Presenting the dynamic model of football in Qatar: The role of hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup

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ABSTRACT

The current study aimed to present a dynamic football model in Qatar, concentrating on the role of hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup. It was practical in terms of purpose and qualitative in terms of strategy. The qualitative research method was based on grounded theory, applying the Strauss-Corbin approach. The sample consisted of 22 football experts selected through purposeful sampling. These individuals represented various roles within the Qatar Stars League during the 2021-2022 football season, including coaches, referees, athletes, heads and managers of football clubs, and veterans. The main categories obtained in this research included causal conditions, contextual conditions, and intervening conditions. Finally, the dynamic model of Qatar football was presented after determining the desired model, process/interactions, consequences, and relationships between the elements. The development of new media and technology also profoundly impacted football club-media relations, as clubs recognized the importance of external communications and the demand for instant information. In general, media, technology, and investment play an important role in shaping the dynamics of the football league in Qatar, driving growth and influencing organizational strategies.

KEYWORDS

Football Dynamics; Qatar; Hosting FIFA World Cup

1. INTRODUCTION

Today, the phenomenon of hosting major international sports events has become a key part of countries' development strategies. Hosting such events is considered a tool for accelerating progress along the development path (Chowdhury et al., 2023). Major sports events serve as a rich resource for sports diplomacy (Abdi et al., 2019) and intercultural relations (Abdi et al., 2018). Hosting sports events is very important for all countries due to the numerous economic, cultural, social, political, and environmental benefits. Many countries engage in both overt and covert efforts to host these events, especially large international competitions. The limited number of major international sports events worldwide has intensified the competition among countries to secure hosting rights (Müller et al., 2023).

Increasing a country's reputation, improving its global image, promoting economic exchanges, and generating income from the sale of television broadcasting rights are among the benefits of hosting. This enhanced credibility and reputation can positively affect tourism, foreign investment, social relations, the country's elite, political influence, and the marketing of domestic products and exports. Today, hosting major international sports events is no longer limited to developed countries; developing countries are also part of this competition. For instance, Azerbaijan and Turkey have expressed interest in hosting the Olympic Games, and Qatar hosted the 2022 World Cup (Uhrich et al., 2024).

After successfully hosting the 2006 Asian Games in Doha, Qatar hosted the 2020 FIFA World Cup, the most significant international sports event after the Olympic Games. With proper management and strategic planning, such hosting can accelerate comprehensive development for Qatari society. Research shows that hosting large events provides numerous benefits (Hoff et al., 2023).

Many researchers have studied the effects of major sports events on the hosting city and communities. Studies on major events began in the 1970s with a focus on the tourism industry. Azadi et al. (2013), in their study titled *Evaluation of the Economic Effects of Holding Major Events*, reviewed the financial impact of major events by examining the last four Olympics. Their findings showed that the Olympic Games offer many advantages beyond economic benefits. Positive non-economic factors, such as enhancing the social image and increasing the country's prominence on the global stage, have led to intense competition between countries (Vestby et al., 2024).

Emiry (2002) argues that the development and promotion of sports are the most important factors in hosting major sports events, as they contribute to economic development and enhance the host city's reputation. Research also shows that hosting large events, even temporarily, can lead to significant growth in the sports sector of the host region. For example, athletic events in England caused Portsmouth residents' membership in athletics clubs to increase by 100% in two years. Additionally, participation in triathlons in England is expected to increase by 400%. Thus, increased sports participation is a key reason for hosting events (Pieper & Schulze, 2024).

Football clubs should consider social media a powerful tool for developing sports marketing strategies and engaging fans as a core product. By utilizing various social media platforms, football clubs can make significant strides in advertising, expand their fan base, develop marketing strategies, and improve financial viability (Kennedy et al., 2024).

