural futures of their societies (Sammour, 2023; Ekren, 2024; Parvez, 2024).

In addressing these issues, this extensive systematic review aims to produce a comprehensive and evidence-based mapping of the roles played by young athletes and youth stakeholders during the Qatar 2022 World Cup in achieving urban and civilizational development goals and in enhancing human communication values, within the framework of national and international programs. The review examines and critically synthesizes recent empirical studies, international policy documents, institutional reports, and local grassroots initiatives that collectively shaped this role. It further seeks to identify the key indicators of change

in identity formation, youth leadership, cultural dialogue, and the transmission of human values that stemmed from this singular event, with the aim of constructing a replicable analytical framework applicable to future sporting mega-events.

The study is guided by the following primary research question (PRQ):

- How did youth in sports contribute to civilizational advancement and the enhancement of human communication during the Qatar 2022 World Cup, and how did the event's outcomes reflect on the image of Arab youth on the international stage?

This primary question is operationalized through three secondary research questions (SRQs):

- SRQ1: What programs and institutional strategies - at the national and international levels - shaped the role of Arab youth during the Qatar 2022 World Cup?
- SRQ2: What are the measurable indicators of change in youth identity, leadership capacity, and cultural dialogue that emerged from the event?
- SRQ3: How can the Qatari model be theorized as a transferable framework for youth-led civilizational development in the context of future sporting mega-events?

Methods

PRISMA-ScR Framework

PRISMA-ScR (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews) provided a rigorous and transparent methodology for compiling and analyzing the literature related to the role of youth and sports in urban development. PRISMA-ScR emphasizes documenting the research steps from formulating the review question, identifying databases, and inclusion and exclusion criteria, through the multi-stage screening phase, and then systematically analyzing the data and extracting results (Tricco et al., 2018).

Databases and Research Platforms

Databases and Research Platforms The scoping review relied primarily on international and local electronic databases known for their comprehensive coverage of multidisciplinary studies in sports science, sociology, and development. The systematic search was conducted by the first author (M. Kenioua) across the following databases: Scopus, Web of Science (WoS), SPORTDiscus (EBSCO), Google Scholar, and ScienceDirect for international sources. National, Arab, and regional platforms such as 'Dar Almandumah' for Arab databases, 'Qatar Digital Library,' and 'Rifad' were consulted as essential references for monitoring academic research output in the Arab world. In accordance with methodological literature (Tricco et al., 2018; Peters et al., 2020), the search diversified between major multidisciplinary databases, subject-specific databases, and gray literature sources to ensure comprehensiveness, avoid publication bias, and enhance the reliability and scientific value of the scoping review.

Search Strategy and Criteria

To ensure comprehensiveness and more accurate retrieval of the relevant literature, this strategy included the use of a mix of primary and semantic keywords in both Arabic and English, along with the adoption of Boolean Operators (AND, OR, NOT) to synthesize and refine the results precisely according to the review question and the volume of available literature. Keywords used in English: youth, youth empowerment, FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, social development, civic engagement, sports and development, volunteering, national identity, soft power, cultural dialog. Inclusion Criteria: (1) The study should address youth issues, development, or social change within the context of the 2022

Qatar World Cup; (2) Focus on the social and cultural impacts of the event; (3) The scientific material should be a peer-reviewed article, academic study, original research report, reliable field study, or official report from government agencies or official organizations; (4) Publication within the period 2022–2025; (5) Published in Arabic or English. Exclusion Criteria: (1) Studies with a purely technical nature not related to social or developmental dimensions; (2) Studies that lack scientific quality or academic standards; (3) Repetitions or non-scientific deliberations such as newspaper articles or undocumented opinions.

Screening and Review Stages

The stages of sorting and auditing were carried out in a manner that combines technology and meticulous manual review. The first author (M.K.) relied on Excel to organize study data, monitor the initial sorting process, and remove duplicates. A thorough manual review was then conducted by a team of six specialized reviewers: two experts in Sport Sociology (University of Batna 2 and University of Ouargla), two experts in Sport Psychology (University of Algiers 3 and University of Batna 2), one expert in Intercultural Studies (University of Ouargla), and one expert in Cultural Dialogue (University of Ouargla) — all holding the rank of Professor, which included examining study abstracts and selecting preliminary research based on their compliance with the specified inclusion and exclusion criteria.

