

## Qatar Residents' Perceptions of the 2022 FIFA World Cup: Projections for Future Co-hosting Countries

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**How to cite this article:** Ishac, W., Swart, K. & Mollazehi, M. A. (2022). Qatar Residents' Perceptions of the 2022 FIFA World Cup: Projections for Future Co-hosting Countries. African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure, 11(6):1990-2009. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46222/ajhtl.19770720.337>

### Abstract

The study examines Qatar residents' perceptions associated with the 2022 FIFA World Cup by assessing the five dimensions of psychic income. Six months before the event, data were collected from the host city residents (n=280). Participants were divided into three subgroups based on residents' nationality (Qatari nationals, Arab nationals excluding the Qatari ones, and non-Arab nationals). Following confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modelling (SEM), the results indicated that residents' perceptions were positively associated with the psychic income dimensions. The community attachment dimension had the highest score in weight contributing to the total of psychic income, followed by community pride and event excitement. Within subgroups, community attachment and event excitement dimensions were significantly different. Results show that locals had a higher positive impact compared to regional and international residents, respectively. These findings are useful for Qatar decision-makers and support their strategies in involving neighbouring countries in the event. The results also support FIFA's strategies in implementing a new direction for future co-host countries, as is the case of the co-hosting of the 2026 tournament and the 2036 bid, which has relevance for the MENA region.

**Keywords:** FIFA World Cup; residents' perceptions; co-host countries; social impact; community attachment

### Introduction

The 2010 FIFA World Cup was the first time this mega sport event ever took place on the African continent. Similarly, the 2022 FIFA World Cup will be a first for an Arab country. This mega event back in South Africa did not only create a positive impact within the country, but it also reached the whole continent. The 2010 World Cup was positioned as an opportunity to address Afro-pessimism and change the negative stereotypes not only of South Africa but the continent as a whole from the inception of the bid (Tichaawa & Bob, 2015). It was set to address the negative perceptions associated with 'Brand Africa' such as civil war, disease, famine, corruption, and crime (Allen et al., 2013). A pan-Africanist theme was symbolized in several features of the 2010 World Cup, including the official slogan (KeNako meaning "It's time") to celebrate Africa's humanity and the official mascot (Zakumi) which comprised "ZA" to represent South Africa and "kumi", which translated into 10 African languages (van der

Westhuizen & Swart, 2011). Moreover, it was viewed as a platform to catalyse socio-economic growth and development in Africa (Tichaawa & Swart, 2010). For instance, the ‘Win in Africa, with Africa’ programme, was one of the main programs that was implemented to support the World Cup in contributing to the development of the African continent (FIFA, 2010). Furthermore, the 2010 World Cup helped in promoting FIFA’s commitment to regional social responsibility (Walker et al., 2013; Tichaawa & Bob, 2015). This programme focused on promoting peace, increase health awareness, and social development through the use of football (Walker et al., 2013). It is apparent that FIFA’s implementation of programmes in relation to the 2010 FIFA World Cup, in the short-term, contributed positively to improving the continent. As concluded by Tichaawa and Swart (2010), their findings on the perceived African legacy in Cameroon and Nigeria, support the view of regional benefits of the 2010 World Cup, mainly in relation to the enhanced image of Africa, and tourism and infrastructure investments primarily associated with football facilities.

Similarly, for the first time in the Arab world, Qatar is going to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup. Researchers indicated that many reasons can be engendered from mega sport event hosting that can be categorised to political, social, and economic (Foley et al., 2012; Dorsey, 2014; Ishac, 2018; Ishac, 2020). For instance, hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup would help in diversifying the country’s long-term revenue source (Henderson, 2014). Alongside, Qatar’s National Vision (QNV) 2030 highlights that one of the country’s main objectives is to become a regional and international sport hub (Government Communication Office, n.d.). According to Scharfenort (2012), QNV 2030 imparts a framework for the implementation of national initiatives to improve its regional positioning by addressing triple bottomline (economic, social, economic and environmental) as well as human development. This was further reflected in the Sports Sector Strategy (SSS) (2011-2016) that emphasises the possible roles sport, and major international sport events, can play in diversifying the country economy (Qatar Olympic Committee, 2011).

Just as the 2010 FIFA World Cup was the first mega-event of its size on the African continent, so too is the 2022 FIFA World Cup in the Middle East North Africa (MENA) region. The 2022 FIFA World Cup is also seen as an opportunity to address negative stereotypes associated with Muslim countries such as terrorism and Islamophobia and to showcase Arab hospitality (The Peninsula, 2022). Similarly, to the South African World Cup, symbolism of the Arab region is represented in the mascot (La’eeb), the song (Hayya Hayya – Better Together) and the test event the year prior to the event was named the 2021 FIFA Arab Cup, for example. With the prospects of a joint bid between another two countries in the region (Saudi Arabia and Egypt), along with Greece, for the 2036 FIFA World Cup (MEMO, 2022), understanding the impacts and legacies in the emerging context is critical.

Although sport mega-events play an essential role in attracting visitors and can boost the tourism sector, these events can still create both tangible and intangible impacts within the host community (Liu, 2016; Ishac & Swart, 2022). While most research initially concentrated on the tangible benefits gained from hosting international sport events, the shift in research to the intangible benefits were covered mainly by concentrating on the socio-psychological impact generated within the host country (Oja et al., 2018; Storm & Jakobsen, 2020). Moreover, some researchers have argued that a short-term impact associated with visitors, while in the long run a significant social impact can be associated (Crompton, 2002; Liu & Gratton, 2010).