The proper management of hosting the FIFA World Cup will result in many short- and long-term positive and negative developments and legacies, such as job creation, income from sponsorships, and infrastructure development for Qatari football. Undoubtedly, these developments follow patterns that can be identified based on their interactions as a system. The effects of hosting on Qatari football can be better understood through this lens. Therefore, considering the various impacts of this sports event on Qatar, the researcher aims to identify the influence of hosting this major event on Qatari football by designing a dynamic model—a step toward understanding the legacy of sports events for future use. To comprehensively capture the dynamic interaction of the elements influencing Qatar's football sector, we need a clearer understanding of the relationships between them. One solution to achieve this is modeling the interactions between the key hosting elements.

Thus, the following section introduces the key factors involved in the dynamics of football in Qatar, based on existing literature, and presents the relationships between them in the form of a conceptual research model. Based on this, the researcher intends to propose a dynamic model of the 2022 World Cup and its role in Qatar's football, answering the question: What is the appropriate dynamic model of Qatar's football based on the impact of hosting the 2022 World Cup?
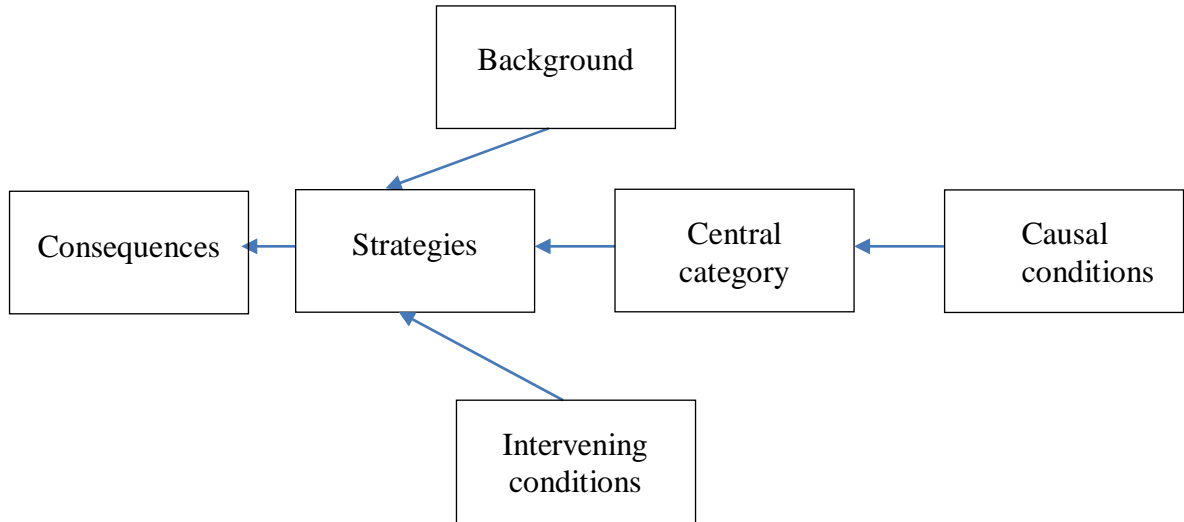
Figure 1. Conceptual model of research

2. METHODS

The current study was practical in terms of purpose and qualitative in terms of strategy. The qualitative research method was based on grounded theory, applying the Strauss-Corbin approach. The statistical population consisted of football experts, including coaches (119 people), referees (77 people), athletes (292 people), heads and managers of football clubs (63 people), and veterans (60 people) from the Qatar Stars League during the 2021-2022 football season. The sampling method was purposeful. We stratified with proportional allocation from each stratum in the quantitative part. Sampling continued in the qualitative part until theoretical saturation was reached, and 22 people were ultimately selected as the sample.

Data collection followed the Strauss and Corbin method in grounded theory. According to Strauss and Corbin, grounded theory was inductively derived from studying the phenomenon and represented that phenomenon. The grounded theory procedure employed systematic steps to create a theory based on induction about a phenomenon. Theoretical saturation indicated the reliability of grounded theory research because it reflected the repetition of data. This repetition demonstrated the reliability of the research method. Using this approach, participants were asked for their opinions on the research topic, and interviews continued until theoretical saturation was reached. Then, data was collected through open, axial, and theoretical coding.