This was followed by a careful reading of the full texts of the studies that passed the screening, to ensure they met all methodological criteria. Consensus sessions were held among the reviewers to resolve any discrepancies or disagreements in assessing the studies' suitability, in accordance with the methodological literature recommendations for scoping reviews (Peters et al., 2020; Tricco et al., 2018)

Data Extraction and Tabulation

A precise and multi-level approach was adopted in data extraction and tabulation in line with the review's axes and analytical objectives. Data extraction was performed independently by the first author (M.K.) and verified by the second author (N.K.) to ensure accuracy and consistency. In the first phase, main tables were prepared that included the most prominent variables such as the researcher's name/publishing entity, the year of the study, the title, the abstract, the type of methodology used (qualitative, quantitative, mixed, report, case study), the main results or the civilizational and communicative indicator, in addition to the specialization or field axis.

Independent tables were allocated for some complex axes, such as the table of targeted age groups, which enabled the identification of recurring patterns in age approaches within the studies. Additionally, a special table was created to distribute the studies according to the main axis (youth empowerment, national/cultural identity, civilizational dialog, volunteering, development, sports diplomacy, human rights, and religious values), detailing the number of studies, geographical distribution, time frame, and the prevailing methodological approach for each axis (Levac et al., 2010; Peters et al., 2020).

Results

After completing the research process and collecting relevant studies, screening and evaluation criteria were applied according to the PRISMA methodology to identify the studies that address the research problem related to the role of the 2022 Qatar World Cup in promoting youth empowerment, civil dialog, and social values. This process yielded a diverse set of studies in terms of their methodologies, approaches, and theoretical frameworks. Figure 1 shows the PRISMA flow diagram that illustrates the stag-

es of the scientific evidence selection process, starting from the identification of sources, then exclusion based on specific criteria, leading to the final studies included in the review (317 records identified → 167 duplicates removed → 150 titles screened → 97 excluded → 53 full-text studies included). Table 1 provides a comprehensive analytical summary of the listed studies, including the title of each study, the year of publication, the research methodology, and the main indicator or result related to civilizational dialog, youth empowerment, or social development. Table

2 illustrates the distribution of these studies according to major thematic axes such as youth empowerment, cultural identity, civilizational dialog, volunteering, sustainable development, sports diplomacy, and human rights, providing an overview of the methodological, temporal, and geographical diversity of these studies. Table 3 presents the distribution of age groups covered by the studies; the youth group (18–35 years) was the most frequently addressed, as it is the pivotal group in community participation and shaping the legacy of the World Cup.

Table 1. Full Summary of Studies on FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022

No.	Author(s)	Year	Study Title	Full Summary	Methodology	Key Findings / Cultural or Communication Indicator
1	Sammour, K.	2023	Qatar 2022 World Cup Cultural Celebration: An Arabic Model of Cultural Diplomacy	The study reviews how Qatar transformed the FIFA World Cup 2022 into a model of cultural diplomacy and enhanced the presence of Arab youth through cultural celebration and global interaction.	Qualitative / Analytical	Promoting cultural dialogue and youth engagement
2	Ishac, W., & Swart, K.	2022	Social impact projections for Qatar youth residents from 2022	The study analyzes the social impact of the World Cup on Qatari youth, focusing on strengthening values and cultural belonging.	Quantitative / Analytical	Enhancing values and cultural identity
3	Al-Thani, M.	2025	In the liminal realm: Qatar's world cup struggle between tradition, modernity, and human rights	The study discusses challenges between tradition and modernity and addresses human rights issues during the World Cup.	Qualitative	Balancing modernity, tradition, and human rights
4	Al-Emadi, A. et al.	2022	The Perceived Impacts of Staging the 2022 FIFA World Cup	The study examines community perceptions of the event's effects on youth identity and development.	Quantitative	Enhancing youth participation
5	Mohamadi Turkmani, E. et al.	2024	Social capital building through mega-sporting events	The study examines the creation of social capital among youth and society after the event.	Quantitative / Analytical	Strengthening social cohesion
6	Hartmann, D., Manning, A., & Green, K.	2023	Postgame Analysis: Qatar 2022 and the Social Significance of Global Sport	The study analyzes the event as a platform for civil dialogue, tolerance, and positive youth representation.	Qualitative / Analytical	Building positive youth image
7	Carvache-Franco, M. et al.	2024	Motivations and satisfaction of sports tourists during the World Cup	The study measures motivations and psychological and social impacts on visiting youth.	Quantitative / Descriptive	Satisfaction and well-being
8	Kerry, L. et al.	2024	Branding countries through multicultural events	The study analyzes the effect on Qatar's global image and communication.	Quantitative / Analytical	Nation branding
9	Zhang, C.	2024	Impact of the 2022 FIFA World Cup on Qatar	A comprehensive evaluation of economic, social, and diplomatic impacts.	Descriptive / Content Analysis	Multi-dimensional impact
10	Kozhanov, N. et al.	2024	The 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar: Global and Local Perspectives	Examines cultural identity and intercultural dialogue.	Analytical	Cultural dialogue
11	Brannagan, P. et al.	2023	Mass social change and identity hybridization	Analyzes social identity transformation and youth integration.	Qualitative / Analytical	Youth integration
12	Bettine, M., & Ozdemir, M.	2024	Soft power and sports diplomacy	Examines Western media framing and soft power.	Analytical / Cultural	Soft power

