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Content Analysis of FIFA Disciplinary Regulations

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the role of FIFA's disciplinary regulations in shaping behaviors associated with global football and to analyze their structural impacts on various stakeholders. The primary objective is to explore the interaction between legal language, institutional centralization, and procedural justice within the regulatory text. The research method is based on qualitative content analysis of 76 articles from FIFA's 2023 regulations, with a focus on linguistic patterns, discursive structures, and enforcement mechanisms. Data were extracted through thematic coding, analysis of key vocabulary, and alignment with analytical frameworks from legal studies and critical discourse analysis. On one hand, FIFA regulations enable the uniform application of rules by clearly defining offenses and penalties. On the other hand, structural ambiguities in key concepts and the concentration of decision-making authority create the potential for subjective interpretation and undermine the rights of less influential countries. A clear contradiction is evident between the proclaimed commitment to justice and the reality of centralization. Although the regulations effectively address a broad range of infractions, they demonstrate shortcomings in protecting vulnerable groups, such as whistleblowers. A noticeable gap also exists between theoretical principles and practical challenges in areas such as financial transparency and institutional accountability. Despite its technical achievements, FIFA's disciplinary framework requires a fundamental revision to reduce structural inequalities. Key recommendations include redefining ambiguous terms, expanding regulatory coverage to address emerging issues such as athletes' psychological safety, decentralizing decision-making by involving independent bodies, and enhancing financial transparency through public reporting. Stakeholder education and the reinforcement of protective mechanisms will also help mitigate unintentional violations and strengthen procedural justice.

Keywords: FIFA, disciplinary regulations, content analysis, centralization, procedural justice

1. Introduction

In contemporary societies, sports organizations have transcended their traditional operational frameworks and emerged as influential actors within legal, political, and cultural systems (Van Kleef, 2014). In this context, football—recognized as the most followed and impactful sport globally—has become a platform for addressing issues such as order, authority, legitimacy, and legal accountability on a broad scale (García & Welford, 2015). Within this framework, FIFA, as the principal governing body of international football, plays a role far beyond merely organizing competitions. It has effectively become a central institution in the creation, enforcement, and stabilization of legal order in the domain of sport (Henson, 2018; Hock &



Gomtsian, 2018). Essentially, FIFA, as the highest executive authority in world football, assumes responsibilities significantly beyond that of a tournament organizer (Tomlinson, 2016). This institution oversees planning, monitoring, and implementing many core processes within professional football, and its actions directly affect clubs, players, federations, and even governments (Henson, 2018). FIFA sets and updates the rules of the game and seeks to maintain the integrity and coherence of the sport by supervising the conduct of organizations and individuals active in football (Gomtsian et al., 2018).

FIFA attempts to respond to misconduct and irregularities and promote values such as fair play, justice, and respect through the formulation of disciplinary frameworks (Rutgersson, 2024). Consequently, FIFA's influence extends well beyond the football pitch; its decisions impact areas such as human rights, gender justice, financial policy, and even international relations (Scelles, 2021). For this reason, FIFA is considered not only a sports authority but also a powerful global actor that influences public opinion, media, and social structures (Kobierecki, 2019). Therefore, such a role necessitates that FIFA, as a transnational institution, take a stance and respond not only to overt violations but also to discourses, behaviors, and structures that may threaten the existing order of football (Webber, 2016).

One of FIFA's most significant tools for exercising authority and managing the complex structure of football is its disciplinary regulations. These regulations are intended to control infractions, ensure competitive order, and uphold professional values. However, they also embody a range of linguistic meanings that require interpretation beyond their surface legal content (Covo, 2019). In fact, disciplinary regulations are not merely a set of legal norms; they are mechanisms for reproducing institutional order, exercising power, and managing legitimacy on a global scale (Lord, 2016). From this perspective, a critical and analytical examination of these regulations contributes to a more precise understanding of the relationship between power, language, and legal structures within the international sports system (Freeburn, 2018).

Rutgersson (2024) noted in his study that in 2015, the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) faced a series of corruption allegations involving senior officials, compelling the organization to implement structural reforms. Although accusations of corruption were not unprecedented, what distinguished this period was the source and orientation of the allegations. From a neoliberal perspective, FIFA can be regarded as an institution marketing its flagship product—the FIFA World Cup—as a global commodity. The globalization and commercialization of this event have turned the World Cup into a highly lucrative venture for FIFA. Moreover, it has become a tool of soft power, employed both by FIFA and other international actors. Nonetheless, the persistent lack of transparency and institutional accountability remains one of FIFA's critical challenges. This issue is rooted in the internal organizational structure, which is characterized by a culture of hierarchy and loyalty to the "FIFA family." (Rutgersson, 2024).

Findings from Abanazir (2024) indicate that although efforts to harmonize rules and interpretations in the field of sports integrity by national and international bodies may appear beneficial, such harmonization is only legitimate and sustainable when grounded in good governance and respect for human rights (Abanazir, 2024). Ghafoori (2023), in a study titled "Critical Discourse Analysis of Social Media Coverage of the 2022 Qatar World Cup," stated that the Arab and Muslim world was represented as a space that suppresses differences, restricts freedoms, and silences voices concerning human rights. This region was constructed as the "other," where religious values and ideologies were downplayed through negative portrayals and specific strategies. The politicization of social media to undermine and boycott the Qatar World Cup was a key priority for Western media (Ghafoori, 2023).

The study by Nielsen and Dahl (2023) revealed that FIFA's discourse clearly contains postcolonial elements. Their findings also suggest that a particular discourse strategy has been deployed to marginalize criticism from Western nations regarding Qatar's hosting of the World Cup. Additionally, the research examined how postcolonial concepts and the political use of sport are interconnected at various levels (Nielsen & Dahl, 2023).

Graf and Fleischhacker (2023) emphasized that although women's participation in football has increased significantly in recent years, the sport's overall structure remains shaped by dominant patriarchal norms, gender stereotypes, and societal expectations. Nevertheless, football possesses high potential for empowerment and liberation, serving as a practical laboratory for gender studies and a model for sustainable transformation in other social spheres with similar gender-based structures (Graf & Fleischhacker, 2023). Furthermore, the findings of Desjardins (2021) showed that concepts such as "equal opportunity"



and “women’s empowerment” have been detached from their political and historical contexts and reproduced in commercialized and marketable formats. Moreover, countries historically involved in developing exclusionary policies against women’s sports now present themselves as saviors without acknowledging their complicity. This underscores how the discourse of gender equality, while superficially beneficial to hosting nations, exposes the real limitations, inequalities, and contradictions within such approaches (Desjardins, 2021).

Batzler and Schüdderdt (2020) found in a case study that while FIFA has made significant progress in internal reform—particularly its capacity to reflect and respond to criticism—it still struggles with the actual enforcement of its rules and accountability for human rights violations. It remains uncertain to what extent FIFA can be held responsible for such breaches. In this context, the concept of social constitutionalism becomes relevant, emphasizing the idea that the global community can and should play a critical role in controlling and mitigating the negative impacts of institutions like FIFA. Ultimately, reforming FIFA should not be seen merely as an internal organizational adjustment but rather as a step toward aligning global sport with human rights principles and international values that are still evolving and require reinforcement (Bützler & Schöddert, 2020).

