



**Palestinian Sports Fans' Rooting Practices and Preferences: A case
Study of the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar**

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study explores the motivations and justifications driving Palestinian sports fans to watch the 2022 FIFA World Cup and support specific national teams. The objective is to understand the underlying factors that contribute to their engagement with this global sports event. **Methods:** The study targeted 732 residents of Nablus Governorate with a primary interest in watching football matches on television. A five-point Likert scale was used to assess Palestinian fandom preferences concerning the FIFA World Cup 2022, covering demographic information and reasons motivating Palestinians to watch the World Cup. **Results:** The study reveals several significant associations between the variables under investigation. Participants argued that the FIFA World Cup serves as a platform to generate interest in the Palestinian cause and showcase the Arab and Islamic cultures to foreign delegations. Additionally, the event contributes to dispelling misconceptions about these cultures on a global scale. Palestinian football supporters use their engagement with the 2022 FIFA World Cup to express not only their passion and love for football but also their national, cultural, and political identities. **Conclusion:** The findings underscore the multifaceted nature of sports fandom as a means of communication, contributing to a broader understanding of how global sports events intersect with cultural and political dynamics.

Keywords: Culture, Fandom, FIFA World Cup, Palestine, Qatar, Rooting Teams.

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ممارسات مشجعي الرياضة الفلسطينية وتفضيلاتهم: دراسة حالة لكأس العالم لكرة القدم 2022 في قطر

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ملخص

الهدف: تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف الدوافع والتبريرات التي تدفع عشاق الرياضة الفلسطينية إلى مشاهدة تصفيات كأس العالم لكرة القدم لعام 2022 ودعم منتخباتهم الوطنية المحددة. وقد حرص الباحثون على فك رموز العوامل الأساسية التي تسهم في مشاهدتهم لهذا الحدث الرياضي العالمي البارز. **منهجية البحث:** استهدفت الدراسة بشكل خاص 732 شخصاً من محافظة نابلس الذين يظهرون اهتماماً ملحوظاً بمشاهدة مباريات كرة القدم عبر التلفزيون. باستخدام مقياس لا يكرت الخماسي، قام الباحثون بتقييم تفضيلات المشجعين الفلسطينيين فيما يتعلق بكأس العالم لكرة القدم لعام 2022. اعتمد الباحثون على الاستبانة والمقابلة كأدوات للبحث والتقصي اخذين بعين الاعتبار مجموعة من العوامل الديموغرافية والأسباب التي تحفز الفلسطينيين على مشاهدة البطولة. **النتائج:** كشفت الدراسة عن عدة ارتباطات مهمة بين المتغيرات المدروسة. حيث عبر المستطلعة آراؤهم عن أن نهائيات كأس العالم لكرة القدم تعتبر منصة لتوليد اهتمام في قضية الفلسطينيين وعرض الثقافات العربية والإسلامية للوفود الأجنبية. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، يري المشاهدون الفلسطينيون ان هذه البطولة ساهمت في تعديل كثير من المفاهيم المغلوطة حول هذه الثقافات على مستوى عالمي. خلص الباحثون كذلك الى نتيجة مفادها ان مشجعي كرة القدم الفلسطينيين استغلوا مشاهدتهم لبطولة كأس العالم لعام 2022 للتعبير ليس فقط عن شغفهم وحبهم لكرة القدم ولكن أيضاً عن هويتهم الوطنية والثقافية والسياسية. **الخلاصة:** تسلط النتائج الضوء على الطابع المتعدد الجوانب لحب الرياضة كوسيلة للتواصل، مما يسهم في فهم أعمق لكيفية تداخل الفعاليات الرياضية العالمية مع الديناميات الثقافية والسياسية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الثقافة، المشجعين، كأس العالم لكرة القدم، فلسطين، قطر، تشجيع الفرق الرياضية.

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Introduction

The key to living a meaningful, happy life is to engage in worthwhile projects (Wolf, 2015). Meaningfulness is promoted by serious engagement with things beyond oneself and one's pleasures. Several studies have demonstrated a positive link between social connections and happiness and the meanings we derive from our relationships (Baumeister & Landau, 2018). There is often a belief that meaningful projects require a connection with something outside the individual; sports fandom exemplifies this belief. Each fandom has its traditions, guidelines, and jokes that encourage interaction between members of the community over a shared interest (Sesek & Pusnik, 2014). Because our lives are enriched by sports and sports fandom, the importance of sports fandom cannot be underestimated (Shaker, 2013).