With the growing research centred on evaluating the perceived impact related to hosting mega/international sport events (Kim & Petrick, 2005; Balduck et al., 2011; Gibson et al., 2014; Oshimi et al., 2021), researchers started to focus more on the perceived social impact within the host country/ city residents’ in supporting the event (Kaplanidou et al., 2013; Prayag et al.,

2013; Parra-Camacho et al., 2020a). Several residents' perceptions have been conducted pre- and post the 2010 FIFA World Cup (Tichaawa et al., 2015; Tichaawa et al., 2015), and on different segments, including those in the immediate vicinity of the stadium precinct (Bob & Swart, 2009), informal residents (Swart & Jurd, 2012) and African immigrants in South Africa (Achu & Swart, 2012). Besides, community pride, self-esteem, and excitement are some of the variables that perform a critical function in understanding the behaviour and attitude of residents (Ghaderi et al., 2021; Ribeiro et al., 2021).

Consecutively, many researchers based their studies on the psychic income to assess the intangible impact produced within the host community (Crompton, 2004; Owen, 2006; Kim & Walker, 2012; Gibson et al., 2014). Psychic income has been expressed as the psychological and emotional benefits residents perceive from hosting the event (Crompton, 2004); therefore, understanding its benefits to the host community can facilitate the social leverage of these events (Oja et al., 2018). More recently, Oshimi et al. (2021) investigated the relationship between perceived social impact and the residents' behaviour during the 2019 Rugby World Cup in Japan, to measure the social impact. Understanding the perceived social impact produced by hosting international/mega sport events can contribute to the understanding of societal changes (Ishac & Swart, 2022).

In the MENA region, limited research exists on the impact associated with hosting these major sport events. Al Emadi et al. (2017) and Al Emadi et al. (2022) assessed the social impact related to the 2022 FIFA World Cup before the event took place (in 2014 and 2021, respectively), while Ishac et al. (2018) and Ishac and Swart (2022) assessed residents' impact after different international sport events took place in Qatar (viz. the 2015 IHF World Handball Championships and the IAAF 2019 World Athletic Championships, respectively). Ishac and Swart's (2022) study categorised residents into different groups based on their nationalities, where they measured the psychic income generated and compared it to each other. The only study concerning psychic income with regard to the 2010 FIFA World Cup is that of Gibson et al. (2014) whose results show that the psychic income of South African residents increased from pre- to post-event. To date, no similar study exists for the MENA region. Though Ishac and Swart's (2022) study used the results of the IAAF 2019 event to make projections regarding psychic income for the 2022 FIFA World Cup, the current study focuses on assessing the psychic income associated with the 2022 FIFA World Cup prior to the event. It is anticipated that the findings of this study can assist in providing direction to future co-host countries' decision-makers and planners, as is the case of the joint 2036 bid which has relevance for the MENA region.

For instance, Ma et al. (2013) and Wicker and Sotiriadou (2013) pointed out that identifying demographic factors can affect psychic income. Moreover, scholars have found that the place where residents grow up or where they were born can have a major influence on their perceptions (Lankford, 1994; McCool & Martin, 1994; McGehee & Andereck, 2004). Following the 2006 Melbourne Commonwealth Games, locals perceived the Games with a better attitude; "People of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin are more likely to spend more time participating in sport" (Wicker & Sotiriadou; 2013: 29). Assessing these variables not only helps administration and decision-makers to identify the level of satisfaction within different resident groups; thus, it will give insight to different countries in the region in bidding to host or co-hosting mega sport events.

The current study focuses on Qatar 2022 FIFA World Cup and utilises Ishac and Swart's (2022) approach to assess psychic income before the event takes place. Furthermore, the present study considers the impact on three different subgroups; categorised based on residents' nationality (viz. Qatari nationals, Arab nationals excluding the Qataris, and non-Arab nationals). Following Ishac and Swart (2022), the questionnaire that comprises the five

different dimensions of psychic income was adjusted to the 2022 FIFA World Cup; as expounded further in the methodology section. This study adds to Al Emadi et al.'s study (2022), which highlighted the significance of nationality within the Qatari context by categorising residents into three sub-groups as mentioned previously, instead of two (Qataris and ex-patriates). Furthermore, it builds on Ishac and Swart's (2022) investigation by assessing the perceived psychic income prior to hosting mega sport events by targeting the whole community instead of the youth only.

## **Literature review and hypotheses development**

### ***Perceived impact and residents' perceptions***

Perceived impact associated with residents' perceptions of international/ mega sport events can generate positive or negative impacts (Scheu et al., 2021) within the host city on different levels, mainly the economic and the social ones (Zhou & Ap, 2009; Scheu & Preuss, 2018; Ribeiro et al., 2022). Therefore, understanding residents' perceptions within local communities has become central in research assessing community impacts (Kaplanidou, 2020; Lee et al., 2022), while it has been measured prior, during, or post events, and sometimes over a period of time, depending on the objectives of these studies (Taks et al., 2020; Polcsik & Perényi, 2022).

Researchers have highlighted the importance of assessing residents' perceptions prior to the event, underlying that the success of the sport events requires ascertaining opinions of local residents (Bull & Lovell, 2007; Vetitnev & Bobina, 2017). Comprehending the behavioural intentions associated with the event usually focuses on supporting and understanding it, especially in planning to host future sport events (Vegara-Ferri et al., 2021; Balduck et al., 2011; Parra-Camacho et al., 2020a; Parra-Camacho et al., 2020b). Moreover, assessing residents' perceptions before the event can provide us with an understanding of residents' expectations, especially since it did not occur yet. Measuring residents' speculation about the impact associated with the event can help us comprehend residents' expectations of what will happen, which usually affect or influence their attitudes towards it (Oshimi et al., 2021).