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No.	Author(s)	Year	Study Title	Full Summary	Methodology	Key Findings / Cultural or Communication Indicator
13	FIFA	2022	Intercultural guidance	Reports on intercultural exchange programs during the event.	Policy Report	Cultural communication
14	Al-Emadi, A. A. et al.	2024	Resident interests and attitudes	Analyzes youth attitudes toward participation.	Sociological / Analytical	Social participation
15	Ishac, W.	2024	Social sustainability: Qatar youth perceptions	Examines youth views on sustainability and dialogue.	Field / Qualitative	Sustainability dialogue
16	Al-Hiti, N.	2023	Sports diplomacy and dialogue	Explores sports diplomacy in promoting tolerance.	Analytical / Descriptive	Dialogue and tolerance
17	Arab Democratic Center	2023	Arab soft power shaping global future perspectives	Examines the Arab soft power dimension of the World Cup.	Qualitative / Analytical	Soft power
18	Al-Marri	2023	Sustaining youth motivation	Examines youth empowerment through global sports events.	Mixed	Youth empowerment
19	Zhao, Y., & Liu	2024	Impact of the World Cup on youth	Discusses social and professional development.	Descriptive / Qualitative	Knowledge integration
20	Luo et AL.	2022	Protests and calls for boycotting the Qatar World Cup 2022 spark online discussion and action away from the soccer pitch	Examines youth activism and social dialogue.	Qualitative / Field	Human rights dialogue
21	Hidaya, M.	2024	Sport and sustainable development	Explores role of sport in sustainable development.	Policy Analysis	Sustainability
22	FIFA	2022	Social impact report	Highlights global social impact on youth.	Report	Social impact
23	Elbanna.et al.	2025	The FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022: Unveiling Insights Beyond the Pitch	Documents cultural diversity and youth engagement.	Case Study / Analytical	Youth engagement
24	Ulrichsen, K. C	2023	Nation branding and soft power	Examines Qatar’s global image.	Analytical	National branding
25	Qatar Foundation	2023	Social change programs	Describes youth-led social initiatives.	Descriptive	Social change
26	Brannagan & Reiche	2023	Nation branding analysis	Analyzes positive global perception.	Content Analysis	Positive image
27	Jarvie & Yujun	2022	Social values post-event	Discusses post-event societal values.	Qualitative	Social values
28	Al-Ghanim	2023	Survey on perceptions	Measures citizens’ attitudes.	Survey	Social perception
29	Munzilin	2024	Post-COVID cultural branding	Promotes cultural understanding globally.	Case Study	Cultural diplomacy
30	Rizana & Lisnarini	2023	Brand ambassador analysis	Examines inclusive engagement.	Qualitative	Inclusion
31	Diop et al.	2022	Volunteering interest	Measures youth volunteering interest.	Survey	Participation
32	Hajjaj et al.	2024	World Cup legacy	Examines identity and development legacy.	Analytical	Social cohesion
33	FIFA	2023	Volunteer capacity building programme	Highlights skill development programs.	Report	Teamwork
34	El-Kassem et al.	2024	Barriers to volunteering	Analyzes social and economic barriers.	Survey	Participation constraints
35	Bouatelli	2025	Digital transformation	Examines digital empowerment of youth.	Comparative Study	Digital participation