A research questionnaire was also designed. The within-subject agreement method was used to calculate the reliability of the interviews. To assess reliability, two coders (evaluators) participated in each interview. Similar codes were marked as "agreement," and dissimilar codes were marked as "disagreement." The researcher and research partner coded three interviews and calculated the percentage of within-subject agreement, which served as an indicator of analysis reliability, using the following formula:

Formula 1: the percentage of intra-subject agreement

$$\text{Percentage of intra} - \text{subject agreement} = \frac{2 \times \text{number of agreements}}{\text{total number of codes}} \times 100$$

The total number of codes in these three interviews was 19 codes, and the number of agreements was 7. According to the relationship, the percentage of intra-subject agreement is equal to 0.73, which is suitable. The Strauss-Corbin method and open coding were analyzed.

3. RESULTS

The results showed that the sample included 7 women (32%) and 15 men (68%). Age distribution was: 20-25 years (9%), 26-30 years (18%), 31-35 years (41%), 36-40 years (18%), and over 40 years (14%). Educational levels were: sub-diploma (4%), diploma (9%), bachelor's (24%), master's (36%), and doctorate or higher (27%). Sports experience was: 5 years or less (9%), 6-10 years (18%), 11-15 years (45%), 15-20 years (14%), and over 20 years (14%). Occupations included players (32%), coaches (27%), team leaders (18%), referees (14%), and club presidents/managers (9%).

The researcher extracted 152 primary concepts in the open coding stage and by coding based on paragraphs, and after editing, 133 primary concepts were extracted as final concepts (Table 1).

Table 1. Summary of final concepts

Minor categories	Concepts	Open Source
Media	Media needs assessment	− A more detailed and deeper understanding of the needs of football − Audience analysis and sufficient familiarity with the taste of football audiences before creating content − Defining short-term and long-term goals of soccer to establish communication − Establishment of new sports media associations in the

		country
		− The use of works of art and effective football documentaries
	Media interactions	− The interaction of the football federation with media organizations
		− Using the technique of highlighting the commonalities of football with other countries
		− Production of joint sports works through cooperation with other neighboring countries
	Media content	− Benefiting from history and civilization for activities in the field of football
		− Using the entertainment function in sports networks to attract the audience
		− Joint programs based on existing comparative advantages with the region
		− Content production based on religious and cultural affinities with countries in the region
Technology	Information systems	− Advances in communication
		− Improving information systems
		− Development of virtual systems
		− The occurrence of the information revolution
	Variety of information infrastructures	− The existence of new technologies
		− The existence and development of online networks
		− The existence of advanced information tools
Investment	Sports infrastructure	− Development and construction of stadiums
		− Club investment in sports and financial affairs
		− Providing the necessary spaces and places for the club
		− Provision of necessary equipment and facilities
	Strengthen the team	− Basic soccer development
		− Strengthening young players
		− Using players with high ability and technique
		− Use of foreign players
Value requirements	Cultural communication	− Familiarity with work culture and group skills
		− Knowing the customs and values of competing athletes and spectators
		− reducing conflicts and tensions,
		− Strengthening the culture of coexistence among people
		− Peace and development of friendship between nations
	Cultural branding	− Strengthening the state-nation process
		− National unity and solidarity
		− Unity among minorities
		− Mobilization of collective feelings of citizens
learning	Finding information	− Attending specialized football sports meetings
		− Attending international conferences
		− Exchanging sports information and sharing experiences
	Education	− Preparation of sports training programs
		− Promotion of general football knowledge
		− Holding training courses
Environmental factors	Technologically	− High speed of technological developments
		− The speed of spreading information and news
		− Dispersion of news sources

