

## An effective coaching through “coaching model”

Mohar Kassim \*, Nik Rasheed Che Ali

*Centre For Coaching Science, National Defense University of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.*

---

**Abstract:** This study is to develop a football coaching model in order towards an effective coaching through coaching model. This study also involves fourth coaches (n=40) from various level and ten (n=20) football managers and twenty five(n=25). The study applied a qualitative methodology analysis to get a better results and data from the interview approach. Conversely, the findings of this study revealed that i) coaches with significant experience were apparent more favorable and impact to their knowledge of coaching ii) the environment factors highly influence the coaches behavior; iii) the players performance impacted by the training and competition process; iv) the coaches must shows their professionalism which constantly effected by the organization factors. Conversely, both coaches and players should justify each perception and giving positive feedback may becoming more team harmony and strengthen up the team performance. From this study the researcher also develop a football coaching model. This model shows that the component of professionalism, knowledge, behavior and players performance were related and each of the component has influenced from other factors such as organization, significant experience, environment, training and competition. Hence, the present study thus offers significant contribution to the existing literature and conceptual development on coaching by looking at the relationship between the coaches knowledge of coaching and behavior during the coaching process.

**Key words:** Football; Coaching model; Knowledge; Behavior

---

### 1. Introduction

Football Association of Malaysia (FAM) has always placed great importance on the development of young players for the future of Malaysian football. Various development programmers were formulated and implemented beginning in the 1980's and these programmers are being constantly refined and modified to suit current conditions.

A well laid-out long term development programmer with emphasis on the development and production of individual players is necessary to continuously provide quality players not only for the national league but also to the national team. Eventually, FAM is determined to make Malaysia a powerhouse for elite football in Asia with more consistent performance in international competitions.

The Association also provides opportunities for local coaches to offer their expertise in strengthening the structure and implementation of the State Football Academies. It believes that the best coaches should be able to develop young players' talent successfully ([www.utusan.com.my/utusan/archive](http://www.utusan.com.my/utusan/archive)). In the effort to develop players' talent, the Youth Department of the FAM states that a notable aim of coaching is to improve players' competence in acquiring football skills and developing their knowledge and understanding of football from the grass root level.

The coach is expected to play a pivotal role in imparting technical knowledge and understanding, as well as the moral, social and ethical development of the young players (World University Games, [www.ccbc.junction.net](http://www.ccbc.junction.net)).

According to Kassim(2008), coach preparation has become a priority and the establishment and support of national standards for coach education provides the core for an integrated system of preparing qualified coaches. Such establishment of coaching education constantly provides a consistent framework from which coach educators and coaching practitioners may establish accountability and credibility in the coaching profession. Quality coaching would then lead to improved performance and a better overall sport experience for young footballers (Gross & Beckenham, 1998).

Within this framework, the knowledge of coaches and their actions during trainings and competitions are both interrelated (Cushion, 2006). It involved their own history, how they learned and construct knowledge (Doherty et al., 2002). The impact of such a stance, particularly in coach education, is in line with the understanding of how knowledge and experience have significant influence on the coaching setting (Cushion, 2006). Cushion et al. (2003) and Gibert and Trudel (2001) noted that coaches' knowledge and practice are related to experience and personal interpretations of those experiences.

---

\* Corresponding Author.

However, this does not mean all experienced coaches are competent (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001). To become a competent coach requires significant experience (Lyle, 2002).

Studies by Gould *et al.* (1990) found that expert coaches felt the two most important knowledge sources that helped them develop their coaching styles were coaching experience and other successful coaches rather than any formal coaching course. Indeed, in their study of coaching, textbooks and seminars were the least important sources of information and only 46% of the coaches believed "there exist a well-defined set of concepts and principles for coaches to use" (p.37). In addition, Gilbert and Trudel (1998) reported that youth coaches require knowledge from a diverse range of disciplines, receive light formal training and reportedly learn best through direct experience.