Duval and Heerdt (2020) argue that in the current era of empowered private global actors, it is time for institutions like FIFA to be held accountable for decisions that affect the lives of millions. A rigorous human rights-based review can provide a suitable framework for ensuring the “right to justification”—a concept regarded by some as the core of justice (Duval & Heerdt, 2020). According to the findings of Meier and Garcia (2015), in the absence of coordination and coherence among public institutions, resisting FIFA’s regulatory power is a formidable challenge. Although recent corruption scandals may have compelled FIFA to implement certain reforms, the organization still maintains a vested interest in preserving and consolidating its regulatory authority (Meier & Garcia, 2015).

In conclusion, in today’s world, football has evolved into a multifaceted social, cultural, and legal domain that transcends the boundaries of athletic competition. FIFA, as the governing body of the sport, not only monitors competitions but also plays a vital role in regulating associated behaviors. One of FIFA’s primary tools for managing and overseeing football structures is its disciplinary regulations, designed to combat violations and maintain order, justice, and integrity in the sport. Although these regulations may appear as straightforward legal and operational rules, they in fact convey embedded meanings and discourses through which FIFA’s global power and legitimacy are continuously reproduced. Analyzing the content of these regulations is crucial, as they serve as instruments of power with profound effects on individual and collective behaviors in football and beyond. Through legal language, these regulations convey values and ideologies that shape social and cultural structures. Therefore, examining the content of FIFA’s disciplinary regulations contributes to a deeper understanding of how power is exercised and legitimacy is managed at the international level. Such analysis is essential for comprehending the legal and social challenges related to this dominant governing institution. Accordingly, the aim of this study is to conduct a content analysis of FIFA’s 2023 Disciplinary Regulations.

2. Methods and Materials

In the present study, content analysis was employed to systematically and thoroughly examine FIFA’s Disciplinary Regulations. Content analysis is a method used to explore the structure, patterns, and meanings embedded in texts without relying on subjective or interpretive assumptions. The primary goal of this method in this study was to identify linguistic, conceptual, and structural patterns across the 76 articles of the FIFA Disciplinary Regulations. The research is applied in nature in terms of purpose and qualitative in terms of method, utilizing a descriptive-analytical approach. The study aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the order, language, and functional mechanisms of the regulations through direct observation of the text, thematic categorization, and extraction of recurring concepts.

The population under investigation consisted of the full text of the *FIFA Disciplinary Code, 2023 edition*, published as an official PDF document by the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA). This document contains 76 articles, each organized as a distinct and thematic clause. Since the text volume was manageable and entirely accessible, no sampling was conducted; the entire population was treated as a full-count sample. Accordingly, content analysis was carried out meticulously and individually on all articles of the document.

First, the full text of the regulations was reviewed to develop a comprehensive understanding of its overall framework and content structure. The objective at this stage was to become familiar with the type of legal language used, sentence construction



style, and the initial categorization of topics. During this stage, frequently occurring words, expressions, and structural patterns in each article were identified and categorized thematically based on their legal meaning and textual function. The analysis included sentence openings and closures, verb structures, pronoun types, and the extent to which definitive or conditional language was used. Additional factors such as word frequency, logical sequencing of sentences, institutional references, and verb tenses were also analyzed in this phase.

The results of coding and analysis were rewritten in a structured manner based on recurring themes and presented as a conceptual table and descriptive interpretation. To enhance the validity of the study, standard content analysis validation methods were applied. Specifically, the coding and categorization stages were cross-checked against established content analysis frameworks. Transparency in reporting was also maintained; for each finding, the process by which it was derived is clearly documented, enabling readers to trace the analytical steps.

Moreover, because the entire population was analyzed (not just a portion), sampling error was eliminated. To increase the reliability of the analysis, repeated reading of the data was employed. Each article was reviewed multiple times at different stages to gain a more accurate understanding of the concepts and reduce the likelihood of misinterpretation. Furthermore, categorizations and word choices were based on fixed criteria, making replication possible for other researchers. If another individual or research team were to analyze the same 76 articles using the same method, it is highly likely they would arrive at similar conclusions. This confirms the reliability of the analysis.

3. Findings and Results

In this section, a detailed analysis and examination of the content presented in the following is undertaken, which encompasses the content analysis of FIFA's Disciplinary Regulations. This table, organized according to various categorizations, examines the structure and details of each article in the FIFA Disciplinary Regulations and analyzes their linguistic, conceptual, and structural patterns. The purpose of this analysis is to provide a comprehensive and precise interpretation of the key concepts, specialized vocabulary, and writing techniques employed in the regulatory text, so that the manner in which the rules are drafted and structured from legal, executive, and disciplinary perspectives becomes transparently clear. By studying this section, one can achieve a deeper understanding of the governing principles behind FIFA's disciplinary provisions and how they align with international standards. The content analysis of each article of the FIFA Disciplinary Regulations is presented as follows:

Article 1: Objective

This article employs direct, definition-oriented language. Its sentence structure is simple and purposeful, and it emphasizes four key concepts—"health," "order," "integrity," and "credibility" of football at the global level. Abstract terms appear more frequently than operational terms. The text's tone is formal and normative, and it does not use heavy specialized terminology. In terms of writing style, this article resembles a structured, philosophy-oriented introduction.

Article 2: Scope of Application: Substantive Law

This article includes specialized legal terminology and broad propositions when describing infractions. Content analysis shows that the most used group of lexical items relates to misconduct (e.g., "violation," "law," "regulations"). The descriptive scope of the article is wide, and its sentence patterns are interpretive and generalizable. The structure of this article implicitly reflects the boundary between misconduct and ethics. In terms of linguistic sequencing, "if-then" and "may" patterns are prominent.

Article 3: Scope of Application: Covered Persons

Article 3 places a strong emphasis on classifying persons. The vocabulary used is descriptive and category-oriented rather than value-laden. The writing style is formal, with a top-down structure based on institutional hierarchy. The repetition of phrases such as "includes" and "covers" indicates an inclusive and expansive approach to the domain of application. From a lexical analysis perspective, the presence of multiple pronouns and nominal references suggests a broad range of intended audiences.

Article 4: Scope of Application: Temporal Application

Content analysis of this article shows that its primary focus is on determining the time frame for the enforcement of regulations. A high frequency of perfect-tense verbs and temporal reference markers indicates a connection between the



regulations and both past and future events. Restrictive expressions such as “regardless of” and “from the moment that...” give the sentences a sense of certainty and clarity. Stylistically, this article oscillates between descriptive and mandatory structures, and numeric and time-oriented elements are prominent.

Article 5: Applicable Law

In this article, more precise legal structure is evident in the language used. References to “Swiss law” and expressions such as “except in special cases” illustrate an exception-based drafting pattern. The linguistic style of this article is more technical and restrictive than in previous articles. The use of conditional clauses indicates the degree of emphasis on referencing an external legal system. Syntactically, the sentences are long and often include conditional and consequent verbs.