It is not uncommon for people to find meaning and identity through their fandoms (Archer & Wojtowicz, 2022). Fans of sports build communities, define themselves, and find meaning in life through their passion. A sports fan's identity is not insignificant, but serves to create and reinforce community and individual identities; in addition to perpetuating communities' existence over time, sports fandom fosters racial and gender hierarchies (Tarver, 2017). Along with ensuring the community's survival, sports fandom practices also shape its character and collective identities (Vanhoutte 2010). These practices make fans more aware of themselves as members of a particular kind as they are governed by a particular set of laws, disciplines, and power structures (Tarver, 2017). As soon as the fan incorporates his or her support of the team into their identity, the success of the team will partly determine their well-being (Archer & Wojtowicz, 2022). Identifying with a sports team is not only a means for some to enhance their self-esteem but also an opportunity for some to improve their mental health (Wann & James, 2018). Eventually, a match becomes something that matters if they take the time to watch it (Borge, 2019).

The spread of digital platforms and space channels and the emergence of the internet have made fandom more accessible to the typical fan (Sesek & Pusnik, 2014). Having this platform allows members of these fans to watch sports events, participate in discussions and interact with those

going through similar experiences (Anderson, 2012). In 2014, the World Cup accounted for billions of interactions on Facebook and hundreds of millions of tweets (Bauder, 2014). Sports events like the FIFA World Cup, which have the power to shape and project the host nation's image both domestically and internationally, are a highly desirable tool for political and economic elites in the age of global television (Black & Van Der Westhuizen, 2004). Media connectivity is primarily responsible for how international fans develop vehement associations with football teams along all territorial frontiers (Hognestad, 2009).

Sports on television are watched by a diverse group of people for a variety of reasons. Some people might enjoy watching high-caliber sports, while others are primarily focused on supporting their favorite teams or athletes, driven by group affiliation and the desire to be social (Danielson, 1997). The article explains how watching the FIFA World Cup in Qatar impacted the Palestinian people's fandom practices, and clarifies demographic variables that may affect why they root for certain national teams rather than others.

Literature review and theoretical framework

The correlation between sports fandom and team identification suggests that many people who have a high level of fan identification may not strongly identify with a specific team or player (Wann, 2002). Team identification, according to Lock and Heere (2017), entails sensory perception, interaction with a people's self, participation in and reviews of social identities, and a certain amount of personal significance. Based on the concept of identity theory, people usually consider how their actions are influenced by the roles they play (Stets & Burke, 2000). As a result, a person can have multiple roles (e.g., a sports team member or a fan, etc.). From the perspective of social identity, sports fans belong to an organization or a group that may include sportspeople, trainers, referees, and personnel (Lock & Heere, 2017). The current study relies on team identification and social identity theories as they help investigate Palestinian sports fans' rooting practices and preferences while watching the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar.

Tarver (2017) divides fandom practices into three categories: knowledge acquisition, performances, and fan discourse. Fan participation in team activities, wearing team colors, logos and patches, learning about a team's history and reading reports about it are all ways in which fans demonstrate their commitment to that team (Archer & Wojtowicz, 2022). In simple terms, a fan is “someone who perceives him- or herself as a fan of a certain team or sport in general” (Bauer et al, 2008, p. 206). A true fan of a sport is not necessarily someone who attends or watches every game, but rather someone who experiences the game in the company of other sports fans (Dixon, 2013). Aspects such as entertainment, pleasure, family needs, group affiliation, self-esteem, and potential, religious, economic, or political gain constitute the psychological factors that push people to support a team (Wann, 1995).

Between the ages of 6 and 15, a large number of people are inculcated into fandom by their families (Shaker, 2013). Furthermore, many people develop a stronger emotional bond with a (national) team by associating their fandom with related external identities, such as a place identity such as a country or university (Heere et al., 2011). Fandom practices and decisions are influenced by other factors, such as a team's history and success, playing style, mythology, and the presence of notable players, such as Messi, Mbappé, and Ronaldo (Vincent et al., 2009).

Although a fair number of females identify as sports fans, the culture still views sports as a predominantly male activity (Dixon, 2013; Williams, 2007). The competitive nature of the sport and the muscular and heroic appearance of the sportsmen all serve to promote sports to male audiences (Borer, 2009). Sports fandom culture is heavily influenced by the need to interact with other men and assert one's masculinity (Dixon, 2013). Asserting heterosexuality and dominance over women is an essential characteristic of sports fandom (Borer, 2009). Nearly the same number of people watch basketball, soccer, and tennis on television (Winslow, 2021). Even though the number of female football fans is rising, it is widely acknowledged that gender-based disparities exist in sports fan communities (Nagle et al, 2010). Fan motivation differs significantly

between men and women, reflecting societal norms (Abu-Tame', 2004; Archer & Wojtowicz, 2022; Wann & Waddill, 2003).