Previous studies highlighted that host city or country residents perceive the sport event positively, mainly from tourism development and as a result of the increase in the marketing of the city (Kim et al., 2006; Balduck et al., 2011; Vetitnev et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2015). Additionally, a positive image is associated with city/ country image improvement (Kim et al., 2006; Kim & Patrick, 2005; Bull & Lovell, 2007). Hosting sport events can assist in showcasing the country or region's culture, improve the sense of community, as well as can have a positive association with community pride and national identity, it can affect and boost interaction between visitors and residents (Gibson et al., 2014; Al-Emadi et al., 2017; Karadakis & Kaplanidou, 2012).

In addition, several factors can influence residents' perceptions. The difference in opinions of various socio-demographic groups can be related to gender, education, and age (Chen et al., 2018; Zhou, 2010). Next, the different segments of the population perceived the sport event differently (Martínez-Cevallos et al., 2020). Moreover, the interest in the event, participating as a spectator, and involvement in sport can influence the perception of residents (Chen et al., 2018; Kim & Kaplanidou, 2019).

The following section will expound the different components that will be assessed in helping to understand residents' perceptions better, and psychic income in particular, associated with hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup.



### *Perceived psychic income*

Researchers have focused on the intangible benefits of hosting sporting events in order to quantify the impact made (Balduck et al., 2011; Slabbert & Oberholzer, 2011; Kim & Walker, 2012; Kim & Kim, 2014). Many research studies have stated that the social and psychological impacts should be separated (Ritchie & Aitken, 1985; Crompton, 2004); nevertheless, given their correlation, it is hard to split them (Kim et al. 2006; Kim & Petrick, 2005). Following that, there are two techniques to evaluate the social impact perceived by residents (Faulkner & Tideswell, 1997, either by looking at the big picture, considering cultural and environmental factors (Kim & Petrick, 2005), or by focusing on the residents' emotional and psychological conditions (Waite, 2003). Many constructs have been identified within the second subdivision; for example, the feel-good effect (Maennig 2008), well-being (Kavetsos & Szymanski 2010), and happiness (Taks et al., 2016).

The psychosocial advantages created by an individual was defined mainly by psychic income. Crompton (2004) was one of the pioneers in using psychic income to assess the influence of sporting events. Crompton (2004:181) described psychic income as "the emotional and psychological benefit residents perceive they receive, even though they do not physically attend sports events and are not involved in organising them." He developed a unique framework to assess psychological income in society based on his definition. The fundamental goal of this concept was to pinpoint the intangible incentive that drives people to participate in sporting events. Furthermore, Weight et al. (2019) amended Crompton's (2004) original concept of psychic income by replacing "with" with "may" to make the definition more inclusive of both fans and non-fans. As a result, the definition was changed to "the emotional and psychological benefits residents feel they obtain, although they [may] not physically attend sporting activities or participate in their organisation."

Crompton (2004) established one of the first models for assessing psychic income. His framework includes seven elements: (a) increased visibility, (b) civic pride as a sport event host city, (c) pride in efforts to resuscitate deteriorated areas, (d) enhanced collective self-esteem, (e) tangible focus on social bonding, (f) excitement from event visitors, and (g) emotional involvement with a sport event.

Many studies have elaborated on the nature of psychic revenue derived from hosting sporting events using Crompton's approach. One of the main studies that used five dimensions derived from Crompton's framework is Kim and Walker (2012). In their studies, the five assessed components were: community pride/image, community attachment, event excitement, community excitement, and community infrastructure (and was used for this study as well). Gibson et al. (2014) used the items designed assessing the psychic income and social capital obtained from hosting the 2010 FIFA World Cup. Four items explaining psychic income generated from mega-events were claimed to remain consistent with the literature. Next, Kim et al. (2015) looked at the Korean Grand Prix's psychological impact on the locals following a three-factor model (perceived community development, perceived economic benefits, and perceived community pride) that determined psychological effects (both positive and negative). While assessing the Olympic Games in Beijing, Liu (2016) investigated the social impact concerned with major sport events on the host residents of Shanghai and found that the majority of these residents perceived this major sport event positively. A recent study by Mourão et al. (2022) assessed the psychic income perceived by local residents at the Rio Olympic Games in 2016, where they found that residents' psychic income increased when comparing results from pre- to post-event. Furthermore, Wallstam and Kronenberg (2022), after assessing the role of major sport events in regional communities, found that the assessed group perceived a stronger positive emotional impact among different international sport

events that took place in the same year. The following section will detail the assessed components and indicate the different hypotheses.

### ***Community pride (CP)***

Community pride was defined as a feeling of self-respect engendered by enhanced national or worldwide awareness resulting from an event (Kim & Walker, 2012). Academic and popular research has shown how media coverage and exposure provided by significant international sporting events may affect a variety of community satisfaction indicators (Koo & Byon, 2014; Liu, 2016; Storm & Jakobsen, 2020). For instance, the national and international media coverage of Expo Milano 2015 and sporting mega-events contributed in increasing community pride (Liu, 2016; Magno & Dossena, 2020). Wicker and Sotiriadou, (2013), found that community pride has increased when comparing it to prior to the event. Likewise, Custódio et al. (2018) found that hosting the European Rally Championship significantly increased resident pride and excitement. Furthermore, in the region, Gahderi et al. (2021), while assessing a small event, found that community pride was not influenced in their assessments; that might be due to the size and type of the event.