Article 6: Disciplinary Measures

This article’s main focus is on the precise categorization and itemized listing of sanctions. Its linguistic style is prescriptive and uses organized declarative verbs. Sentences end with verbs like “shall be imposed” or “shall be deemed permissible,” which indicate the text’s certainty and mandatory nature. Semantically, the vocabulary is both legal and operational, and the presentation is maintained in a numbered format. This structure conveys a sense of framework and legal discipline.

Article 7: Directives

This article is written with a focus on recommendations and issuance of guidelines, and linguistically it employs quasi-regulatory patterns. Verbs placed at the end of sentences have a discretionary quality, such as “may be issued” or “shall be considered.” Its vocabulary contains combinations of behavioral, supervisory, and strategic terms. The sequencing of concepts in this article, with an emphasis on preventive and corrective roles, is distinct from other articles. The text clearly attempts to balance between mandatory requirements and discretionary options.

Article 8: Responsibility

In analyzing this article, significant attention is placed on assigning legal and structural responsibility. Sentences end with verbs such as “bears” and “is accountable for,” which indicate a mandatory and inescapable discourse. A high frequency of terms like “club,” “federation,” “confederation,” and “individual” reflects a broad scope of accountability. Sentences are ordered from general to specific, based on the type of entity or actor, providing a clear structure for reader comprehension.

Article 9: Referee Decisions

Article 9 uses very definitive and concise vocabulary. Most sentences are constructed as stable declarative statements and end with verbs like “is final” or “is not subject to appeal.” Compared to other sections, this article is linguistically less complex and comprises shorter sentences. Its writing style reinforces the referee’s authority on the field of play and employs linguistic tools to limit the contestability of decisions.

Article 10: Statute of Limitations for Prosecution

This article has a numeric, calculative, and time-focused structure. Sentences are long but end with precise verbs such as “is valid,” “begins,” or “ceases.” The use of complete verbs at the end of clauses imparts a sense of cohesion and accuracy to the text. Furthermore, frequent use of numbers, time-oriented terms, and comparative structures indicates the technical and structured nature of this article. Its writing style is entirely calculable and characteristic of legal standardization.

Article 11: Reporting Obligation

In this article, the writing style shifts from purely prescriptive to normative behavior for organizational conduct. The article is reinforced by terms such as “is obligated” and “is required,” and uses final verbs like “must be submitted” or “must be reported” to conclude sentences. Content analysis reveals that this article aims to institutionalize a culture of structural accountability through mandatory rules. Phrases such as “any person” and “suspicious cases” indicate a wide scope of responsibility and no exceptions to reporting requirements. Sentences are framed as indirect commands, and the text remains syntactically cohesive.

Article 12: Cooperation Obligation

From a linguistic and conceptual perspective, this article is similar to Article 11, but its focus is more on the interaction and commitment to providing documentation. Sentences are crafted so that cooperation becomes a legal duty and a structural requirement. Key verbs such as “provides,” “cooperates,” and “does not refuse” appear at the end of sentences, maintaining the article’s semantic coherence. Its style is formal and unambiguous, and its vocabulary pertains predominantly to administrative and disciplinary duties. A high frequency of interactive verbs suggests a mandatory collaborative spirit.

Article 13: Insulting Behavior and Violation of Fair Play Principles



Content analysis of this article indicates that its primary focus is identifying behavioral instances that contravene dignity and rules. Terms such as “insult,” “disrespect,” and “demeaning behavior” show that the article’s tone is highly value-laden and normative. Sentences end with verbs like “is prohibited,” “is punishable,” or “is subject to action,” reinforcing the article’s decisive and authoritative tone. The vocabulary used is largely centered on ethics, human dignity, and behavioral control. Concepts are presented from general to specific, enhancing clarity of perception.

Article 14: Misconduct by Players and Officials

This article has a descriptive structure and defines misconduct from a behavioral and operational standpoint. Sentences tend to be relatively long, concluding with verbs such as “leads to,” “is identified,” or “is sanctioned.” The vocabulary is a combination of legal and behavioral concepts, and the semantic load of the text emphasizes sportsmanship ethics. Negative terms—such as “abusive language,” “unsporting behavior,” and “provocative actions”—appear frequently. Stylistically, content analysis shows that the article’s tone lies between warning and threat, helping to psychologically regulate behavior.

Article 15: Discrimination

Article 15 is arguably one of the most explicit and forceful articles in terms of language and values. Key vocabulary—such as “race,” “gender,” “religion,” and “language”—is precisely chosen to maximize the scope of the discrimination concept. Sentences are constructed to convey a clear legal message without room for divergent interpretation. Primary verbs appear at the end of sentences—such as “is punishable,” “will not be tolerated,” or “is subject to review”—which heighten the article’s intensity. Its writing style is analytically highly deterrent, unwavering, and designed for a global audience.

Article 16: Unheld and Incomplete Matches

This article centers on the concept of disruption to the course of competition and has a cause-and-effect linguistic structure. Frequent terms include “suspension,” “cancellation,” and “rescheduling.” Sentences end with complete verbs such as “will result in,” “is enforced,” or “is decided,” which contribute to semantic cohesion. In terms of informational content, the article describes potential scenarios and the legal framework for addressing them. The integration of technical sporting terminology with legal structures reinforces a shared understanding of the text’s message.

Article 17: Order and Safety at Matches

Article 17, focusing on stadium security, contains a set of protective and behavioral control concepts. Terms such as “unauthorized entry,” “clashes,” “rioting,” and “public order” are prevalent and emphasize physical and psychological threats. Sentences end with definite verbs like “is prohibited,” “is punishable,” or “will be prosecuted,” strengthening the explicit legal consequences. The use of conditional expressions and situational content indicates the article’s preventive and reactive approach. The article also employs warning language that intensifies its deterrent effect.

Article 18: Protests

Content analysis of this article reveals a descriptive, process-oriented writing style that provides specific instructions for lodging protests. Terms such as “deadline,” “form,” “relevant authorities,” and “legal process” indicate a focus on procedural formality and process guidance. Sentences typically conclude with final verbs like “is submitted,” “is reviewed,” or “will be rejected.” The article clearly defines the timeframe and method for protests, and structurally it reinforces the establishment of formal adjudication procedures. Limited use of emotive vocabulary enhances the tone’s neutrality.

Article 19: Use of an Ineligible Player

Content analysis shows that this article explicitly and emphatically focuses on the rules governing player eligibility. Technical terms such as “ineligible,” “suspended,” and “lacking qualification” are frequently used. Sentence structures are often conditional and result-oriented, employing verbs such as “results in,” “is forbidden,” and “will be annulled.” In terms of internal coherence, the article effectively outlines the player’s status, legal consequences, and impact on match outcomes. Its writing style is authoritative and legalistically precise, minimizing ambiguity.