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Table 1. Full Summary of Studies on FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022

No.	Author(s)	Year	Study Title	Full Summary	Methodology	Key Findings / Cultural or Communication Indicator
36	Yaylali	2025	National identity	Examines pride and solidarity.	Analytical	National identity
37	Amara & Bouandel	2024	Infrastructure and development	Discusses national development impact.	Analytical	Economic development
38	FIFA	2022	Youth empowerment report	Highlights educational programs.	Policy Report	Youth capacity
39	Solimane & Elfekair	2024	Tourism impact	Examines youth travel intentions.	Field Study	Cultural openness
40	Parvez	2024	Women participation	Examines empowerment of young women.	Qualitative	Female leadership
41	Al-Mulla	2024	Sustainability achievements	Examines environmental sustainability.	Content Analysis	Sustainability
42	Al Gheith et al.	2024	Social impact survey	Measures happiness and cohesion.	Survey	Social cohesion
43	Al-Malik	2025	Human rights protection	Examines legal frameworks.	Legal Analysis	Rights awareness
44	Al-Azmi	2023	Social communication and Islamic values	Examines Islamic values and youth participation.	Qualitative	Religious values
45	Mohamed, M.	2023	Arab media coverage	Examines Arab identity in media.	Content Analysis	Arab identity
46	Fouda, M. et al.	2024	Foreign media image	Examines representation of Arabs.	Media Study	Positive image
47	Al-Bouhaliqa	2025	Sports diplomacy	Examines changing stereotypes.	Analytical	Soft power
48	Mostafa, A.	2023	Islamic outreach during World Cup	Examines religious communication strategies.	Anthropological	Cultural interaction
49	Ishac et al.	2024	Sentiment analysis of tweets	Examines public mood via social media.	Data Analysis	Public sentiment
50	Al Halk	2023	Football participation legacy	Examines youth participation in football.	Field Study	Sport development
51	Al Fahadi	2022	Nation branding tool	Examines digital branding strategies.	Analytical	Global image
52	Ayouni	2022	Volunteer hosting program	Examines hospitality and cooperation.	Field Study	Social cooperation
53	Ekren	2024	Islamic values and sustainability	Examines theoretical framework linking Islam and sustainability.	Analytical / Theoretical	Sustainable values

Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram – Study Selection Process

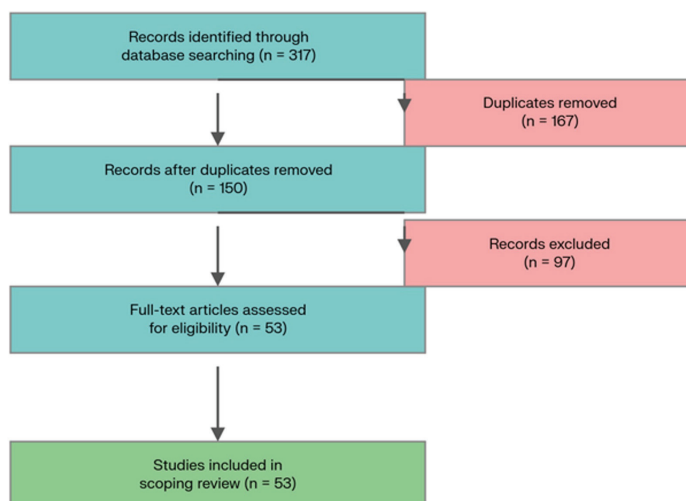


FIGURE 1. PRISMA flow diagram illustrating the study selection process.