### ***Community attachment (CA)***

Hummon (1992) describes people's emotional connections to a specific community as stated under the 'rootedness' and 'belongingness' due to the event being entrenched in the domestic culture. This notion is heavily linked to community level interpersonal interactions and social networks. Accordingly, sporting events foster strong and unspoken relationships amid host communities and boost community members' individual confidence (Heere & James, 2007; Liu, 2016). Further studies have looked at sporting events to assist people in re-establishing a sense of community via involvement (Smith & Ingham, 2003). While experts agree that hosting international sport events can achieve these goals (Gibson et al., 2014; Liu, 2016; Zagorin et al., 2017; Zhou et al., 2018), more research is required to thoroughly comprehend how local relationships arise and appear as a sense of attachment and reciprocity, and if this sense of attachment can or change or vary concerning the size of the sport event.

### ***Event excitement (EE)***

Several studies have found that sporting events can boost the number of local activities and entertainment alternatives available near the event site (Kim & Walker, 2012; Liu, 2016). For example, in his study, Chalip (2006) highlighted that an increased number of visitors to a community and the associated activities around the major could generate excitement. On the other hand, Inoue and Havard (2014) observe that sport events generate enthusiasm by presenting professional and well-known athletes from various nation regions and sharing expertise and information about the sport with the community. Therefore, event liminality's energy and excitement are essential factors in attracting, attending and hosting events (Chalip, 2006). Nevertheless, there is a paucity of research concerning the type of the sport event and the repetitiveness of the sport event over a period of time, and whether it generates the same impact.

### ***Community excitement (CE)***

Several researchers suggested that other activities function as streams of communal enthusiasm even if they are not essentially related to the event itself (Inoue & Havard, 2014; Kim & Walker, 2012; Liu, 2016). For instance, a multi-ethnic, multi-sport event accompanied by traditional performances (music, local dance, and traditional food, among other regional activities) increased the community's excitement. In addition, García (2001) highlights that

event augmentations may improve the festive ambiance of an event by incorporating relevant artistic aspects into sport or physical activity. Furthermore, other studies indicate that combining cultural pursuits with sporting events boosts community excitement (Ratten & Madichie, 2016; Vij et al., 2019).

### ***Community infrastructure (CI)***

The physical improvements or developments that arise from hosting sport events or closely related activities are called community infrastructure. Many researchers emphasised that hosting mega sport events contribute to the regeneration and revival of cities, communities, and regions (Chen & Wang, 2017; Davies, 2016; Smith & Mair, 2018; Zhang et al., 2018). Local citizens, for example, thought the Super Bowl enhanced urban regeneration, increased public service and infrastructure quality, and encouraged possibilities to revitalise the city (Kim & Walker, 2012). In addition, since Qatar won the bid to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup, the country has been investing heavily in improving its infrastructure. A previous study found that host city residents recognised the changes happening in the city landscape to host sport events, which was reflected in favour of all the efforts implemented (Ishac & Swart, 2022). Nevertheless, it is important to re-assess this element longitudinally, especially after the city reaches a sufficient stage of building infrastructure.

### **Research context**

To the authors' knowledge, in the region, and mainly in the Arab world, only two studies considered assessing the psychic income, mainly in the context of hosting international/mega sport events, and specifically after the event took place (Ishac et al., 2018; Ishac & Swart, 2022). In the context of the FIFA World Cup, Gibson et al. (2014) assessed pre-post psychic income associated with the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa. Therefore, the current study focuses on assessing residents' perceived psychic income associated with the 2022 FIFA World Cup prior to the event take place. Furthermore, the literature assessing the perceived impact has taken into consideration the analysis and the examination of subgroups of residents (Zhou & Ap, 2009; Ma et al., 2013). The majority of studies categorised residents into subgroups by clusters. For instance, Madrigal (1995) and Chen and Tian (2015), assessed the perceived impact on their communities by focusing on residents' reactions in two cities. Other studies categorised residents into groups based on the type of emotions that can be generated (Fredline & Faulkner, 2000; Zhou & Ap, 2009). Furthermore, researchers believed that classifying residents based on specific demographic factors can generate a higher psychic income (Ma et al., 2013; Wicker & Sotiriadou, 2013). For instance, longer-term residents were more affected in comparison to shorter-term residents living in the country (Sheldon & Var, 1984; Brunt & Courtney, 1999). Similarly, categorising residents based on their nationalities showed that it can generate a difference in residents' perceptions. Researchers found that the place of birth or where residents were raised can affect their perceptions (Lankford, 1994; McCool & Martin, 1994; McGehee & Andereck, 2004; Ishac & Swart, 2022).

Accordingly, this study centres on measuring the psychic income before the 2022 FIFA World Cup take place by categorising residents' into subgroups based on their nationalities. Hence three groups were formed, Qatari nationals as a group, Arabs excluding the Qataris as the second group, and non-Arabs as the third, and final, group (see Figure 1). While the majority of Qatar residents are non-Qatari, following Ishac and Swart (2022), the authors argue that categorising Qatar residents will provide a better understanding of the impact generated within the society.