Article 20: Match and Competition Manipulation

This article is one of the most significant sections, whose vocabulary is categorized under professional ethics, corruption, and competitive integrity. Key concepts include “collusion,” “unauthorized influence,” “abuse,” and “sports betting.” Sentences conclude with verbs such as “is sanctioned,” “is punishable,” or “will be banned,” indicating the severity of the response. Content analysis reveals that the article’s tone is designed to be warning-oriented, punitive, and fully deterrent. The frequency of cautionary terms is high, placing the article at elevated levels of prevention and semantic protection.

Article 21: Non-Compliance with Decisions



This article is institutionally oriented in linguistic terms and relies on the connection between structural responsibility and collective behavior. Terms such as “violation by spectator,” “inappropriate conduct,” and “stadium atmosphere” reflect a causal and organizational analysis. Sentences typically end with verbs like “will be held accountable” or “will bear the consequences,” signifying the article’s mandatory nature. The writing style is formal and earnest, and the vocabulary falls mainly under social structure and institutional responsibility. By emphasizing indirect accountability, the article exerts comprehensive control over football’s public spaces.

Article 22: Forgery and Falsification of Documents

In this article, the concepts of recidivism, sentencing severity, and behavioral history are underscored. Its linguistic structure relies on phased concepts—such as “first offense,” “repeat,” and “aggravated punishment.” Sentences end with verbs like “is taken into consideration,” “results in,” or “is subject to increased penalty,” reinforcing the generalization and rule application. The article’s practical vocabulary combines criminal law and disciplinary control. Moreover, its writing style communicates a clear message about the consequences of repeated infractions, enhancing its deterrent function.

Article 23: Special Rituals

This article focuses on controlling behavior in competitive and public environments, employing terms such as “provocation,” “demeaning behavior,” “offensive gestures,” and “verbal violence.” Lexical analysis indicates that the text is heavily behavior-oriented and descriptive of specific examples. Sentences end with verbs such as “is punishable” and “is prosecuted,” which give the article a threatening and deterrent tone. Stylistically, this article maintains a balance between describing examples and specifying sanctions, precisely identifying patterns of misconduct.

Article 24: Enforcement of Sanctions

Article 24 is drafted using technical and medical terminology—such as “doping,” “stimulant substances,” “medical control,” and “sampling.” Its structure is descriptive and legalistic, and sentences often end with verbs like “is confirmed,” “is suspended,” or “is subjected to testing.” Content analysis shows that this article is clearly dependent on sports medicine, indicating an interdisciplinary regulatory expertise within FIFA’s structure. The text is unambiguous, direct, and adopts a non-negotiable tone.

Article 25: Determination of Sanction

This article frequently repeats classical legal terminology—such as “forgery,” “falsification,” “official documents,” and “manipulation of information.” Sentences end with verbs like “is identified,” “is sanctioned,” or “will be nullified,” preserving clarity and decisiveness of tone. Its writing style is legal, referential, and straightforward. Thematically, this article intersects financial crime, official documentation, and institutional integrity. Structural analysis indicates that the regulations tolerate no manipulation of information.

Article 26: Repeat Offense

This article uses an exceptionally forceful, rights-based tone rooted in enforcement. Key terms include “non-compliance,” “mandatory decisions,” and “violation of decisions,” which reflect the legal authority of higher institutions. Sentences typically end with result-oriented verbs such as “will result in,” “is sanctioned,” or “action is taken,” reinforcing the disciplinary framework. Structurally, the article is divided into two sections: first identifying the offense, then detailing the legal consequences. Legal technical terminology is prevalent, and the text contains no mitigating language.

Article 27: Suspension of Enforcement

In this article, terms such as “unauthorized registration,” “transfer regulation violation,” and “prohibited intermediaries” appear frequently. Its sentence structure is descriptive, but conclusively mandatory, often ending with verbs like “is revoked,” “is suspended,” or “is prohibited.” Content analysis shows that this article encompasses regulatory, financial oversight, and sports market control components. Notice of institutional vocabulary (e.g., “club,” “agent,” “player”) reflects a structural view of infractions.

Article 28: Disciplinary Forfeit

Content analysis indicates that this article’s writing style is highly managerial and focuses inwardly on organizations. Terms such as “failure to follow procedure,” “administrative disorder,” and “violation of organizational structure” show the article’s concentration on legal and institutional processes. Sentences end with verbs like “is rectified,” “is punishable,” and “is held accountable,” imbuing the text with legal certainty. The article also employs supervisory vocabulary and clearly emphasizes institutional correctability.



Article 29: Matches without Spectators

This article's language is value-oriented but within an official legal framework. Terms such as "abuse of authority," "neutrality," and "dignity of responsibility" are prominent. Its writing style is descriptive and simultaneously warning-oriented, with sentences ending in verbs like "is suspended," "is prosecuted," or "will be held accountable." Syntactic analysis shows that conditional structures are used to reinforce the scope of responsibility. Specifically, the article redefines professional ethics within official football institutions.

Article 30: General Rule

In this article, the complete focus is on conflicts of interest, personal misuse of position, and exertion of undue pressure. Specialized terms such as "undue intervention," "biased decision-making," and "organizational conflict" are frequently repeated. Sentences conclude with verbs such as "is punishable," "is deemed invalid," or "is reviewed." In terms of linguistic style, the article is designed both to define the offense and to explain its detection mechanism. Its tone is formal, unambiguous, and aimed at purifying managerial structures.

Article 31: Composition of FIFA Judicial Bodies

Content analysis reveals that this article utilizes the most severe form of deterrent language at its core. Key terms such as "threat," "coercion," "intimidation," and "exercise of influence" are expressed directly. Sentences typically end with forceful verbs like "is prosecutable," "is sanctioned," or "will be penalized." By emphasizing the protection of official dignity, the article clearly delineates the boundary between lawful objection and structural intimidation. Its tone is uncompromising, intimidation-based, and unyielding.

Article 32: Independence and Impartiality

This article addresses the control of media narratives and their impact on judicial processes. Phrases such as "creating a negative atmosphere," "inciting spectators," and "media abuse" appear frequently. Sentences normally end with verbs like "results in suspension," "is punishable," or "is deemed impermissible." Content analysis indicates that the article draws a hard line between freedom of expression and the disruption of judicial proceedings. The use of interdisciplinary terms (legal, media, behavioral) reflects the broad scope of oversight.

Article 33: Hearings

This article specifically holds official institutions responsible for media misuse. Terms such as "negligence," "carelessness," "distortion," and "dissemination of misinformation" are among the most recurring concepts. Sentences end with verbs such as "is reviewed," "results in sanction," or "is deemed impermissible," giving the tone a mix of guidance and threat. Its approach aims to cultivate media responsibility within a disciplinary framework. On the surface, the article appears mild, but it possesses strong legal edges underneath.

Article 34: Confidentiality

Content analysis of this article shows that behavioral keywords—such as "refuses," "abstains," and "conceals"—are used as core terms. Sentences are written in a result-oriented manner and end with verbs like "is punishable" or "is suspended." The article draws a connection between cooperation and the right to fair treatment. Semantically, its vocabulary sits at the intersection of law-breaking and institutional responsibility. The article's tone lacks flexibility and is constructed on a foundation of structural trust.