Going to sporting events can make fans happy on an aesthetic level, give families a chance to bond (Smith & Stewart, 2007), and help people escape the hardships of daily life or the stress of belonging to a marginalized minority group (Bilyeu & Wann, 2002). Sports are a means by which fans can join a .selected team. Cultural affinity fosters harmony and unites group members who are fans (Wann 1995). Sports events may help fans feel a part of the community and connected to its culture (Sesek & Pusnik, 2014). As Cialdini et al., (1976) state, people often identify with successful teams as a way to identify with themselves; they will boost their self-esteem without actually helping the team win.

As a dynamic phenomenon, sports fandom can mean different things to different age groups (Jaber, 2010); compared to their younger counterparts, older fans show higher levels of team identification and sports fandom (Toder-Alon, Icekson & Shuv-Ami, 2018). Additionally, as sports fans age, their loyalty increases (Tapp, 2004). The proportion of older adults who are sports fans has dramatically increased (Icekson et al, 2021). Fans' interest in sports increases as they get older (Guimaraes, Stride, & O'Reilly, 2016; Lombardo & Broughton, 2017). Students utilize watching TV to connect and converse with friends, which constitutes mediating social interaction (Haridakis & Hanson, 2009). Particular program types, like news and sports, are typically linked to social interaction and information gathering (Cooper & Tang, 2009).

Statement of the problem

Sports fandoms and nations have been referred to as social formations where members believe they are part of the same group but have never actually met (Anderson, 2006). While the 2022 World Cup was underway in Qatar, much emphasis was placed on who supported which national teams and why. In this article, we provide a thorough analysis of Palestinian fandom preferences in the context of the FIFA World Cup 2022. We claim that the nations' use of sport as a means of communicating

with global dynamics is equally important to the role played by politics, international relations, and globalized media.

To help respondents define why they were watching the World Cup, we created a questionnaire to allow them to describe which teams they found appealing or repulsive and the reasons for their bias. The study aimed to investigate Palestinian sports fans' rooting practices and preferences while watching the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar.

Questions of the study

The researchers seek to answer the following questions:

1. What are the reasons that drive Palestinian fans to watch the 2022 FIFA World Cup?
2. What are the reasons that push Palestinian fans to root for specific national teams based on the teams' characteristics and attributes?
3. What are the reasons that push Palestinian fans to root for specific national teams based on their preferences and feelings towards these teams?
4. Are there statistically significant differences at ($P < .05$), among study participants regarding their motivations for following the 2022 FIFA World Cup and their preferences for rooting for particular national teams, which may be attributed to (Age, Gender, Academic Qualification, and Job)?

Materials and Methods

To conduct the current quantitative study, institutional consent and approval were obtained from the director of the Language Centre at An-Najah National University (See appendix A). A descriptive online questionnaire (See appendix B) was compiled to explore the current state of sports fandom practices and preferences among the Palestinians living in Nablus Governorate.

To ensure the questionnaire's validity, factorial validity was calculated by using Bartlett's Test of Sphericity which was significant, and the

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy test; this was found to be 0.884 which ensured that the items were suitable for exploratory-factor analysis. To ensure the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was 0.902 for the total items.

Sample

The study population consisted of residents of Nablus Governorate in the northern West Bank whose sports interests are mainly limited to watching football matches on television. Participants in the survey were randomly selected and their identities were kept anonymous. Out of the (802) responses received, (732) responses that we generated were appropriate for inclusion in the analysis. The descriptive statistics of the participants' responses were calculated based on the demographic variables, i.e., gender, age, academic qualification, and job; the results are shown in Table 1 below.

Table (1): Participants' basic characteristics and attributes.

Variable		Count	Percentage
Gender	Male	418	57.1
	Female	314	42.9
	Total	732	100
Age in years	Less than 15–24	385	52.6
	25 – 34	157	21.4
	35–44	105	14.3
	45–54	63	8.6
	55 actors	22	3.0
	Total	732	100.0
Academic Qualification	Without a degree	17	2.3
	High School certificate	70	9.6
	Diploma	28	3.8
	Bachelor's Degree	494	67.5
	Postgraduate degree	123	16.8
	Total	732	100.0

Variable		Count	Percentage
Job	Student	350	47.8
	Public sector employee	106	14.5
	Private sector employee	159	21.7
	Housewife	15	2.0
	Wage worker	18	2.5
	Entrepreneur	67	9.2
	Without a job (Jobless)	17	2.3
	Total	732	100.0

According to (Jaber, 2010), sports are portrayed primarily as a male activity, and because there are gender differences in sports fandom, there are more male respondents (418) than female respondents (314) in this study. The age of the participants is another important factor that has been taken into account; young Palestinians between the ages of 15 and 24 have made up 51.5% of the participants, while 1.1% are children under the age of 14. The majority of study respondents (67.5%) are typically students, and the least number of respondents (2.3%) are people whose ages preclude them from obtaining a degree or certificate. Another important factor that may influence a football fan's decision to support one national team over another while watching the World Cup is thought to be the participants' jobs. Seven major categories are used to group the respondents (student, public sector employee, private sector employee, housewife, wage worker, entrepreneur, and jobless). Students make up the greatest share of respondents (47.8%), while housewives make up the smallest share (2%).