## 2. Methodology

For the purpose of this study, a qualitative methodology was adopted because of its appropriateness in acquiring and analyzing the data from the questions. Since the present study is aimed to develop a first football coaching model for Malaysia, the qualitative method is considered appropriate because the study is primarily concerned with human understanding. The duration of 24 months was quite sufficient time to collect data, because to go beyond the said duration, the study could be influenced by some external factors such as policy, social environment, politics, etc., which may affect research data.

Data in the form of quotes from interviews are presented to support the study's findings. The data collection techniques used in this study is explained below.

### 2.1. Interview

The semi-structured interviews are considered as one of the best methods to inductively identify and conceptualize the terminology and main components of a knowledge domain (Biber & Leavy, 2006; Gamack & Young, 1985; Marshall & Rossman, 1989; Ritman-Olson & Biolsi, 1991; Wielinga & Breuker, 1985). This means, from the interviews, we could assess how the coach acquires new knowledge from the interaction with players and their existing knowledge during training sessions and game day.

Apart from the semi-structured interview, unstructured interview was also used because it allows the respondents to answer questions posed in their own words, and since the nature of the response is unlimited, the result of this more open-ended approach contributed to greater data depth. Thus, it enabled the researchers to ask more complex and sensitive questions, and each interview became very individual (Biber & Leavy, 2006). Fontana and Frey (2000) described the unstructured interview as a 'negotiated text' where the interviewees are active participants. Fontana and

Frey (2004) also suggested that unstructured interview provides a greater breadth, given its qualitative nature. In addition, the unstructured interview, according to Cohen and Manion (1994), is an open situation, having greater flexibility and freedom. This suggested that the unstructured interview is more casual.

After the transcription of each interview was completed, the transcripts were read numerous times in order to clarify and search for any further relevant information. As suggested by Kvale (1989), this process helped the researchers to : 1) become highly familiar with each respondent's view; 2) continually check the credibility and trustworthiness of the interview process to facilitate the later phase of content analysis. The validation and credibility checks are on-going process; continually questioning the interpretation of the respondents' answers.

### 2.2. Observation

Apart from the interview, we also employed the observation technique as a means of collecting data for this study. Nachmias and Nachmias (1996) stated that observation involves "watching what people do, listening to what they say and sometimes asking for clarification" (p.206). According to Nachmias and Nachmias (1996), the main advantage of using the observation method is its directness; and it enables the researcher to study behavior as it occurs. The researcher does not have to speak to the respondents and ask them about their own behavior and actions. The researcher can simply watch as individuals act and speak and this enables the researcher to collect first hand data, thereby preventing contamination of the factors standing between the researcher and the object of research.

In using non-participant observational procedure, the researcher took the role of an observer. The researcher did not become part of the team or offer coaching advice. Therefore, the researcher kept in mind three major considerations put forward by Nachmias and Nachmias (1996), in ensuring the data obtained are systematic and meaningful. They are: 1) what to observe, 2) when to observe and how to record, and 3) how much inference is required.

## 3. Data analysis findings

When the content in the interview stood out as meaningful in itself, it was isolated as a separate piece of text. By breaking down and conceptualizing a sentence or a paragraph a name or a tag is given. For example, 'gaining knowledge from seminars and workshops' is a text separated from the interview transcript and converted into a meaning unit. From this meaning unit, the researcher created the 'tag' Workshop/Seminar.

The respondents' responses are classified according to their category and property. Creating 'properties' is the second step in the interpretation analysis. After listing and comparing the tags created in the first phase, similar tags were re-grouped and

organized into certain categories that are referred to as 'properties'. For example, the tag 'Gaining knowledge' was re-grouped with similar meaning units into a large 'property' named "Growth Processes of Coaches". The properties include; always learning, coach maturing, career choice, etc.