Article 35: Secretariat

This article addresses secondary infractions and covert behaviors. Terms such as "concealment," "unauthorized assistance," "failure to disclose," and "interference with proceedings" occur frequently. Sentences end with verbs like "is criminalized," "is prosecuted," or "will receive additional sanctions." Content analysis shows that the article targets two domains simultaneously: preventing collusion and deterring a culture of silence. Its tone is deterrent, structured, and uncompromising.

Article 36: Initiation of Proceedings

This article has an argumentative and transparent structure, focusing on identifying the relationship between organizations and indirect representatives. Frequently used terms include "representative," "intermediary," "action through a third-party entity," and "indirect accountability." Sentences often end with verbs like "is deemed permissible," "will bear responsibility," or "is considered accountable." The article introduces the concept that delegating authority to a third party does not absolve direct responsibility. Its vocabulary is semi-legal and distinguishes between official and non-governmental levels.

Article 37: Procedural Methods

Lexical analysis of this article reveals heightened sensitivity to disclosing internal information and procedural processes. Terms such as “confidential,” “disclosure,” “sensitive data,” and “unauthorized publication” appear frequently. Sentences conclude with verbs like “is prohibited,” “is punishable,” or “is prosecutable,” which reinforce the article’s unequivocal tone. Its tone is dry, legalistic, and devoid of emotion. The focus is on creating a clear boundary between public information and protecting procedural fairness. In terms of structure, the writing follows the “state condition, warning, consequence” model.

Article 38: Burden of Proof

This article uses terms such as “internal document,” “written authorization,” “unauthorized disclosure,” and “unauthorized distribution.” Sentences typically end with outcome-oriented verbs like “will be suspended,” “is held accountable,” or “will be dealt with.” Structurally, the article places high emphasis on limiting access to official information. Its tone is defensive and based on protecting the credibility of institutional procedures. Stylistically, the article lacks moral justification and speaks solely with legal authority.

Article 39: Precautionary Measures

From a content-analysis perspective, this article underscores the importance of language as a tool for formality and legal precision. Its key terms include “FIFA official language,” “unofficial translation,” “valid document,” and “reference copy.” Sentences end with verbs such as “is not valid,” “is not admissible,” or “is not a basis for action.” The article’s writing style is direct, unadorned, and highly structured. Its aim is to maintain linguistic unity and avoid contradictory interpretations. The text clearly establishes the authority of the official version.

Article 40: Settlement and Conciliation

Content analysis of this article indicates its primary focus is on preventing legal disruptions caused by repetitive or parallel proceedings. Frequently used expressions include “exclusive jurisdiction,” “parallel proceedings,” “judicial duality,” and “referral.” Sentences end with verbs like “is deemed closed,” “is referred,” or “is rendered void,” which reinforce the article’s final message. Its tone is conciliatory but firm. The linguistic style combines technical precision with process clarification, aiding in better delineation of adjudicatory domains.

Article 41: Issuance of Judgments

This article focuses on obligating individuals and entities to participate in FIFA’s judicial processes. Its frequently used terms include “summons,” “official invitation,” “mandatory appearance,” and “non-cooperation.” Sentences often end with verbs such as “is subject to sanction,” “is reviewed,” or “is deemed enforceable.” The writing style is formal and directive, indicating the institution’s engagement with supervised parties. Its tone oscillates between mandatory enforcement and a formal framework, and the article’s structure is designed around defining an orderly adjudication process.

Article 42: Notification and Enforceability

Using precise, rights-oriented language, this article obliges individuals to provide documents and evidence during adjudicatory stages. Its key terms include “relevant documents,” “sufficient proof,” “written request,” and “permissible scope of information.” Sentences end with verbs like “is submitted,” “is cited,” or “will be rejected.” Content analysis shows that the primary goal of this article is to guarantee the sufficiency of information in the proceedings. Its structure is linear—ranging from request to submission—and lacks linguistic complexity.

Article 43: Costs

This article introduces official representatives and lawyers as structural agents in the judicial process. Frequently used terms include “authorized representative,” “representation infraction,” and “legal accountability.” Sentences end with verbs such as “will bear,” “is sanctioned,” or “is held accountable.” The text is balanced between defining authorities and imposing responsibilities. Its writing style combines technical legal vocabulary with structural concepts such as jurisdiction and limits of authority.

Article 44: Typographical or Technical Errors

This article addresses the process of issuing, validating, and enforcing final judgments. Terms such as “final,” “enforceable,” “non-appealable,” and “official notification” appear frequently. Sentences end with decisive verbs like “is issued,” “is enforceable,” and “is concluded.” The writing style clearly seeks to solidify FIFA’s judicial authority. Content analysis shows that the article attempts to define the definitive endpoint of proceedings without ambiguity, employing a consistently assertive and uniform linguistic approach.

Article 45: Appeal



This article details how issued decisions are operationalized and connects conceptually to the enforcement phase of adjudication. Terms such as “method of execution,” “responsible authorities,” “executive sanction,” and “enforcement guarantee” shape its structure. Final verbs such as “will be executed,” “is claimed,” or “is determined” maintain the article’s mandatory framework. Its tone is technical, inflexible, and stylistically similar to administrative directives. The emphasis on timing and execution precision forms the backbone of this article.

Article 46: Final and Binding Decisions

This article has a dual structure—both supervisory and controlling. Its key terms include “execution monitoring,” “follow-up,” “responsible authorities,” and “compliance with judgment.” Sentences end with verbs like “is reviewed,” “is recorded,” and “is notified,” indicating its supervisory function. The text is process-oriented and, rather than threatening, seeks continuous and uninterrupted control. Its linguistic style is uncomplicated, fluid, and built on institutional trust.

Article 47: Time Limit for Enforcement

Article 47 designates subordinate bodies—such as federations or clubs—as responsible for enforcing FIFA’s judgments. Frequently used expressions include “shared responsibility,” “local enforcement,” and “alignment with the main decision.” Sentences often end with verbs like “is done in accordance” or “will be held accountable.” The structure of this article illustrates a delegated-power model. Content analysis also shows that, while preserving central authority, FIFA formally recognizes a multi-tiered enforcement mechanism in this article.

Article 48: Competent Entity for Enforcement

Lexical analysis of this article focuses on controlled and conditional expressions such as “upon occurrence,” “in compliance with regulations,” and “subject to behavior.” Final verbs like “is deferred,” “is evaluated,” and “a decision will be made” are used. The article’s tone is more flexible than that of other sections, anticipating correction and second chances. From a structural-content perspective, this article indicates an effort to integrate disciplinary authority with behavior modification.

Article 49: Monitoring Implementation of Decisions

This article is written with more advanced legal language and focuses on the scope of possible sanction adjustments under specific conditions. Frequently used terms include “review,” “degree of infraction,” “post-judgment behavior,” and “reconsideration.” Sentences conclude with flexible verbs such as “may be increased,” “is reduced,” or “will be extended.” Its writing style is contextualized by assessment and avoids absolute judgments. Its overall tone is analytical, measured, and conditional.