Study tool

In this study, Palestinian fandom preferences in the context of FIFA World Cup 2022 will be identified using the five-point Likert scale to test the correlative and causal relationships between study variables. The researchers tried to evaluate how participants agree or disagree with items of the questionnaire which is divided into four main sections (See Additional file 1). The study's independent variables are introduced in Part

1 and are related to demography (social and demographic features of the study sample including age, gender, academic qualification, and job). The dependent variables are represented in Parts 2, 3, and 4. The second section contains 10 items that represent the reason that motivates Palestinians to watch FIFA World Cup 2022. The frequency of the 15 items was determined using a five-point Likert scale with the following values: Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Uncertain (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). The third section contains 15 items that discuss reasons that push Palestinian fans to root for specific national teams based on the teams' characteristics and attributes. The final section contains 8 items that discuss the reasons that push Palestinian fans to root for specific national teams based on their preferences and feelings towards these teams.

Procedures

Eventually, the questionnaire was posted to people online; it was written in the respondents' native language (Arabic) to ensure that all the respondents fully understood the survey items. A total of (732) survey instruments were completed and returned for analysis. Data collection was carried out during the 2022 FIFA World Cup tournament that took place in Qatar from 20 November to 18 December 2022. Quantitatively, the data were normally distributed and analyzed by using descriptive statistics; factorial ANOVA was used to calculate the mean differences between the demographic elemental scores, by using the SPSS version 26.

Analysis

Data were normally distributed and were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods such as means and standard deviations to describe the response of the sample members towards the study variables and inferential statistical methods to test the hypotheses of the study, to determine the differences in the dependent variables according to the independent variables. t-test was used when there were two independent variables and One-way ANOVA was also used when there were three or more independent variables. Associations were tested at a 95% significance level ($P < .05$).

Results

Results related to the study questions:

This study aims to identify the attitudes of Palestinian fans toward rooting for the national teams that are participating in the FIFA World Cup tournaments held in Qatar. To answer the first question “What are the reasons that drive Palestinian fans to watch FIFA World Cup 2022 held in Qatar?”, means and standard deviations are extracted for each item as shown in Table 2.

Table (2): Means and Standard Deviations of questionnaire items related to the first question.

No.	Item	M	SD	%
2	FIFA World Cup 2022 in Qatar can contribute to changing the negative stereotypes about the Arab and Islamic world.	4.3128	.78404	86.256
3	FIFA World Cup 2022 can help increase the interest of foreign delegations to get acquainted with the Arab culture.	4.3087	.75094	86.174
7	FIFA World Cup 2022 is held in the Middle East and an Arab and Muslim country for the first time.	4.1585	.94269	83.17
8	Enjoying the achievements of Qatar and its success in hosting FIFA World Cup 2022 despite the obstacles and challenges.	4.1243	.89511	82.486
1	FIFA World Cup 2022 can contribute to the definition of the Palestinian cause.	4.1230	.84741	82.46
9	I see FIFA World Cup 2022 as an opportunity for cultural	4.1011	.85030	82.022

No.	Item	M	SD	%
	convergence between the peoples of the world.			
5	The improvement in telecommunication especially using smartphones has made watching FIFA World Cup 2022 easier.	3.8019	.98434	76.038
4	The focus of social networks and local channels on the FIFA World Cup 2022 generated my curiosity to follow up and watch it.	3.6311	1.02126	72.622
6	The availability of many satellite and local channels that broadcast matches for free without the need to subscribe to BN Sports channels.	3.6216	1.04101	72.432
10	The opening ceremony had a great impact and aroused my curiosity to follow the OFIFA World Cup 2022.	3.4945	1.18644	69.89
Total degree		3.9678	.66066	79.356

The main reason that drives participants to watch the tournaments is that the FIFA World Cup 2022 in Qatar can contribute to changing the negative stereotypes about the Arab and Islamic world, as indicated by (86.256%) of the respondents. The results indicated that item No. 10 “The opening ceremony had a great impact and aroused my curiosity to follow FIFA World Cup 2022 in Qatar” is the least reasonable drive (69.89%) that pushes Palestinian fans to follow up the tournaments.