Next, the final stage of analysis is creating a concise theoretical formulation. It involves inductive analysis of the content and thus, the relationship between the 'properties' are identified. When all the stages are carried out, the higher-order 'categories' describing the coaches' knowledge and behavior is achieved. This stage involves the integration process in order to identify the core categories and relate them to the research question. This integration process only describes certain parts of the data, not the whole data. The integration is not much different than the creation of properties except that it was done at a higher and more abstract level of analysis. This is an important process as systematically developing properties forms the basis for making relationships between categories and sub-categories.

#### **4. Organization**

The organization component also involves applying knowledge towards establishing optimal conditions for training and competition for reaching the team goal. The task of organizing can take place before, during, or after training and competition.

In the context of this study, organization ideally began with the creation of a positive and productive environment which would ensure a better chance for the players to follow the overall mission or plan of their coaches. Successful coaches were effective planners and they were able to see their tasks in a flexible manner, seasonal, monthly, weekly or daily.

Part of their organizational tasks involved helping their players to set goals and then monitoring them. Creating the team rules and using certain activities to help develop the team together, were the two central areas mentioned by the coaches related to the team building tasks.

Two final properties in this category include administrative tasks and working with the support staff. The following sections explore the amount of tags in each property of organization which had strong implications for the knowledge and behavior of the coaches. In this category of Organization, the findings of the data were labeled as Outlining the Mission, Planning, Goal-Setting, Team Building, Administrative Tasks and Working with Support Staff.

##### **4.1. Outlining the mission**

All coaches felt it was important to begin any season's quest by clearly outlining the mission of the team and the steps necessary to achieve success. Without an explicit plan from the coaches, the players would be left without guidance and it would affect the performance of the team. Hence, the

coaches agreed that the vision for the team must be clear to all the players.

##### **4.2. Planning**

A significant portion of meaning units in the organization category was fitted into the property of planning. In order for the coaches to effectively set out their mission of success, they had to anticipate the level of competition within their quadrennial, seasonal, weekly and daily plans for practices.

Thus, from the moment the season ended, coaches began planning for the next one to meet the priorities and skills which were deemed to be most important for success. However, coaches also understood the importance of remaining flexible with their seasonal plan.

However, there are instances where the coaches had a hard time planning for their training programmer, because FAM only appointed the coaches in March, the month in which the league season was due to start.

As part of their planning, the coaches also ensured that the seasonal plan is always kept as a 'reserve' in preparing for the weekly planning. According to the coach of the City Football Academy, the performance of the team had to be evaluated, in terms of their physical fitness and skill ability, at the beginning of the week to see if significant changes were required to be implemented into their monthly or seasonal plans. For example, if the team was particularly weak in their passing skill, then specific drills would be carried out to correct this problem.

In addition, it is important to understand that the planning property also involved more detailed preparation for daily practices. Although the seasonal and weekly perspectives include elements of practice planning which involves a number of hours, the coaches ensured that careful attention is given to this matter.

As was the case with other areas of planning, coaches felt it is important to remain flexible and provide specific themes for practices. Not least important in the process of planning is the importance of writing down the best and worst aspects of their practices to be used for future adjustments in training.

Apart from that, the coaches also emphasized a variety of activities in order to develop the players' skills through small group activity.

##### **4.3. Goal-setting**

According to the coaches, effective coaches are those who are able to help their players to achieve set goals, which were included in the seasonal plan. The goal setting of the coaches is in line with the objectives of the FAM which states that every team in the academy must engage in achievable goal-setting. From this study, it shows that the coaches' personal attributes helped them plan efficiently including their organizational, leadership and

communications skills during goal-setting sessions, both with individuals and the team.

Even though goal-setting is an important part in achieving the master plan, the Chief Coach (Lee) of the City Football Academy commented on the futility of having an outsider as a sport psychology consultant, who was appointed to work with them and their players to enhance the goal-setting process.