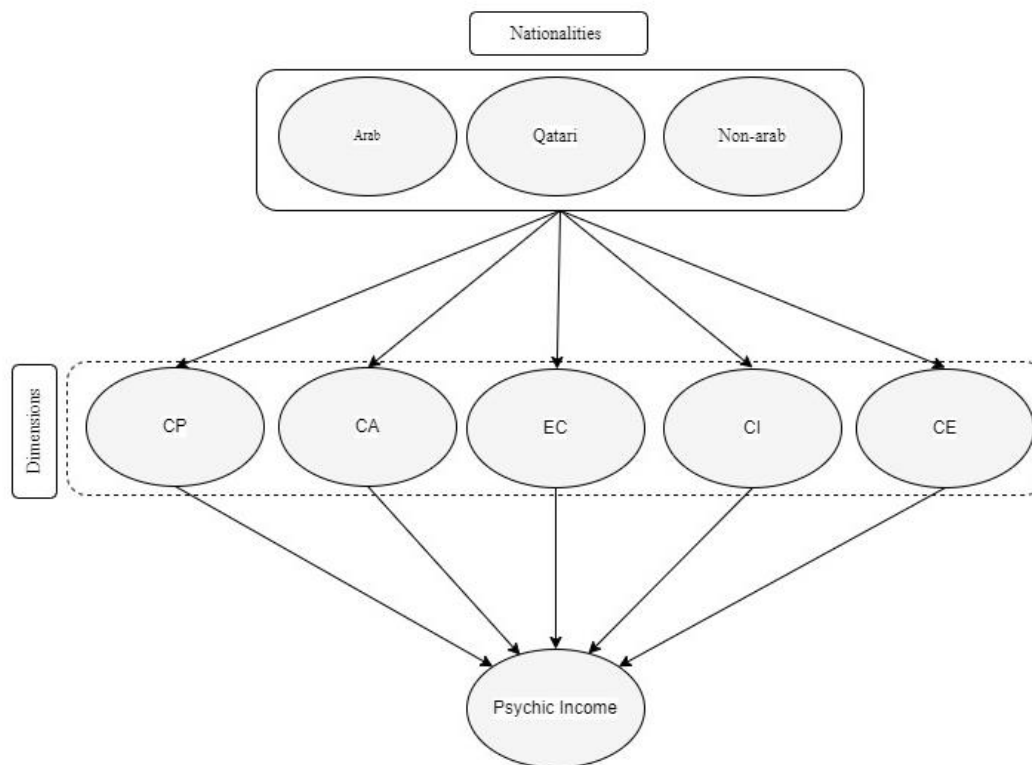


Figure 1: New conceptual framework

Additionally, results will provide decision-makers and future co-host cities/ countries the ability to understand the changes that might occur within their society, while highlighting the advantages of such a co-host and how it can improve the impact within different cities, countries and even continents at the same time. Therefore, the following hypotheses were formulated and tested:

*Hypothesis 1: Positive psychic income was perceived by Qatar residents before hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup.*

*Hypothesis 2: Before hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup, a greater psychic income for Qatari nationals was perceived compared to Arab nationals.*

*Hypothesis 3: Before hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup, a greater psychic income for Arab nationals was perceived compared to non-Arab nationals.*

## Methods

### *Participants and data collection*

Following Kim and Walker's (2012) framework, and modified by Ishac and Swart (2022), the questionnaire was adapted further to correspond to the 2022 FIFA World Cup before the event takes place. The study used a questionnaire adopted from Ishac and Swart (2022) consisting of 29 questions to assess the five dimensions of the study (see Figure 1). A seven-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), was used and assisted in measuring participants' perspectives. Following ethical approval from the Institutional Review Board, the online questionnaire was uploaded. Two hundred and eighty participants residing in Qatar took part in this study, 56% of the respondents were Qatari nationals (n=157), with



the majority being female (n=227). They were recruited by sending an online questionnaire via a link shared on different social platforms (Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp). Data were collected six months before the 2022 FIFA World Cup. The target audience for this study was residents living in Qatar for more than one year. Building on Al Emadi et al.'s (2022) and Ishac and Swart's (2022), this study underscores the importance of associating the perceived impact before the event take place and how it can help in projecting into the future further, which, mainly by giving co-host countries decision makers a better understanding to the changes that can occur in the host countries.

### **Measurements**

The study used a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and a Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) in measuring the perceived impact generated prior to the 2022 FIFA World Cup. In order to determine the internal reliability of the survey items, each factor was tested to assess its ability to extract sufficient variance from its corresponding items (Ishac & Swart, 2022). Following, the construct reliability was measured by applying Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) and Composite Reliability (CR). Accordingly, the average variance extracted (AVE), and Fornell and Larcker's criteria (FLC) were applied to validate the constructs and to determine whether the constructs are distinctive from one another, respectively.

Additionally, SEM was applied to describe the relationships between the subgroups of the residents' and the five dimensions, as well as with the overall psychic income (see Figure 1). Variance Inflation factor (VIF) was applied to examine collinearity, followed by measuring the path coefficients, standard errors, t-values, and p-values for testing the hypotheses. Following Wold's (1982) approach, the manifest indicators of the five dimensions are used to identify the second-order construct (total psychic income). To assess the total psychic income, all of the manifest variables of the common first-order factors must be used. The psychic income is measured based on the 29 questions; thus not a single scale variable as it is measured based on all the questions.

### **Results**

In order to determine whether the latent variables (CP, CA, EE, CE, and CI) adequately described the data collected before hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup, a CFA model was developed. Several procedures were applied to assess the measurement model's reliability and validity. To measure the internal reliability of each item standardised factor loadings (SL) were used, and it is recommended to be above 0.7 (Kline, 2016). Table 1 shows that the factor loadings varied between 0.779 and 0.950, approving the reliability of the survey items.

For the construct consistency,  $\alpha$  and CR, it has been suggested that their value has to be of 0.70 or above to be considered acceptable (Taber, 2017). As shown in Table 1, construct reliability was confirmed in which  $\alpha$  and CR values are greater than 0.70. To better understand the applied scales' correlation to the other factors and assess the convergent validity, the current study examined the AVE, which should be greater or equal to 0.50 (Henseler et al., 2014). Table 1 demonstrates acceptable convergence validity for all factors, given that the AVE values are between 0.733 and 0.895. Moreover, the discriminant validity was assessed by applying FLC approach.