To answer the second question “What are the reasons that push Palestinian fans to root for specific national teams based on teams’ characteristics and attributes?”, means and standard deviations are extracted for each item.

About (81%) of respondents say they consider whether the country supports the Israeli occupation or not when they root for a specific country's national team. (75.9%) of respondents contend that they root for a country's national team based on the exceptional skills of their players, while only (45%) said they root for a country's national team because of how attractive and appealing the players on that team are as shown in the table below.

Table (3): Means and Standard Deviations of questionnaire items related to the second question

No.	Item	M	SD	%
2	When rooting for a team, I take into account whether the country supports the Israeli occupation or not.	4.060	1.036	81.20
3	When rooting for a team, I take into account whether the country supports the Palestinian cause or not.	3.97	1.002	79.48
14	I root for a team based on the outstanding sports skills of its players.	3.795	.9218	75.90
5	When rooting for a team, I take into account the extent to which the values raised by that team are compatible with my religious values.	3.804	1.048	76.09
6	When I root for a team, I take into account how that country deals with some humanitarian issues.	3.515	1.034	70.3
1	When rooting for a country's national team, I take into account whether the country has a colonial history or not	3.446	1.160	68.93
7	When I root for a team, I take into account the positions of the country's officials regarding holding the World Cup in an Arab country.	3.431	1.053	68.63

No.	Item	M	SD	%
15	I root for a team for purely religious and cultural considerations.	3.412	1.138	68.25
4	When rooting for a country, I take into account the extent of Islamophobia in that country.	3.386	1.052	67.73
10	I root for a team based on its outstanding footballing history at the World Cup.	3.385	1.101	67.70
11	I root for a team because I admire that country's culture.	3.243	1.032	64.86
9	When I root for a team, I usually side with teams coming from marginalized communities	3.217	1.109	64.34
13	I don't root for a team because of the violent behavior of its supporters and native fans.	3.213	1.119	64.26
8	I root for a team because I resided in that country for some time by virtue of studying or working.	2.687	1.094	53.74
12	I root for a team because of the attractiveness of the players of that national team.	2.25	1.262	45

Concerning the third question "What are the reasons that motivate Palestinian fans to root for specific national teams based on their preferences and feelings towards these teams?", means and Standard Deviations are calculated as shown in Table 4 below.

Table (4): Means and Standard Deviations of questionnaire items related to the third question.

No.	Item	M	SD	%
7	I root for some teams because their victory makes me feel the splendor victory.	3.6872	1.10920	73.744
1	I root for a particular country's national team because my favorite player belongs to that team.	3.5232	1.10006	70.464
8	I root for some teams because this makes me feel like I belong to a group.	3.5205	1.15826	70.41
2	I root for some teams influenced by some family members, especially parents.	2.6434	1.08839	52.868
3	I root for some teams influenced by some friends and colleagues	2.5656	1.07187	51.312
6	I root for some teams because I admire certain celebrities (sports analytics) who talk about the FIFA World Cup 2022.	2.5068	1.11878	50.136
4	I root for some teams to spite some friends who support different teams.	2.5068	1.15488	50.136
5	I root for certain teams based on what I read on social media.	2.4604	1.08077	49.208
Total degree		2.9267	.72262	58.534

It is clear from the results of Table 4 that 73.7% of respondents root for some national teams because the teams' victories make them feel the

euphoria of glory. About 70% of respondents indicate that they support certain teams because it makes them feel a sense of belonging to a group, and their favorite player is part of that team. However, about 49% of respondents state that their support for national teams is influenced by what they read on social media.

Table 5 below shows the means and standard deviations of the reasons as well as the attitudes and preferences of the respondents in all fields. It also indicated that (79.356%) of the respondents have reasons for following FIFA World Cup 2022 in Qatar; (67.76%) of the respondents are driven to root for certain national teams due to factors and reasons related to the participating teams and countries; and (58.534%) of the respondents are motivated to root certain national teams based on their desires and feelings.

Table (5): Means and Standard Deviations of questionnaire items related to all questions.

No.	Item	M	SD	%
1	Reasons for watching FIFA World Cup 2022 held in Qatar.	3.9678	.66066	79.356
2	Reasons for rooting for specific national teams based on teams' characteristics and attributes.	3.3882	.62910	67.764
3	Reasons for rooting for specific national teams are based on preferences and feelings towards these teams.	2.9267	.72262	58.534
Total degree		3.4276	.51551	68.552

Results related to the study hypotheses

First hypothesis: There are no statistically significant differences at ($P < .05$) among study participants regarding their motivations for following the FIFA World Cup 2022 being held in Qatar and gender-based preferences for rooting for particular national teams.