Other important aspect in the goal-setting process is the relative advantages of using outcome and process goals. The coaches spoke about 'outcome goals', which focus on the number of points derived from winning and losing, and 'process goals' which are more concerned with the necessary effort and steps required to achieve a goal, such as consistently performing to one's capabilities.

However, in the process of achieving the goal of the team without feeling much pressure, the coaches of the Academy chose to focus more on developing the players rather than winning the competition. Interestingly, for the City Football Academy, the coaches were not interested in producing a champion for the first round of the league tournament. Instead, for these coaches, it was more important to develop the players in terms of their physical, skills, and confidence in football. However, they hoped that their team would perform and the performance would be something which they could be proud of at the end of the season.

#### **4.4. Team building**

Part of the organizational skills of these coaches was their belief in molding individual players into a compatible team. This process could be facilitated by creating a positive and productive environment, as well as by setting proper team goals.

Moreover, creating team rules and solving problems relating to team building were two other strategies which the coaches believed could enhance team cohesion. Coaches understood that it was therefore important to be consistent with their rules and sanctions and to clearly communicate them to the players.

#### **4.5. Administrative tasks**

One area which most coaches just tolerated, yet felt extremely important, is dealing with administrative tasks. This property comprised the attitudes of the coaches pertaining to their interactions and activities which involved management issues with the State football Associations.

For the Forest Football Academy, matters involving management of the team were dealt with by the Chief Coach, and the Assistant Coach was only responsible for the training aspect of the team. This is different from the City Football Academy, where all relevant matters relating to the management of the team is carried out by the Assistant Coach, and

the Chief Coach would only be informed of any development by the Assistant Coach.

#### **4.6. Working with support staff**

Another type of important organizational task is the selection of the support staff. Hiring competent and loyal staff is very important because these support staff are needed to fulfill the necessary tasks involving welfare of the players during game day. In team sports such as football, there is a need for support staff to assist the coach during game day. For example, the State FA hired a part-time physiotherapist for the City Football Academy to treat the players' injuries and a part-time kit man to take charge of their meals, and drinks during match day.

However, for the Forest Football Academy, the State FA did not provide any support staff and thus, the Chief Coach and the Assistant Coach had to manage the players' meals and drinks, and treat the players' injuries during game day.

### **5. Training**

In this study, the training category is defined as the knowledge and skills used by the coaches in helping their players to prepare for the tournament. Whilst, in the context of this study, if the coaches did not make the practice environment stimulating and challenging, the players became bored and lost interest. Therefore, the coaches need to play an important role in creating challenging and stimulating tasks for the players.

In this category of training, the interview and observation findings were labeled as Physical Training, Tactical Training and Technical Training. All these aspects were equally important and affect one another. Physical training deals with physiological components that are necessary to compete at a higher level. Tactical training is the knowledge taught by the coaches to their athletes and technical training focuses on the continuous refinement of individual motor skills. Along the same line, daily or weekly practice plans had to be adjusted by the coaches depending on the previous post game evaluations. In team sports, like football, the coach had to read and adapt to both the strengths and weaknesses of their own team as well as their opponents. Thus, the coaches might use many different techniques to help players develop their skills.

#### **5.1. Physical training**

Physical training is defined as training required preparing players' respiratory, energy, and muscular systems physiologically from aerobic, anaerobic, and strength perspectives. The purpose of this property is for the coaches to train the players' physical strength, endurance, and conditioning so they would ultimately perform well in competition. For

endurance sports such as football, physical training is extremely important. Players must be pushed to their limit to get their bodies as fit as possible. Therefore, coaches are very firm on hard, strenuous training, using practices that were up-tempo and fast moving. One method to assess progress in training is to test and evaluate the players' performance through-out the season.

Thus, it is important that a part of physical training is conducted during the off-season. Two coaches discussed the planned programmers that they wanted their players to follow during the off-season. Those who did not adhere to the planned programmers were identified during the commencement of the training camp.