Table 1. Measurement model results

Variables	Mean	SD	SL	$\alpha$	CR	AVE
<b>Community Pride (CP)</b>				0.939	0.951	0.733
Qatar gained a positive image as the FIFA World Cup host country	6.036	1.386	0.857			
Qatar gained positive recognition	6.050	1.322	0.850			
Qatar showed the ability to host a major sport event	6.282	1.083	0.862			
Hosting the FIFA World Cup will give opportunities to showcase the country	6.436	1.123	0.886			
Hosting the FIFA World Cup will help Qatar to become a nationally known country	6.479	1.059	0.822			
Qatar can host other major sports events	6.418	0.993	0.849			
Hosting the FIFA World Cup will allow foreigners to know more about Qatar.	6.493	0.975	0.866			
<b>Community Attachment (CA)</b>				0.957	0.964	0.769
Hosting the FIFA World Cup will strengthen my friendships in my community	5.282	1.800	0.779			
Hosting the FIFA World Cup will make residents' appreciate their way of life more	5.254	1.772	0.823			
Watching the FIFA World Cup will increase my sense of well-being	5.229	1.861	0.871			
Watching the FIFA World Cup will increase my sense of belonging in various community groups.	5.039	1.848	0.892			
Watching the FIFA World Cup will increase my social interaction within my community	5.104	1.803	0.917			
Watching the FIFA World Cup will increase my respect to the community	5.146	1.963	0.919			
Watching the FIFA World Cup will increase cooperation among groups in my community	5.189	1.885	0.895			
Watching the FIFA World Cup will increase my community confidence	5.239	1.889	0.907			
<b>Event Excitement (EE)</b>				0.942	0.954	0.775
Watching the FIFA World Cup will increase my interests in the FIFA World Cup	5.332	1.823	0.858			
Watching The FIFA World Cup will increase my fan involvement	5.243	1.872	0.902			
I will enjoy watching more matches from the FIFA World Cup	5.439	1.802	0.918			
During the tournaments the night life will be exciting	5.600	1.746	0.865			
During the tournament I will enjoy interacting with visitors	5.179	1.959	0.858			
I will like to watch the tournament	5.811	1.679	0.881			
<b>Community Infrastructure (CI)</b>				0.929	0.947	0.780
Hosting the FIFA World Cup will improve the quality of city public services	5.736	1.559	0.878			
Hosting the FIFA World Cup will improve the quality of police and fire services	5.954	1.472	0.885			
Hosting the FIFA World Cup will improve our public and sports facilities	6.157	1.327	0.867			
Hosting the FIFA World Cup will promote opportunities to revive the community	5.732	1.555	0.912			
Hosting the FIFA World Cup will help urban regeneration	5.714	1.616	0.874			
<b>Community Excitement (CE)</b>				0.941	0.962	0.895
Hosting the FIFA World Cup will provide entertainment to the community	5.882	1.499	0.947			
Hosting the FIFA World Cup will bring excitement to the community	6.004	1.387	0.950			
Hosting the FIFA World Cup will bring new activities to the community	5.936	1.438	0.941			

Following, Table 2 approves Fornell and Larcker's (1981) approach by showing that the square root AVE of each of the latent variables is greater than their correlation coefficient (off-diagonal).

Table 2. Discriminant validity results

Factors	CE	CA	EC	EE	CI
CE	<b>0.946</b>				
CA	0.629	<b>0.856</b>			
EC	0.674	0.611	<b>0.877</b>		
EE	0.738	0.550	0.810	<b>0.881</b>	
CI	0.823	0.732	0.719	0.722	<b>0.883</b>

### Structural model assessment

Prior to analysing structural relationships, the current study assessed the VIF values. Based on the reported VIF values, the study found that the structural model had minimal collinearity considering the obtained values below 5 (Sarstedt et al., 2021). Following this, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) was applied to determine whether the SEM model

was a good fit. RMSEA equal to 0.07, indicating a good model fit (Hooper et al., 2008). Next, Partial least squares (PLS) were applied with 10,000 bootstrap samples and 280 bootstrap cases to determine the standardised path coefficients, standard errors, and t-values (see Table 3). Following the path coefficients and levels of significance, it can be concluded that the host country residents perceived a positive psychic income prior to the 2022 FIFA World Cup, with the five dimensions assessed being positive. Enhanced community attachment was found to have the most significant effect ( $\beta_{EC} = 0.325, p < 0.001$ ), followed by community pride ( $\beta_{CP} = 0.242, p < 0.001$ ), event excitement ( $\beta_{EE} = 0.240, p < 0.001$ ), community infrastructure ( $\beta_{PC} = 0.205, p < 0.001$ ) and community excitement ( $\beta_{CE} = 0.133, p < 0.001$ ).