To test this hypothesis, means and standard deviations are calculated, and the t-test is used. The results are shown in Table 6.

Table (6): Statistical results based on gender.

Domain	Male = 418		Female= 314		t	sig.
	M	SD	M	SD		
Reasons for watching FIFA World Cup 2022.	3.8947	.66695	4.0650	.64042	-3.476	.001
Reasons for rooting for specific national teams based on teams' characteristics and attributes.	3.3426	.66647	3.4488	.57100	-2.318	.024
Reasons for rooting for specific national teams are based on preferences and feelings towards these teams.	2.8597	.74006	3.0159	.68984	-2.909	.004

The table shows that respondents' opinions about football fandom trends in Palestinian society vary by gender; female respondents display higher means than male respondents, both in each domain and the overall, total domain.

Second hypothesis: There are no statistically significant differences at ($P < .05$) among study participants regarding their motivations for following the FIFA World Cup 2022 being held in Qatar and age-related preferences for rooting for particular national teams.

To test this hypothesis, means and standard deviations were calculated; the results showed that there are differences. To test whether these differences are statistically significant, a One-way analysis of variance was used. The results in Table 7 show that differences are found among respondents in both, the reason for watching the World Cup and the reason for rooting for particular national teams based on participants' preferences and feelings as well as the total domain. To identify which age groups are different in their mean results, the least significant difference (LSD) is used; the results shown in Table 8 below indicate that the younger the respondent the more likely the causes that push them to follow the World Cup are influenced by their innermost feelings.

Table (7): One-way Analysis of variance based on age variable.

Variable Domain	Source	DF	MS	MD	f	sig.
Reasons for watching FIFA World Cup 2022 held in Qatar.	Between groups	5	6.324	1.265	2.936	.012
	Within groups	726	312.73	.431		
	Total	731	319.05			
Reasons for rooting for specific national teams based on teams' characteristics and attributes.	Between groups	5	2.581	.516	1.307	.259
	Within groups	726	286.72	.395		
	Total	731	289.30			
Reasons for rooting for specific national teams based on preferences and feelings towards these teams.	Between groups	5	12.69	2.540	4.997	.000
	Within groups	726	369.01	.508		
	Total	731	381.71			

Table (8): LSD test results according to age.

Domain	Age (i)	Age (j)	MS	Cal. F
Reasons for watching FIFA World Cup 2022 held in Qatar.	15-24	25-34	.18383*	0.003
		35-44	.19041*	0.009
		45-54	.20438*	0.022
Reasons for rooting for specific national teams based on preferences and feelings towards these teams.	Less than 14	45-54	.54812*	0.041
		15-24	.27250*	0.001
	25-34	45-54	.36020*	0.000
		45-54	.23223*	0.029

Hypothesis Three: There are no statistically significant differences at ($P < .05$) among study participants regarding their motivations for following the FIFA World Cup 2022 being held in Qatar and their preferences for rooting for particular national teams attributed to scientific qualification.

Table (9): One-way Analysis of variance based on scientific qualification.

Variable Domain	Source	DF	MS	MD	F	sig.
Reasons for watching FIFA World Cup 2022 held in Qatar.	Between groups	4	1.923	.481	1.102	.354
	Within groups	727	317.136	.436		
	Total	731	319.059			
Reasons for rooting for specific national teams based on teams' characteristics and attributes.	Between groups	4	1.970	.493	1.246	.290
	Within groups	727	287.332	.395		
	Total	731	289.302			
Reasons for rooting for	Between groups	4	5.729	1.43	2.769	.026

Variable Domain	Source	DF	MS	MD	F	sig.
specific national teams based on preferences and feelings towards these teams.	Within groups	727	375.983	.517		
	Total	731	381.712			

The results show that differences are found among respondents only on the reasons for rooting for particular national teams based on participants' preferences and feelings. To identify which academic qualification groups are different in their mean results, the least significant difference (LSD) is used; the results shown in Table 10 below indicate differences in the field of causes and factors related to desires and feelings between those who have not earned a degree yet and those with postgraduate degrees. The differences also appear between those with a bachelor's degree and those with postgraduate degrees.

Table (10): LSD test results according to scientific qualification.

Domain	Degree (i)	Degree (j)	MS	Cal. F
Reasons for rooting for specific national teams based on preferences and feelings towards these teams.	No degree	Postgraduate degree	.37602*	0.044
	Bachelor degree	Postgraduate degree	.22015*	0.002

Hypothesis Four: There are no statistically significant differences at ($P < .05$) among study participants regarding their motivations for following the FIFA World Cup 2022 being held in Qatar and their preferences for rooting for particular national teams based on their jobs.