	Terms and Conditions	–	Changes in the competitive system
		–	Attention to the country's club rules
		–	Paying attention to FIFA and AFC standards
		–	Modeling successful domestic and foreign clubs
	Cultural	–	Direction of public opinion
		–	Characterization of players
		–	Preparation of sports websites
		–	Promoting ethical principles in football
	Economic	–	Government support for football
		–	provision of budget
		–	Creating sports and tax infrastructure
Empowerment	Legislation	–	Revision of the Executive Regulations of the Football Federation
		–	Preparation of the cooperation document between the Ministry of Sports and the Football Federation
		–	Formulation of strategic plans in the promotion of football
		–	Appropriate communication with supervisory organizations such as the Ministry of Sports and the National Olympic Committee
	Education	–	Holding meetings between the football federation and the clubs
		–	Teaching and strengthening concepts related to football
		–	Using the training and development system of talented players
	Management structure	–	Improving the management structure of the club
		–	The type of ownership of the club (government-private-public)
		–	A method of participation of veterans and fans in the ownership and management of clubs
		–	Improving the resource management system in the club
		–	Efficiency of monitoring and evaluation system
		–	Management of relations with administrative and technical personnel of the club and services to them
		–	Management of relationships with supporters and services to them
Communication solutions	New technologies	–	Interaction between football clubs and media
		–	Providing soccer information in different languages
		–	Strengthening the virtual environment in order to familiarize with the national sport of football
	Mutual communication	–	Use of communication capacities
		–	Emphasis on people's opinion and participation
		–	Multiple communication channels
Economic function	Sports economics	–	Development of sports tourism
		–	Development of export of sports services and products
		–	Domestic investment
		–	Strengthening sports infrastructure
		–	The growth of the domestic economy of sports
		–	Privatization
	National economy	–	gain wealth
		–	Improve the job situation

		– Economic prosperity
		– Highlighting economic power
		– Contribute to economic stability
	Marketing	– Environmental marketing at the stadium and city level
		– Electronic marketing in the digital space
		– Social marketing in virtual media
		– Using virtual space to create special value of the league brand
	Financing	– Income from ticket sales on match day
		– Seasonal sales revenue
		– Memberships
		– Sustainable economic development of the club
		– Income from media broadcasting
		– Commercial and business income
		– Transfer of players
		– Income from advertising around the land
Cultural function	Public awareness	– Preservation of indigenous and sports heritage
		– Fighting extremism
		– Reducing global violence
		– Strengthening the spirit of chivalry
		– Strengthening critical spirit
		– Promoting the culture of championship and public sports
	Information circulation	– Learning the culture of public participation
		– Expanding relations between important people of governments
		– Transfer of moral concepts
		– Promotion of socialization of people
		– Exchange of indigenous cultures
Political function	Domestic policy	– Development and modernization of governments
		– Reducing political stereotypes
		– national pride
		– Political acceptability of the government
		– National independence show
	Foreign policy	– Increasing international communication
		– National branding
		– Fighting political isolation
		– International status
		– peace and friendship
		– A tool to promote power
Social Development	Correlation	– social unity
		– Resolving ethnic differences
		– Resolving religious disputes
	Social capital	– Reconstruction of the history of the club
		– Making the club's social media more efficient
		– Continuous assessment of social capital of the club
	Public participation	– Community dynamics
		– Social commitment
		– Normability
		– National enthusiasm
		– Community Relations