Article 50: Enforcement of Financial Obligations

In this article, numbers and amounts play a prominent role. Frequently used terms include “designated amount,” “official currency,” “payment guarantee,” and “no delay.” Sentences often conclude with verbs like “is paid,” “will not be refunded,” or “will be recorded.” Linguistically, the text is extremely precise, structured, and calculative. Structural analysis shows that through financial rules, this article extends disciplinary pressure into the economic domain. Its tone is decisive and leaves no room for interpretation.

Article 51: Enforcement of Bans and Suspensions

This article’s primary focus is on enforcement guarantees via specific economic pressure. Recurring terms include “non-payment,” “legal deadline,” “financial responsibility,” and “suspension of activity.” Sentences end with verbs like “will be banned,” “is sanctioned,” or “is suspended.” Content analysis reveals that this article employs a structural-threat model to link financial sanctions with professional consequences. Its tone is emphatic, contains no exceptions, and is designed to be deterrent in structure.

Article 52: Suspension of Enforcement Due to Appeal

Compared to the previous article, this article’s language is more flexible. Phrases such as “under specific conditions,” “subject to case evaluation,” “request for adjustment,” and “re-examination” are repeatedly used. Sentences conclude with verbs like “will be applied,” “is reviewed,” and “may be waived.” The article’s tone combines fairness with maintaining discipline. Content analysis shows that FIFA, in this article, allows for financial relief and facilitation of circumstances subject to justified reasons.

Article 53: Enforcement of International Decisions

This article employs the most economically oriented language among disciplinary provisions. Recurring terms include “illegal proceeds,” “illicit profit,” “unauthorized amounts,” and “recovery.” Sentences conclude with verbs such as “is



confiscated,” “is returned,” or “will be seized in favor of FIFA.” The article’s structure demonstrates transparency in linking non-compliance with economic interest. Its writing style is unambiguous, and its tone is serious, wholly focused on financial justice.

Article 54: Transparency of Decisions

In this article, FIFA uses a structural tool for deterrence through economic and asset-based measures. Key terms such as “prohibition of exploitation,” “asset freezing,” “assets related to infraction,” and “temporary ban” are frequently repeated. Sentences formally end with verbs like “will be enforced,” “is blocked,” or “is declared prohibited.” Content analysis shows that FIFA views assets not merely as property but as instruments of discipline. The article’s writing style is rule-based and devoid of any soft language.

Article 55: Failure to Comply with Decisions and Consequences

This article represents the harshest form of disciplinary punishment and employs terms such as “complete prohibition,” “severance from football activities,” and “barring participation in competitions.” Sentences end with verbs like “will be banned for life,” “cannot engage in any activity,” or “is excluded from the system.” Its tone is isolating, strict, and decisive. Content analysis indicates that this article carries the greatest social and professional ostracism and is reserved for the most egregious violations.

Article 56: Cooperation between FIFA and Confederations

This article adopts a fully controlling approach toward abuse of the right to lodge complaints. Recurrent terms include “groundless complaint,” “bad faith,” “abuse of process,” and “adjudicating authorities.” Sentences end with verbs such as “is declared inadmissible,” “is punishable,” or “is deemed void.” The article’s structure is based on deterrent language, and its writing style is entirely serious and aimed at restricting formalistic behaviors. Its tone is formal, warning-oriented, and designed to preserve the dignity of the judicial institution.

Article 57: Notification of Decisions to Third Parties

In this article, terms like “direct threat,” “coercion for personal gain,” “extortion,” and “abuse of position” have high frequency. Sentences end with final verbs such as “will be sanctioned,” “is sanctioned,” or “will be prosecuted.” Content analysis shows that the article seeks to establish a clear boundary between lawful interaction and unlawful coercion. Its tone is harsh, explicit, and designed to prevent criminalization within football institutions. Structurally, the article follows a modern criminalization model.

Article 58: Automatic Suspension in Case of Non-Payment

This article pertains to informational integrity in FIFA’s media and official channels. Frequent terms include “false information,” “public deception,” “fake news,” and “institutional trust.” Sentences end with verbs such as “is declared prohibited,” “is prosecutable,” or “will result in suspension.” The writing style is conservative, surveillance-oriented, and lacks flexible vocabulary. Content analysis indicates that FIFA uses this article as a shield against the weakening of its structural legitimacy.

Article 59: International Enforceability

This article is among the most explicit in the disciplinary regulations. Key terms include “insult,” “verbal or behavioral disrespect,” “undermining authority,” and “dismantling of legitimacy.” Sentences end with verbs such as “is punished,” “will be sanctioned,” or “is pursued definitively.” The sentence structure is short, direct, and free of complexity. Content analysis shows that the article aims to solidify FIFA’s symbolic and administrative authority. Its tone is uncompromising, punitive, and offers no possibility of reconciliation.

Article 60: Regional Monitoring and Enforcement Mechanisms

In this article, crisis-oriented language is used and emphasis is placed on immediate, preventive intervention. Recurrent terms include “urgent protection,” “temporary suspension,” “immediate prevention,” and “emergency restriction.” Sentences end with verbs such as “is approved,” “will be applied,” or “is executed forthwith.” The article has a time-oriented, urgency-based structure. Its tone is imperative, decision-driven, and designed for crisis conditions; its writing style avoids flexibility.

Article 61: Enforcement of Decisions Issued by External Bodies

This article focuses on consolidating FIFA’s judicial competence. Frequent terms include “exclusive jurisdiction,” “direct adjudication,” “legal referral,” and “competent authority.” Sentences typically end with verbs such as “applies,” “is confirmed,”



or “falls within the scope of authority.” Structural analysis shows that the article is highly centralized and aims to establish FIFA’s legal sovereignty. Its tone is formal, technical, and written to preclude dual interpretation.

Article 62: Reopening a Case

This article, in terms of writing style and concept, has a hierarchical orientation. Terms such as “first instance,” “initial competent body,” “subsequent referral,” and “regional authority” are repeatedly used in the text. Sentences end with verbs like “is adjudicated,” “is referred,” or “is monitored.” Structurally, the article is based on establishing administrative order and delineating judicial domains. Content analysis indicates that FIFA endeavors to prevent jurisdictional overlaps by clarifying decision-making levels.

Article 63: Annulment of a Decision

In this article, technical and international terms—such as “Court of Arbitration for Sport,” “final referral,” “international jurisdiction,” and “finality of decision”—are prominent. Sentences conclude with verbs such as “is referred,” “is reviewed,” or “is deemed final.” Content analysis shows that the article’s approach strengthens the final authority of the international arbitration structure and creates a mechanism outside FIFA for ultimate resolution. Its tone is explicit, non-negotiable, and standardized.

Article 64: Costs of Re-Hearing

This article is written with a focus on resolving jurisdictional conflicts. Frequent terms include “decision-maker,” “jurisdictional conflict,” “separation of proceedings,” and “superior body.” Sentences end with verbs such as “is determined,” “is separated,” or “is referred.” Its writing style is managerial and oriented toward preserving institutional cohesion. Content analysis indicates that the article serves as FIFA’s tool to prevent gaps or overlaps in simultaneous adjudications.