Table (11): One-way Analysis of variance based on job.

Variable Domain	Source	DF	MS	MD	F	sig.
Reasons for watching FIFA World Cup 2022.	Between groups	6	8.389	1.398	3.263	.004
	Within groups	725	310.670	.429		
	Total	731	319.059			
Reasons for rooting for specific national teams based on teams' characteristics and attributes.	Between groups	6	.969	.162	.406	.875
	Within groups	725	288.333	.398		
	Total	731	289.302			
Reasons for rooting for specific national teams based on preferences and feelings towards these teams.	Between groups	6	12.384	2.064	4.052	.001
	Within groups	725	369.328	.509		
	Total	731	381.712			

The results show that differences are found among respondents in both, the reasons for watching the World Cup and the reasons for rooting for particular national teams based on participants' preferences and feelings as well as the total domain. To identify which job groups are different in their mean results, the least significant difference (LSD) is used. The results of Table 12 show differences between students and workers in the public and private sectors, as well as entrepreneurs in their reasons for watching the World Cup field. The same is true about the causes related to participants' feelings. However, employees working in the private and public sectors have stronger feelings to root for particular

national teams than those who are jobless. Finally, students show greater differences than private sector workers and entrepreneurs.

Table (12): LSD test results according to job.

Domain	Job (i)	Job (j)	MS	Cal. F
Reasons for watching FIFA World Cup 2022 held in Qatar.	Student	Public sector	.15266*	0.036
		Private sector	.20706*	0.001
		Entrepreneur	.24276*	0.006
	Jobless	Entrepreneur	.26427*	0.001
Reasons for rooting for specific national teams based on preferences and feelings towards these teams.	Student	Private sector	26427*	0.001
		Public sector	.23440*	0.001
		Entrepreneur	.27293*	0.004
	Public sector	Jobless	-.38818*	0.038
	Private sector	Jobless	-.35831*	0.05
	Entrepreneur	Jobless	-.39684*	0.041

Discussion

About (80%) of respondents have reasons for watching the FIFA World Cup 2022 in Qatar. Two-thirds of them are driven to support certain national teams because of factors related to the competing teams, while less than (60%) of respondents are motivated to support certain national teams based on their feelings.

Male respondents make up (57%) of the study's sample, primarily because sports are portrayed as male activities. However, females have more reasons to watch the World Cup and root for particular teams, not only because of the teams' attributes and characteristics, but also because of their personal preferences towards certain teams. In light of the demanding life pressures (Bilyeu & Wann, 2002) that Palestinian women face, the female follow-up for the World Cup matches has exceeded expectations. They experience an upbeat atmosphere while watching them if they take the time to watch (Borge, 2019), especially since they are being held in an Arab country and there have been female referees at the World

Cup; this helps send a positive message about women's rights not only regionally but also globally, foster and strengthen communities' ties and reinvent themselves (Dixon, 2013). The results of the current study are inconsistent with (Borer, 2009) who claims that women are marginalized as sports fans (Borer, 2009). The German women's team legend Monika Staab states "The women can do like the men;" (Wolf, 2022). This is in contrast to (Dixon, 2013; Williams, 2007) who argues that sports are still primarily associated with men. In addition, women can watch sports as a way to access a male-dominated world, and talk about sports with other girls (Gantz et al, 2006).

Young Palestinians between the ages of 15 and 24 make up 51.5% of the participants, with 1.1% being under the age of 14. The findings also indicate that the younger the respondent, the more reasons drive them to follow the World Cup, and those reasons originate from their deepest feelings. These results are inconsistent with those (Boker et al, 2015; Guimaraes, Stride, & O'Reilly, 2016; Icekson et al, 2021; Lombardo & Broughton, 2017; Tapp, 2004; Toder-Alon, Icekson & Shuv-Ami, 2018) who claim that as people age, their interest in sports increases.

Most participants (67.5%) are students, while the fewest (2.3%) are older individuals who have not earned a degree or certificate. Football fans' occupations are another relevant factor that may affect their choice of supporting one national team over another during the World Cup; Student respondents (47.8%) make up the majority, while housewives (2%), make up the minority.

Palestinian students are addicted to watching sports programs, especially football. A high percentage of them follow the Spanish La Liga and FIFA World Cup in Qatar. They see this as an opportunity to escape the pressing atmosphere, as well as a chance to exchange talks and build rapport with friends and society members. The results of the current study are consistent with (Cooper & Tang, 2009; Haridakis & Hanson, 2009) who postulate that exposure to sports content is positively linked to social interaction. However, women, mostly housewives, do not have enough time to watch sports as they have other interests, drama for example, and duties such as household chores or families to care about.