Table 2. Distribution of Studies by Main Axis, Temporal, and Methodological Analysis

Main Axis	Studies (n)	Geographical Distribution	Time Frame	Methodology
Youth Empowerment	14	Qatar & Gulf, Arab and Western countries	2022–2025	Qualitative, Quantitative, Policy Reports
National / Cultural Identity	13	Qatar, Gulf, Arab & international contexts	2022–2025	Analytical, Field Studies, Media Analysis
Cultural Dialogue & Communication	9	Qatar, Gulf, international organizations	2022–2024	Qualitative, Cultural Analysis, Policy Studies
Volunteering & Community Participation	8	Qatar, Gulf, Arab & international volunteers	2022–2024	Quantitative, Qualitative, Program Analysis
Development (Social / Sustainable)	15	Qatar, Arab world, global comparisons	2022–2025	Quantitative, Descriptive, Policy Reports
Sports Diplomacy	10	Qatar, Gulf, global media coverage	2022–2025	Analytical, Qualitative, Media Studies
Human Rights	6	Qatar, international organizations	2022–2025	Legal, Descriptive, Comparative
Religious & Islamic Values	3	Qatar, transregional Islamic perspective	2023–2024	Qualitative, Anthropological, Theoretical

Table 3. Distribution of Age Groups Addressed in the Studies

Age Group	Number of Studies	Main Focus
Youth (18–35 years)	36	Main target group; focus on empowerment, participation, volunteering, and social development
Adolescents (<18 years)	9	School participation, value formation, and belonging through sports
Young Women / Girls	7	Focus on empowerment, leadership, and sports participation
Adults (>35 years)	6	Often comparative samples; focus on societal attitudes and advisory roles
Mixed / General Population	12	Multi-age samples or general societal analysis

Quantitative Analysis of Research Topics

The statistical tables indicate that most of the research literature between 2022 and 2025 focused on issues of community development (15 studies), followed by youth empowerment (14), and national and cultural identity (13). Through the study by Hidayat (2024), which highlighted how sports investment and the impact of the World Cup promoted sustainable development in Qatari society, the deep interest in the structural transformations accompanying the event is evident. In the same context, Ulrichsen (2023) provides an analysis of the soft power that Qatar gained through the championship, documenting how national development projects integrated with the country's global image. Regarding youth empowerment, Al-Marri's (2023) study analyzed the impact of major sporting events on shaping new leadership roles for Arab youth in volunteering and innovation. The study by Al-Emadi et al. (2022) directly addressed the effects of the World Cup on enhancing participation and self-awareness among young groups. As for the identity axis, Brannagan et al. (2023) explained how the championship contributed to restructuring Qatari belonging and enhancing Arab pride through international media coverage. Additionally, Yaylali (2025) made the World Cup event a platform to celebrate national uniqueness and enhance social solidarity in the era of globalization.

Sports diplomacy was a notable focus; Bettine & Ozdemir (2024) emphasized Qatar's use of the tournament to craft a new soft power, which helped correct stereotypes and present a global model for peaceful dialog and cultural coexistence. Regarding civilizational dialog, Sammour (2023) demonstrated how the tournament created a model for cultural rapprochement and effective channels for civilizational communication through youth.

Methodological Intertwining in Research Tools

The systematic analysis reveals that the research on the 2022 Qatar World Cup was characterized by clear diversity in research tools and methods. The quantitative approach was used in approximately 22 out of 53 studies, reflecting the strength of field surveys, questionnaires, and digital data analysis in measuring social impacts. For example, the study by Al-Emadi et al. (2022) used surveys and digital data analysis to monitor community perceptions of the event, providing accurate quantitative data on the tournament's impact on development and youth identity. In the same context, the study by Diop et al. (2022) used questionnaire tools and quantitative surveys to measure the motivations for voluntary work among Qatari youth. Digital data analysis tools for big data also emerged in the study by Ishac et al. (2024), which relied on analyzing Arabic Twitter data to monitor public sentiments during the World Cup events. Conversely, 17 studies relied on the qualitative approach, which dominated the discussion of identity issues, civilizational communication, and cultural and media studies. This approach has emerged in studies such as Brannagan et al. (2023) and Yaylali (2025), which relied on qualitative analysis of journalistic narratives and media discourse content. Mixed-method studies that combined both quantitative and qualitative approaches numbered approximately 14, evident in the research of Hartmann et al. (2023) and Kerry et al. (2024).