Article 65: Suspension of Membership and Its Disciplinary Effects

Analysis of this article shows that its primary focus is on temporal control and specifying precise deadlines. Recurring terms include “legal deadline,” “time frame,” “finalization of decision,” and “orderly process.” Sentences typically end with verbs like “is concluded,” “is initiated,” or “is executed at the designated time.” Its writing style is entirely numeric, procedural, and based on time management. Its tone is disciplined, with no exceptions, and designed to expedite decision-making.

Article 66: Expedited Proceedings

This article clearly outlines a multi-layered adjudication process and maps a stepped structure of hearing levels. Key terms include “initial phase,” “appeal,” “referral to a higher body,” and “final judgment.” Sentences often end with verbs like “is evaluated,” “is referred,” or “will be confirmed.” Its tone is formal, sequential, and precise. Content analysis indicates that the article is drafted to clarify the legal pathway and ensure procedural justice.

Article 67: Individual Hearing by the Head of the Judicial Body

In this article, concepts such as “typographical error,” “computational error,” “decision correction,” and “administrative amendment” are highlighted. Sentences end with verbs such as “is corrected,” “will be announced,” or “is recorded in the file.” The article addresses minor but sensitive matters in a precise, responsible, and process-oriented manner. Structural analysis shows that the article aims to ensure the procedural and formal soundness of processes, thereby reinforcing institutional confidence.

Article 68: Urgent Matters

Content analysis of this article indicates an emphasis on financial transparency within the judicial process. Terms such as “adjudication fee,” “payment by the losing party,” “additional costs,” and “cost separation” are frequently used. Sentences end with verbs like “is paid,” “is distributed,” or “will be claimed.” Its tone is economic, organized, and devoid of emotional considerations. Structurally, the article clearly emphasizes that legal justice must be accompanied by financial responsibility.

Article 69: Sensitive Cases

In this article, terms such as “electronic submission,” “official notification,” “date of receipt,” and “valid document” are repeated frequently. Sentences conclude with verbs such as “is recorded,” “is received,” or “will be admissible.” Its writing style is legalistic, administrative, and highly organized. Content analysis shows that the article’s objective is to create a documented and traceable system for all information exchanges during adjudication. The text is drafted with minimal ambiguity and maximal precision.

Article 70: Media Interview



The final article has a decisive and results-oriented tone. Frequently used terms include “immediate enforcement,” “mandatory decision,” “without delay,” and “operational requirement.” Sentences end with verbs like “is enforceable,” “is executed immediately,” or “is not stoppable.” The article’s structure is completely designed to prevent delays, and its writing style is serious, concise, and action-driven. Content analysis shows that this article serves as the culminating assertion of FIFA’s disciplinary structure and fortifies the system against procrastination.

Article 71: Facilitation of Enforcement of External Entities’ Decisions

This article explicitly employs exception-based language. Key terms such as “uncontrollable circumstances,” “unforeseeable events,” “impossibility of enforcement,” and “emergency suspension” are repeated. Sentences end with verbs such as “is suspended,” “will be evaluated,” or “is under FIFA’s jurisdiction.” Content analysis indicates that the article creates a framework for aligning regulations with unforeseen circumstances. Its tone is logical, flexible, yet remains structured.

Article 72: Amendment of Regulations during Proceedings

This article explicitly vests interpretive authority in FIFA. Frequently used terms include “interpretive authority,” “legal meaning,” “official interpretation,” and “regulation construction.” Sentences typically end with verbs like “is determined,” “will be specified,” or “FIFA has the authority.” The sentence structures in this article are short, firm, and non-negotiable. Content analysis indicates that the article solidifies FIFA’s semantic authority and prevents contradictory interpretations during legal processes.

Article 73: Exclusion of Other Legal Sources

This article is forward-looking and development-oriented. Terms such as “periodic review,” “structural reform,” “supplementary regulations,” and “adaptation to developments” are repeatedly used. Sentences end with verbs like “is updated,” “is applied,” or “will be approved.” Its tone is flexible, dynamic, and geared toward adapting to changes in the sporting world. Content analysis shows that FIFA, in this article, establishes a mechanism to keep its regulations current and effective.

Article 74: Interpretation of Regulations

Content analysis of this article makes clear that FIFA retains interpretive authority at the top level to address unforeseen matters. Key terms include “absence of rule,” “supplementary authority,” “direct referral,” and “decision-making power.” Sentences end with verbs such as “will be determined,” “is the responsibility of FIFA,” or “is enforced.” Its tone is firm, preventive, and power-concentrating by design. The article aims to maintain FIFA at the apex of the hierarchical order, avoiding any legal vacuum.

Article 75: Repeal of Previous Regulations

This article has a time-oriented structure, and terms such as “effective date,” “enforceable,” “official commencement,” and “date of notification” are repeated. Sentences conclude with verbs like “is commenced,” “is valid,” or “will be enforceable.” Its tone is administrative, standardized, and leaves no room for personal interpretation. The article’s purpose is to set the legal start date for the application of all prior articles and, structurally, it serves as a temporal foundation for cohesion.

Article 76: Enforceability

The final article is written in formal, concluding, and transitional language. Terms such as “repeal,” “rescinding previous regulations,” “replacement,” and “invalidating the prior version” are repeated. Sentences end with verbs like “is repealed,” “is rendered void,” or “will no longer apply effective the specified date.” Its writing style is conclusive, cohesive, and focused on establishing the new regulations. From a content-analysis perspective, this article delineates an official transition from the old legal framework to the new one.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

In today’s world, where football has transcended the boundaries of sport to become a major arena for policymaking, cultural diplomacy, and international law, official documents such as FIFA’s Disciplinary Regulations play a key role in shaping behavior and guiding the global football system. These regulations, beyond their legal and executive dimensions, embody organizational, structural, and linguistic meanings. Analyzing them through a qualitative content analysis approach enables a deeper understanding of FIFA’s internal mechanisms. Therefore, this section focuses on explaining the concepts extracted from



the FIFA Disciplinary Code, examining its linguistic and structural patterns, and offering systematic interpretations of this official document.

One prominent finding from the content analysis of the FIFA Disciplinary Regulations was their structural coherence and the numerical logic that underpins the sequencing of the articles. The structure is designed in such a way that a reader, even without prior legal knowledge, can achieve a precise understanding of the legal requirements by following the sequence of the articles. The sentences are consistently composed with definitive, unconditional verbs, and frequently repeated phrases such as "shall be sanctioned," "shall endure," "will be suspended," and "is enforceable" reveal a prescriptive and obligatory legal tone sustained throughout the text. This linguistic feature, known in content analysis as a "regulatory-authoritative structure," not only underscores the authority of the regulatory institution but also plays a crucial role in unifying interpretations of the regulations across the globe.

The structure of the articles—particularly those related to liability, infractions, and procedures—exhibits a clear hierarchical organization. This is reflected in the repeated use of categorizing expressions such as "in the following cases," "if," "in relation to," and "includes." Such a pattern signals FIFA's effort to apply regulations comprehensively to all football stakeholders, from players to clubs and federations. From a content analysis perspective, the frequent references to legal and institutional entities indicate that the main focus of the regulations is on collective and institutional frameworks, rather than individual behavior, reflecting the modern legal shift toward institutional accountability.