– The spirit of teamwork

In Figure 2, the dynamic model of football in Qatar is presented, highlighting the main categories identified in this research, including causal conditions, contextual conditions, intervening conditions, the desired model, processes/interactions, consequences, and their interrelationships.
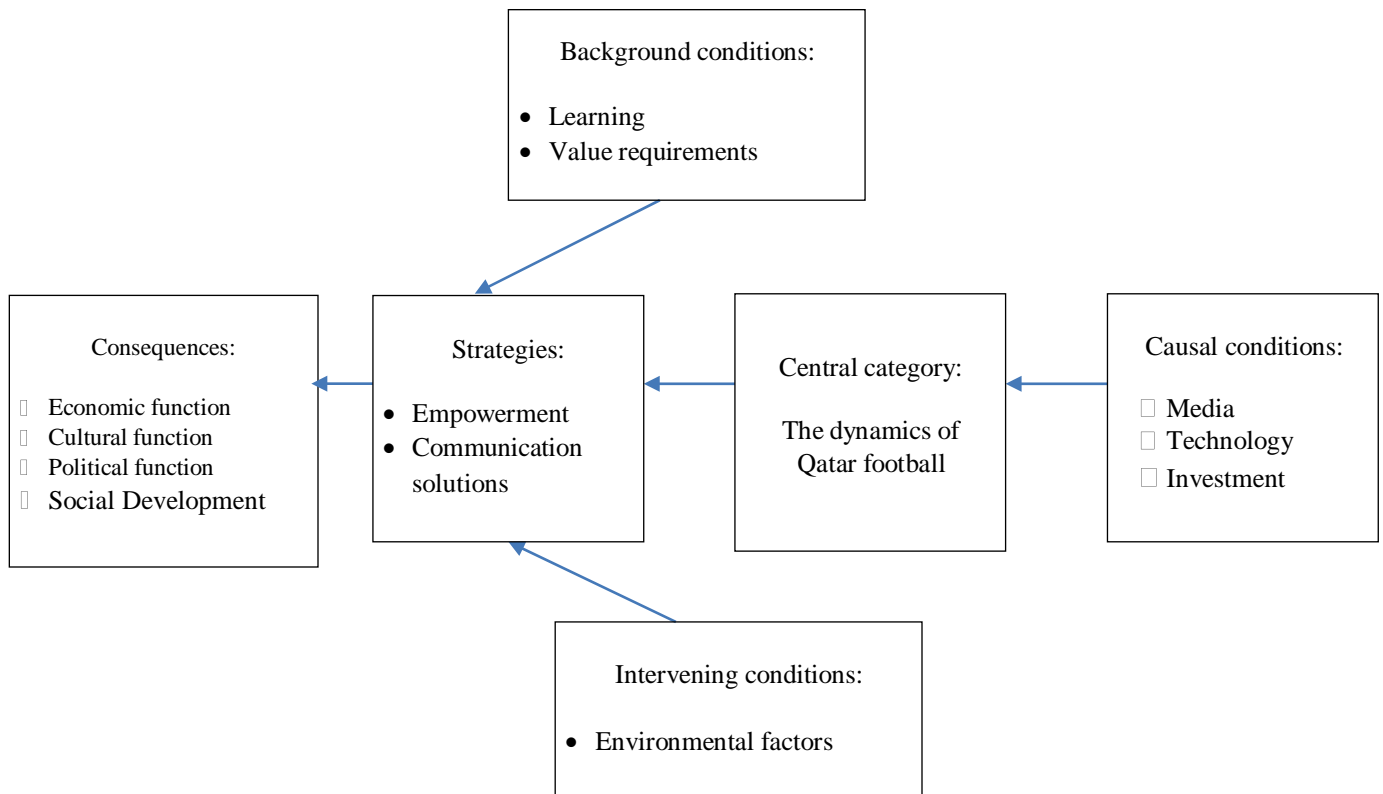

Figure 2. Dynamic model of football in Qatar: the role of hosting the 2022 World Cup

4. DISCUSSION

The results showed that media, technology, and investment were identified as the causal conditions in the dynamic model of Qatar football. The media factor includes media needs assessment, media interactions, and media content. On the other hand, the technology factor includes information systems and the diversity of information infrastructures. Finally, the investment factor includes sports infrastructure and team strengthening. The football industry has experienced significant growth in recent years. Professional clubs earn substantial income from broadcasting, marketing, and matchday activities (Zheng & Mason, 2022). This growth has led to a greater

emphasis on economic factors alongside sporting goals, resulting in the need for qualified staff and adapted organizational structures. Additionally, football clubs are seeking new sources of financing as domestic funding becomes insufficient, making them attractive investment alternatives for investors. However, evaluating football clubs as investments can be challenging due to emotional biases and the influence of past achievements on financial decisions (Tasevski, 2019). The development of new media and technology has also had a profound impact on football club-media relations. In general, media, technology, and investment play important roles in shaping the dynamics of the football league, driving growth, and influencing organizational strategies.