Temporal Trends in Research Production

The results of the study distribution indicate that the research output on the Qatar 2022 World Cup is concentrated in three main temporal waves. Initially, the period before and during the event (2022) witnessed a surge in studies addressing themes of

identity, international image, and societal expectations. With the transition to the post-tournament period (2023), analytical studies emerged addressing the sustainable legacy of the event, shifting from measuring immediate reactions to evaluating the social, economic, and administrative changes that began to take root in Qatari and Gulf society. In the more recent years (2024–2025), studies have increasingly focused on measuring long-term impact, youth empowerment programs, and developing volunteer policies, in addition to leveraging digital indicators and qualitative narratives to enhance the understanding of societal transformations.

Distribution of Age Groups

The distributional analysis of the targeted age groups reveals a clear dominance of the youth category (18–35 years). Most studies — such as Al-Emadi et al. (2022) on the perceptions of Qatari youth toward the tournament and Al-Marri (2023) on youth empowerment through major sporting events — confirmed this category as the main driver in the context of sports and social legacy. Some studies focused on adolescents and school students, such as Qatar Foundation (2023), which examined the impact of school and volunteer programs on building values and belonging among the rising generation. The focus on girls and young women has also emerged in recent years; Parvez (2024) addressed the empowerment of young Qatari women and the challenges they faced in sports participation and gender equality policies in the context of the championship.

Discussion

Interpretation of the Results According to the Theoretical Framework

The results of this review reveal a significant alignment between the empirical evidence and the theoretical framework, which considers young athletes a driving force for civilizational advancement and the enhancement of global communication. Most studies, such as those by Al-Emadi et al. (2022), have shown that Qatari and Arab youth were at the forefront of societal forces driving the path of cultural and social development, benefiting from the World Cup experience to practice leadership, enhance national belonging, and embody the values of dialog and tolerance in a multinational and multicultural environment. These findings are consistent with earlier scholarship on mega-events and social transformation; for instance, Coalter (2007) and Giulianotti et al. (2016) argued that large-scale sporting events serve as catalysts for civic identity formation and intercultural exchange - a proposition that the Qatar 2022 case strongly corroborates and extends into the Arab context.

The civilizational contribution of youth lies in their ability to transform the sporting event into a platform for exchanging experiences and establishing cross-border communication networks. Qualitative studies (Brannagan et al., 2023; Sammour, 2023) have documented how young people dedicated digital communication tools, volunteer work, and community initiatives to establish a positive image of the Arab state and to reshape the narrative of identity and belonging in global circles. This aligns with findings by Giulianotti & Robertson (2009), who demonstrated that global sporting events generate what they termed "glocal" identities - simultaneously local and universal - a dynamic that was particularly pronounced in Qatar's deliberate projection of Arab-Islamic values alongside universal hospitality norms. Compared to previous World Cup host nations such as South Africa (2010) and Brazil (2014), where youth engagement was largely organic and unstructured, Qatar's institutionalized approach through programs such as Generation Amazing and the Qatar Volunteers program represents a qualitative advancement in harnessing youth

agency for deliberate civilizational messaging (Kerry et al., 2024; Ulrichsen, 2023).

According to contemporary theoretical perspectives in the sociology of sport and development, the rise of youth in the field of leadership and influence reflects a strategic transformation crucial for the advancement of societies and the construction of resilient civilizational images capable of meeting the demands of sustainable development (Diop et al., 2022; Al-Marri, 2023). This finding resonates with Hartmann & Kwauk's (2011) theoretical model of "sport for development," which posits that youth participation in organized sporting contexts can generate transformative social capital - though the Qatar case extends this model by demonstrating that such capital can operate at a civilizational, rather than merely community, scale.

Research Gaps and Future Needs

Despite the extensive body of studies on the Qatar 2022 World Cup, the review reveals clear research gaps that still need to be addressed more deeply in future literature. One of the most prominent gaps is the relatively weak attention to human rights issues and religious and social values, despite the intense international media presence on these topics. This stands in notable contrast to existing literature on previous mega-events, where human rights dimensions - particularly those concerning labor rights and displacement - received substantial scholarly attention (Grix & Houlihan, 2014; Zimbalist, 2015). The comparative absence of rigorous human rights analysis in the Qatar 2022 literature suggests either a disciplinary avoidance of politically sensitive dimensions or a methodological limitation in accessing marginalized voices.