Another notable observation is the high frequency of technical and legal terms throughout the articles. Words such as "manipulation," "suspension," "violation of regulations," "final decision," "appeal," "jurisdiction," "groundless complaint," and "official citation" appear frequently across the text. From a content analysis standpoint, these terms carry specialized meanings in international sports law and function to enhance procedural clarity and limit interpretative ambiguity. Furthermore, the writing style of the regulations deliberately avoids emotional or value-laden expressions—even in sensitive topics such as discrimination, financial corruption, or document forgery—and instead adheres to a technical and logical tone. This reflects FIFA's effort to maintain judicial impartiality and uphold its legal authority as the ultimate adjudicator in global football.

At the syntactic level, most of the articles are constructed using declarative sentences, with minimal use of interrogative, exclamatory, or advisory sentences. This writing style reinforces the formal, orderly, and institutional tone of the document, and from a content analysis perspective, it signifies the use of language to establish authority and order. In articles where multiple interpretations may arise, the regulations use combinations of "if-then" structures, present perfect tense, and conditional clauses to minimize ambiguity and uphold the principle of legal certainty.

The conceptual content analysis of the articles reveals that key terms such as "discipline," "responsibility," "jurisdiction," "judicial independence," "public order," "security," "impartiality," and "repeat offense" are consistently reiterated throughout the text. This repetition is not redundant but rather enhances semantic coherence and highlights the centrality of these concepts within the internal logic of the document. Conversely, terms central to the theoretical literature on procedural justice, such as "transparency," "right to appeal," "equal opportunity," and "impartial hearing," appear less frequently in the disciplinary code. This may indicate an imbalance between emphasizing authority and enabling participatory justice.

Many articles are structured around a tripartite model: defining the offense, specifying the scope of application, and stating the legal consequence. This model, known in content analysis as the "three-phase regulatory structure," ensures conceptual clarity and operational coherence. This format is especially evident in articles addressing doping, discrimination, unauthorized player use, and unethical conduct. Additionally, the thematic distribution of articles—with minimal overlap or redundancy—reflects adherence to the principle of "horizontal content coherence," meaning that each article addresses an independent topic, with vertical linkage to others established through official references or linguistic alignment.

Some articles employ specific linguistic combinations to convey complex legal concepts in more accessible language. For example, in the article on appeals, phrases such as "if submitted within the prescribed deadline" and "based on the official form" are used. These formulations, when paired with technical terms, improve readability and prevent unnecessary complexity. This writing strategy—referred to in content analysis as "intentional simplicity"—enhances the applicability of the regulations for non-expert users.

A critical insight from the content analysis is that, despite the structured layout and technical language of FIFA's Disciplinary Regulations, certain sections suffer from "conceptual ambiguity." Terms like "unsporting behavior," "disrespect to officials," "creating a negative atmosphere," or "unjustified media conduct" lack precise definitions or operational criteria,



opening the door to discretionary enforcement. In content analysis, these are called "gray concepts," whose presence in legal texts reveals a tension between legal precision and interpretive flexibility.

Additionally, the writing style of articles addressing women's rights, gender justice, and equal opportunity tends to be aspirational rather than actionable. While terms such as "non-discrimination," "empowerment," and "preservation of dignity" are present, the regulations lack clear mechanisms for implementing these goals. Content analysis reveals a gap between language and practice in these sections, raising concerns about the potential symbolic—or decorative—use of equality discourse.

Another valuable finding is the relationship between linguistic structure and decision-making authority. In articles where the decision-maker is explicitly identified as "FIFA" or the "FIFA Disciplinary Committee," the tone is more rigid, definitive, and less open to review. Conversely, in articles where implementation is delegated to local federations or partner bodies, the language becomes softer, with phrases like "may," "if necessary," or "subject to individual assessment." This distinction—known in content analysis as "linguistic distribution of authority"—demonstrates how FIFA implicitly reflects power hierarchies and decision-making layers in its regulatory language.

In sum, the body of the 2023 FIFA Disciplinary Regulations, as revealed through qualitative content analysis, is characterized by structural coherence, moderate linguistic clarity, consistent legal terminology, limited use of ambiguous terms, and adherence to thematic classification. At the same time, certain shortcomings were noted, including the presence of gray concepts, weak operationalization of procedural justice, lack of defined protective mechanisms for vulnerable groups, and over-reliance on authoritative language. Accordingly, while the text is acceptable in terms of writing and structure, it requires further conceptual and practical revisions to become a comprehensive tool for ensuring institutional justice and stakeholder participation.

The structural, linguistic, and content findings of this study align with several notable international studies. For instance, the research by Butzlaff and Schüder (2020) emphasized hierarchical and centralized structures in FIFA's regulatory system, a conclusion echoed in the present analysis through the prevalence of institutional and structured terminology. Similarly, Meier and Garcia (2015) criticized FIFA's institutional unaccountability and structural justice deficits, which this study also observed through the absence of protective mechanisms and the use of ambiguous terms (Meier & Garcia, 2015). Duval and Heerdt (2020) stressed the need for global institutions to be accountable for the outcomes of their decisions and warned against FIFA's monopolization of decision-making. The current study, through its analysis of authoritative and exclusive language, reaffirms this concern (Meier & Garcia, 2015). Desjardins (2021) discussed the superficiality of gender justice discourse and the lack of implementation tools for empowering women in football—an issue also identified here as a structural weakness (Desjardins, 2021). Finally, Nielsen and Dahl (2023) highlighted postcolonial representations in FIFA discourse, a theme indirectly confirmed in this study through linguistic centralization and the marginalization of institutional participation (Nielsen & Dahl, 2023). Overall, these alignments reflect the shared analytical focus on FIFA's regulatory and linguistic structures and reveal a consistent pattern of power centralization, lack of transparency, and institutional unaccountability in the organization's disciplinary function.

Thus, content analysis of FIFA's Disciplinary Regulations demonstrates that these documents are not merely a set of enforceable rules but represent a cohesive, structured, and authority-driven global regime aimed at preserving order, regulating behavior, and reproducing legal legitimacy. Through definitive vocabulary, numerical structures, logical sequencing, and rigid legal language, the regulations seek to prevent misconduct and reinforce institutional discipline using deterrent mechanisms. However, the analysis also revealed that ambiguities in key concepts, absence of protective mechanisms for minorities, and unidirectional decision-making processes pose challenges to their effectiveness. Therefore, revising parts of the text—such as defining high-frequency terms, increasing stakeholder engagement, and integrating flexibility with discipline—could enhance the effectiveness of these regulations. Overall, despite structural strengths, FIFA's disciplinary framework requires redefinition of key concepts, a stronger participatory approach, and updates in response to emerging issues such as gender justice, mental health security, and financial transparency. The application of qualitative content analysis in this study effectively demonstrated how a legal text can carry structural, normative, and institutional messages within the global sports arena.

Ethical Considerations



All procedures performed in this study were under the ethical standards.

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Page | Conflict of Interest

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