Background conditions consist of learning and value requirements. Learning includes information gathering and training, while sports requirements encompass cultural communication and cultural branding. The importance of learning and training in the dynamics of the football league is crucial for the development of performance coaches and the improvement of coaching practices (Kay et al., 2023). Understanding the techniques and tactics necessary for success and teaching them effectively is essential in preparing players for elite competition. In the Australian Football League, head and assistant coaches acquire their knowledge and skills through continuous learning and reflection on their practice. In different countries, their clubs are considered learning organizations where coaching knowledge is continuously developed. Coaching plays an important role in strengthening professional coaching practices (Nesterenko et al., 2022). Improving the quality of coaching in various leagues not only benefits the performance of players and teams but also contributes to the continuous development and sustainability of the game.

Intervening conditions, including environmental factors, were identified as the main influences. Environmental factors encompass technological aspects, laws and regulations, domestic and foreign successes, cultural affairs, and economic conditions. Rules and regulations play an important role in the dynamics of the football league. Leagues require effective cooperation between competing clubs to deliver a common product and maximize output. Without regulation, leagues tend to become unbalanced, leading to reduced demand and the possibility of rival leagues forming breakaway groups (Reiche, 2013). On the other hand, environmental factors are also becoming increasingly important in the football industry. Professional soccer clubs recognize their responsibilities to society and the environment and implement sustainability practices as part of their corporate social responsibility efforts (Leet & Figuerido, 2020). These practices are driven by the desire to achieve legitimacy and the potential strategic and competitive advantages they can provide.

In general, rules and regulations, along with environmental factors, are both crucial in shaping the dynamics of a football league.

The identified strategies include empowerment and communication solutions. Empowerment includes legislation, training, and the management structure. Additionally, communication solutions encompass factors such as new technologies and mutual communication. Empowerment and communication strategies play an important role in the dynamics of the football league. Papaiano et al.'s study showed that empowerment is applied similarly in both wealthy and less wealthy football clubs, with the main difference being the management styles used (Tasevski, 2019). As highlighted by Beauchamp et al., effective communication is recognized as a key factor in successful team performance (Asada et al., 2021). In addition, Obardovic et al. emphasized the importance of social media networks as a communication tool for sports branding, with Facebook being the main network analyzed in their study (Kartakoullis et al., 2009). In general, these findings show that empowering individuals in football clubs and implementing effective communication strategies are necessary to optimize organizational performance and crisis management in the football league.

The identified results included factors such as economic function, cultural function, political function, and social development. The economic function encompasses the sports economy, national economy, marketing, and financing. The cultural function includes public awareness and information circulation. The political function involves domestic policy and foreign policy. The function of social development comprises solidarity, social capital, and public participation. The dynamics of the football league are affected by various consequences. Economic implications play an important role, as the financial crisis in the English Premier League has been a growing concern since the 1980s. Cultural implications are also significant, as football culture is entangled with wider systems of power, including race, gender, sexuality, class, and nationality. The political implications are evident in the competitive balance of domestic football leagues, with democracies showing a lower percentage of league competitions won by the most successful club compared to non-democracies. Finally, the implications of social development are seen in the National Football League (NFL), which perpetuates existing systems of inequality while managing cultural sentiments in capitalist society.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The development of new media and technology has had a profound impact on football club-media relations. In general, media, technology, and investment play an important role in shaping the dynamics of the football league, driving growth and influencing organizational strategies. Improving the quality of coaching in different leagues not only benefits the performance of players and teams but also contributes to the continuous development and sustainability of the game. Laws and regulations, as well as environmental factors, are important in shaping the dynamics of the football league.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors listed have made a substantial, direct and intellectual contribution to the work, and approved it for publication.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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