At the methodological level, one of the prominent weaknesses lies in the limited samples of some studies or their restriction to a single category or geographical area without generalizing the results or testing them across diverse contexts (Al-Emadi et al., 2022; Diop et al., 2022). Some studies often lacked cross-analysis between the categories or variables used within the samples, which limited the studies' ability to reveal complex societal dynamics. These methodological shortcomings echo concerns raised by Coalter (2010) regarding the "problem of attribution" in sport-for-development research - namely, the difficulty of isolating the specific effects of a sporting event from broader social, political, and economic processes occurring simultaneously. The weaknesses remained in the lack of longitudinal studies that measure the impact over the years, and the insufficient focus on marginalized groups such as migrant workers, people with disabilities, or the elderly (Ulrichsen, 2023) - groups whose experiences of the World Cup diverged substantially from those of the youth cohorts that dominate the existing literature.

Practical Implications

The results of the review form a clear knowledge base that can be practically employed to enhance national sports policies and youth empowerment programs in Qatar and the Arab world. Studies have highlighted the pivotal role of youth in driving civilizational change, which necessitates the redesign of sports development policies to focus not only on competition or achievements but also on building leadership capacities and community initiatives, and localizing volunteerism within a comprehensive future vision (Al-Emadi et al., 2022; Al-Marri, 2023). These recommendations are consistent with the UNESCO (2021) framework on sport and sustainable development, which explicitly calls for embedding youth leadership within the organizational architecture of major sporting events rather than treating it as a supplementary activity.

In light of these results, sports institutions can leverage major events such as the World Cup to launch quality programs that

focus on the professional and social empowerment of youth, and to enhance partnerships between government entities, the private sector, and civil society to build an environment supportive of youth leadership in sports and volunteer work. This multi-stakeholder approach mirrors successful models documented in the context of the London 2012 Olympic Games (Girginov & Hills, 2008), where structured public-private collaboration produced measurable improvements in youth civic engagement and community cohesion. The review also highlights the importance of directing efforts toward empowering women and underrepresented groups to ensure the inclusivity of social development, which aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2030 related to gender equality (United Nations, 2015).

From the perspective of human communication strategies, studies have shown that global sporting events represent a unique platform for instilling the values of civilized dialog and enhancing the international image of the host country. With the effective use of digital media and social media (Ishac et al., 2024; Kerry et al., 2024), communication policies can be developed that enable the construction of a modern, open national image capable of addressing different cultures and activating the role of sports in fostering human convergence and global recognition. This finding is particularly relevant in the post-COVID-19 era, during which digital platforms emerged as primary vehicles for cultural diplomacy, as documented by Parvez (2024) and Ekren (2024) in the context of Qatar's strategic media management during the tournament.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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- Conclusion**
- This scoping review demonstrates that the Qatar 2022 World Cup constituted a pivotal platform for civilizational and social transformation through the empowerment of Arab youth and the enhancement of their leadership and community roles. The literature review, employing a precise methodology that combines quantitative and qualitative analysis and the use of specialized extraction tables, highlighted the themes of youth empowerment, national identity, and civilizational dialog in the field of modern studies, with a strong presence of the roles of women and vulnerable groups. The results indicate that young athletes have effectively contributed to leading voluntary and organizational initiatives, and establishing values of openness and human dialog through programs such as 'Generation Amazing,' youth leadership workshops, and cultural and social exchange initiatives. These efforts have positively reflected in establishing the image of Arab youth as a symbol of ambition and building cultural bridges on the international stage. There is a need to develop applied and long-term studies on the impact of sports policies and programs on youth, with a focus on underrepresented groups, and to develop qualitative and quantitative measurement tools to assess community and leadership participation. This review lays a scientific foundation for formulating policies that support Arab youth, helping to achieve national and international development goals, and enhancing their positive presence in a rapidly transforming world that believes in sports as a means of human communication and comprehensive civilizational advancement.
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