Table 3. Structural model results

Structural paths	B	SE	t	p
<b>Total residents</b>				
Community excitement -> Psychic income	0.133	0.004	31.440	< 0.001
Community pride -> Psychic income	0.242	0.011	22.017	< 0.001
Community attachment -> Psychic income	0.325	0.012	27.644	< 0.001
Event excitement -> Psychic income	0.240	0.009	26.242	< 0.001
Community infrastructure -> Psychic income	0.205	0.006	34.946	< 0.001
<b>Subgroup by nationality</b>				
Nationalities (Qatari) -> Community excitement	0.345	0.112	3.080	0.002
Nationalities (Arab) -> Community excitement	0.211	0.117	1.801	0.072
Nationalities (Qatari) -> Community pride	0.192	0.103	1.852	0.064
Nationalities (Arab) -> Community pride	0.064	0.116	0.551	0.581
Nationalities (Qatari) -> Community attachment	0.268	0.105	2.545	0.011
Nationalities (Arab) -> Community attachment	0.217	0.105	2.060	0.039
Nationalities (Qatari) -> Event excitement	0.321	0.103	3.116	0.002
Nationalities (Arab) -> Event excitement	0.250	0.105	2.378	0.017
Nationalities (Qatari) -> Community infrastructure	0.289	0.107	2.701	0.007
Nationalities (Arab) -> Community infrastructure	0.188	0.112	1.682	0.093

B: Path coefficient; SE: Standard Error; t, Bootstrap t-value; p, p-value.  
 The reference group for the variable Nationalities is “non-Arab”.

Additionally, Table 3 shows a significant difference between non-Arabs and Qatari nationals in relation to the community excitement dimension ( $\beta_{Nationalities (Qatari)} = 0.345, p = 0.002$ ) while it was not significant between non-Arabs and Arab nationals ( $\beta_{Nationalities (Arab)} = 0.211, p = 0.072$ ), indicating Qatari residents were more enthusiastic on the dimension of community excitement than both Arabs and non-Arabs. Besides, there was no significant difference between the nationalities of residents when measuring community pride ( $\beta_{Nationalities (Qatari)} = 0.192, p = 0.064$ , and  $\beta_{Nationalities (Arab)} = 0.064, p = 0.581$ ). On the dimension of community infrastructure, the results indicate a significant difference between Qatari and non-Arab nationals ( $\beta_{Nationalities (Arab)} = 0.289, p = 0.007$ ). Interestingly, no significant difference when assessing pride in community infrastructure between Arabs and non-Arabs ( $\beta_{Nationalities (Arab)} = 0.188, p = 0.093$ ). Compared to non-Arab nationals, Qataris and Arabs showed significant differences with respect to community attachment ( $\beta_{Nationalities (Qatari)} = 0.268, p = 0.011$ , and  $\beta_{Nationalities (Arab)} = 0.217, p = 0.039$ ). Finally, there were significant differences between residents of different nationalities when assessing the event excitement dimension ( $\beta_{Nationalities (Qatari)} = 0.321, p = 0.002$ ) and ( $\beta_{Nationalities (Arab)} = 0.250, p = 0.017$ ).

## Discussion

A growing research interest is arising in relation to the perceived impact related to hosting mega sport events; however, studies in the Arab region remain scarce. One of the main objectives of this study is to fill that gap and to understand and explore the residents' perceptions concerning the 2022 FIFA World Cup. Next to that, this study is set to gain better insights of different countries in the region aiming to bid to host or co-host mega sport events such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia who are part of the next FIFA World Cup bid. To the best of our knowledge, the present study is the first to investigate Qatar residents' perceptions prior to the 2022 FIFA World Cup, taking into count the difference in nationalities of these residents based on three subgroups, and how this factor can affect their perception. This work advances the research field by being the first study in the region evaluating the psychic income connected to host country residents prior to mega sport events. Additionally, this work advances measuring the impact associated with subgroups of the residents considering the influence on residents' opinions due to different demographic variables (Kim & Petrick, 2005; Wicker & Sotiriadou, 2013; Al-Emadi et al., 2017, 2022).

The questionnaire adopted by Kim and Walker (2012), and modified by Ishac and Swart (2022), consists of five different dimensions of psychic income (a) community pride/image, (b) community attachment, (c) event excitement, (d) community excitement, and (e) community infrastructure and was further adjusted to the 2022 FIFA World Cup. CFA showed a good fit to the questionnaire, followed by a SEM to measure and analyse the relationships between the different subgroups and the five dimensions (see Figure 1), most of the values reached the ideal values mentioned in the literature.

The present study found a positive psychic income associated with Qatar residents six months prior to the 2022 FIFA World Cup. These findings evidenced how hosting mega sport events can positively affect the hosting community before the event takes place, supporting previous researchers' findings (Ribeiro et al., 2021; Gibson et al., 2014; Liu, 2017). Furthermore, these results highlight that residents' perceptions supported the five dimensions assessed in this study, and thus they are seen as positive perceptions among the Qatar residents further supporting previous researchers' findings (Mourão et al., 2022; Gibson et al., 2014).

For instance, when assessing each of the five components and its weight on the total psychic income, results showed that community attachment had the highest score in weight and contribution to the total psychic income, confirming previous research findings that hosting mega sport events can help in re-establishing a sense of community (Smith & Ingham, 2003), and can boost individual self-confidence as a community member (Heere & James, 2007; Liu, 2016). In that regard, the authors argue that the challenges Qatar faced in the past years (the blockade exercised by Qatar's neighbouring countries, the media attack on human rights connected to the hosting of the World Cup) seems to have strengthened the relationships between the residents supporting the government's decision; manifesting in community attachment.

The following results show community pride as the second dimension being the second highest weight contributing to the total psychic income, supporting previous researchers' findings (Crompton, 2004; Kim & Walker, 2012; Koo & Byon, 2014; Gibson et al., 2014; Liu, 2016; Storm & Jakobsen, 2020; Magno & Dossena, 2020). It is important to highlight that community pride cannot be measured in the short-term; with Ghaderi et al. (2021) suggesting that hosting several sport events over a period of time will help strengthen community pride.