The study findings also show that the FIFA World Cup held in the Middle East in an Arab country for the first time has the potential to change unfavorable perceptions of the Arab and Islamic worlds and to spur interest among foreign delegations and tourists in learning more about Arab and Islamic culture, which will help advance global cultural convergence and rapprochement. This event has given Qatar the chance to garner other nations by presenting a carefully cultivated international image of a modern, open society that is also Muslim and Arab (Grix & Lee, 2013). Qatar has managed to “challenge the colonial grand narratives long propagated as fact in the Cultural West that continue to perpetuate the stereotype of the Arab as the ‘Other’, an uncivilized, non-Christian, exotic and inferior entity whose social order exists in diametric opposition to the values and ideas of the West” (Griffin, 2022, p. 1002).

The majority of respondents (81%) claim that when they support a particular nation's national team, they take into account whether or not that nation supports the Israeli occupation. According to Dima Khatib, managing director of AJ+ Channels (2022), Palestine “is scoring in the hearts and minds of fans from across the world” and “beats Israel on football’s big stage.” Only (45%) of respondents said they support a country's national team because of how attractive and appealing the players on that team are, while (75.9%) said they do so because of the exceptional skills of that team's players. This could be attributed to the fact that male respondents care about skills rather than the physical attributes of players. Besides, the Palestinian woman's perseverance and fortitude are highlighted by the variety of tasks she plays within the society. The focus on her being the sister of a prisoner or the mother of a martyr serves to further emphasize how closely Palestinian women are linked to the difficulties and hardships that their society faces. Furthermore, her status emphasizes the value and respect Palestinian women are accorded. This view reflects a focus on traits that add to the overall strength and well-being of the community rather than on outward appearances, which is consistent with the observed emphasis on talents rather than physical beauty.

Most respondents support certain national teams because their victory fills them with joy and elation and gives them a sense of community, especially if that team incorporates their favorite player(s). These results agree with those of (Archer & Wojtowicz, 2022; Seseek & Pusnik, 2014; Smith & Stewart, 2007; Wann, 1995) who postulate that watching sports involves pleasure and anxiety, stimulates a sense of loyalty and community, and keeps them engaged.

Conclusion, limitations and implications

Eighty percent of those surveyed have justifications for attending the 2022 FIFA World Cup. Less than (60%) of respondents are motivated to support certain national teams based on their feelings, while two-thirds of respondents are motivated to support certain national teams because of factors related to the competing teams. Females have more reasons to watch the World Cup and support specific teams than males do, including personal preferences as well as the traits and traits of the teams in question. 51.5% of the participants are young Palestinians between the ages of 15 and 24, with 1.1% being under the age of 14. The majority of participants (67.5%) are students, while the minority (2.3%) consists of older people who lack a college diploma or degree.

The FIFA World Cup, which is being held in the Middle East in an Arab nation for the first time, has the power to alter negative perceptions of the Arab and Islamic worlds and to awaken the inquisitiveness of foreign delegations and tourists about these cultures, which will help advance cultural convergence and rapprochement on a global scale. The majority of respondents (81%) assert that they consider whether a country supports the Israeli occupation when deciding whether to support its national team. Only (45%) of respondents said they back a nation's national team because of the players' attractiveness and appeal, while (75.9%) asserted to do so due to the players' exceptional abilities. Most respondents support particular national teams because they experience joy, elation, and a sense of community when they succeed, especially if that team includes their favorite player (s). Through their passion and love for football, Palestinian fans express their national, cultural, and political identities.

The study on Palestinian sports fans' rooting practices is limited by its cross-sectional design, which may not capture changes over time. The self-reported data used in the study could introduce response bias or inaccuracies. The sample specificity of residents of Nablus Governorate, primarily interested in televised football matches, may limit the generalizability of findings. The use of Likert scales may be subjective, and participants may exhibit social desirability bias, affecting the accuracy of reported motivations. The study's generalizability may be limited due to its focus on the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar, and the study's lack of cultural sensitivity. Future research could explore these nuances to develop more targeted interventions.

To see how far the findings of the current study are pertinent and can be generalized, further research should be conducted in other sports grounds and within other sports gatherings such as the FIFA Arab Cup. To understand how fan identification unfolds for diverse types of personality, prospective researchers may use different sociodemographic variables to conduct research that depicts different sports fans' qualities and traits.

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Ethical approval and consent to participate: Ethical approval was not required for this study as it involved only minimal risk activities, specifically the completion of an anonymous online survey. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and consented to participate voluntarily. No sensitive or personally identifiable information was collected.

Availability of data and materials: The data and materials used and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Author contribution: Both authors contributed equally to the conception, design, data collection, analysis, and writing of the manuscript. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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