Furthermore, event excitement was the third dimension in terms of weight contributing to the total psychic income, and that is related to the type of event that going to be hosted as highlighted by several researchers (Kim & Walker, 2012; Liu, 2016). This result support Ishac and Swart's (2022) projections. The findings of their study, which assessed the impact of the

2019 IAAF on Qatar residents, suggested that the nature of sport event can affect the interaction of residents, projecting that the 2022 FIFA World Cup will have a higher impact on Qatar residents.

The last two dimensions, “community excitement” and “community infrastructure” show consistency with previous researchers (Kim & Walker, 2012; Gibson et al., 2014; Liu, 2016, Al Emadi et al., 2017, 2022). This study confirms Al-Emadi et al.’s (2022) findings that focus on the sociocultural factors being important in generating a positive impact on residents by being excited about hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup. When it comes to community infrastructure, results show a positive impact perceived in Qatar residents confirming previous studies (Chen & Wang, 2017; Davies, 2016; Smith & Mair, 2018; Zhang et al., 2018, Ishac et al., 2018; Ishac & Swart, 2022). In the case of Qatar, local citizens and residents were able to witness the major transformation, and the way winning the bid to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup enhanced urban regeneration, boosted the development of public service, which was also confirmed by Ishac et al., (2018) when they assessed the 2018 Handball World Championships, and Ishac and Swart (2022) after assessing the 2019 IAAF Athletic World Championships.

Moreover, the results go further by assessing the results within subgroups by categorising Qatar residents by their nationalities. To gain better insights of the impact associated with the 2022 FIFA World Cup scholars suggested that the place where residents grow up or where they were born can affect their perceptions (Lankford, 1994; McCool & Martin, 1994; McGehee & Andereck, 2004; Ma et al., 2013; Wicker & Sotiriadou, 2013). Results showed that Hypotheses 2 and 3 are partially supported. While community pride was not significant between the three different subgroups, community attachment was significantly different when comparing Qatari, Arab and non-Arab nationals, confirming Humman’s (1992) approach, which indicates that a feeling of belongingness can be generated within residents as the event gets entrenched in the local culture. That can be explained by the fact that the 2022 FIFA World Cup being hosted for the first time in an Arab country and for the first time in the MENA region, residents with a nationality from this region feel more associated with the event more than nationals from other regions of the world. Furthermore, it can be expressed by the greater interest of nationals from the region in football compared to other nationals (Theodorakis et al., 2019).

The event excitement dimension was significantly different between the different nationals. Perceived impact on Qatari nationals was higher than Arab and non-Arab nationals respectively. Following Inoue and Havard’s (2014) findings, sport events generate enthusiasm by presenting professional and well-known athletes from various nations and regions and sharing expertise and information about the sport with the community. Furthermore, another explanation to this difference in perceptions between nationals, is related to the fact that fans from the region are highly involved in football (Theodorakis et al., 2019).

### **Conclusion and limitations**

To conclude, the study underscores that a positive impact was generated among Qatar residents six months prior to the 2022 FIFA World Cup. Furthermore, this study illustrates that following residents’ nationalities, the perceived impact can differ between residents. This study deals with a critical aspect not included previously in the literature. By assessing the psychic income perceived within subgroups of the host country, decision-makers can have a better understanding of changes happening within the society. Furthermore, our study can deliver a better projection of the effectiveness of projecting to co-hosting international/ mega sport events, and the type of impacts that can be generated within the hosting countries.

Learning from the impact produced from hosting the 2010 FIFA World Cup and the impact generated from the 2022 FIFA World Cup before the event takes place, it is clear that



hosting such an event does not limit its positive impact only on the host country. Thus, it can affect the whole continent, which was the case of the 2010 South Africa, where this event was positioned as an opportunity to address Afro-pessimism and change the negative stereotypes not only of South Africa but the continent as a whole (Tichaawa & Bob, 2015). Similarly, the 2022 FIFA World Cup will help in changing the negative stereotypes associated with Muslim countries and showcase Arab hospitality (The Peninsula, 2022). Furthermore, the 2010 FIFA World Cup was seen as an opportunity to assist in the development of Africa (Tichaawa & Swart, 2010). The authors argue that the same can apply to the 2022 FIFA World Cup when the host country, Qatar, decided to move this event to a regional one by involving its surrounding countries to accommodate in hosting fans from all over the world.

By assessing the perception of subgroups in society, the case of the 2022 FIFA World Cup can help in understanding the perception that can be generated from co-hosting the FIFA World Cup by several countries. The authors argue that assessing the residents based on their nationalities can provide insight into co-hosting the FIFA World Cup. Following our findings on community attachment and event excitement, results show that locals had a higher positive impact compared to regional and international residents, respectively. This means that if the event is taking place in different countries, each of the local populations will likely generate a higher impact. Consequently, a totally higher impact will be generated from hosting the FIFA World Cup. Next to that, the authors argue that co-hosting the FIFA World Cup, based on the experiences of the 2010 and 2022 FIFA World Cups, will provide an opportunity to create a positive impact within several continents.

Future research could consider measuring the impact related to Qatar's hosting of the 2022 FIFA World Cup in neighbouring countries, especially since they will be supporting hosting international fans. This will provide an understanding of the perceived impact on residents as well as on visitors. Assessing the psychic income associated with residents and visitors of neighbouring countries to Qatar will help in planning and developing strategies to increase the impact created from hosting mega sport events, and is likely to increase regional engagement. Consequently, this may attract more regional visitors to travel to the host country. Furthermore, engaging more visitors in different regions and continents will help in increasing the return on investment for the host communities and will provide higher exposure to the FIFA World Cup.

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