Though the physical training aspect is very important in the training programmer, the players in both academies had not gone through an intensive physical training and the effect was that the players were not fit.

### 5.2. Tactical training

The property of tactical training deals with teaching the cognitive strategies by the coaches and guiding players to consistently perform; despite pressure, opponents, and different playing environments. For example, the coach might teach a predetermined play to counter defense and it might be the understanding of a special defensive formation to use in late stages of a close game. The coaches carefully crafted the practice environment, where they tried to help their players achieve their short-term or long-term goals. All drills were constructed with purpose, where the coaching style of each coach is equally important as the drills.

Also important in the aspect of tactical training is the way the coaches prepared for upcoming match. Coaches in both Academies used a variety of game situations and chose the best way to get the job done. They also had in mind that certain strategies and tactics may not work.

In other words, they prepared their team for the next game by learning as much as possible about the opposition, anticipating the movement, and making sure every player plays well. In this study, the coaches realized that seeing an opponent in action gave the players a better understanding of the play towards winning. Hence, it is significant that the coaches used part of their training time to prepare for a specific opponent by simulating game situations.

### 5.3. Technical training

A third element of training involved technical aspects, the skill-based dimensions which appear to be the most obvious pedagogical part of coaching. This property is defined as the instruction provided by coaches to their players that is best believed to enhance the learning of individual motor skills such as ball control and accuracy of passing, kicking, and heading.

According to the coaches, it is important that all players received individual attention to help them reach their potential in training and games. Improving the players' performance in terms of the technical aspect is one of the most difficult challenges that the coaches faced. Therefore, it is not uncommon for coaches to spend much time on technical training.

In fact, some coaches believed, in adapting the technical training in one game after another, it could overcome the weaknesses of the team. Finally, from the above findings, the model below can be used as a model to help the coaches to get a better performance for their football team.

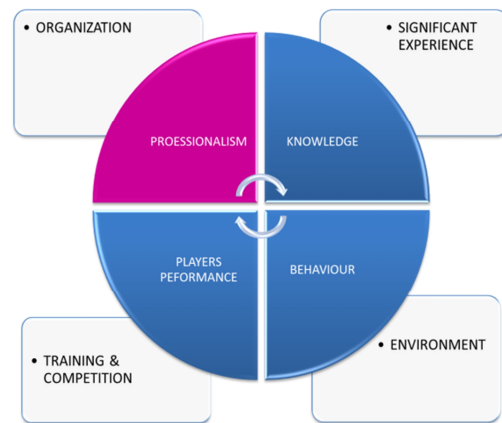


Fig. 1: The coaching model

### 6. Conclusion

The present study was set out to make a contribution to current understandings of coach education by providing theoretical insights and empirical evidence related to the knowledge and behavior of the Football Academy coaches in Malaysia. It is the purpose of this study to reflect on the discussion and elucidate the process of coaching and how it has taken place in the context of the present study. By discussing the issues that have emerged in this study, an understanding of the coaching process can be evaluated and perhaps improved.

Other than that, future research may want to embark on a study of the coaches' content knowledge, understanding the learning process in coaching, quality in coaching, coaching methods, and understanding of the athletes' abilities. It is hoped that future research can also focus on the coaches and players in other sports at various levels. If this can be done, it is hoped that a theory or a coaching model can be developed as a guide for the coaching practice in the Malaysian perspectives. These additional studies will help provide a basis for comparative analysis of the coaches' knowledge and behavior in these academies. It would also be beneficial in future to conduct further research on the coach education programmer being implemented at the national and international level to examine the

comparative aspects of the programmer that should ultimately benefit the coaches and the players.

Greater importance should be placed on the review of the coach education programmer to ensure the effectiveness of the programmer in producing competent coaches and quality players in the future. Future research should also continue to examine the role and involvement of more parties or agencies in the development of the coach education programmer in the country, including the National Sports Council, the National Coaching Board and the Ministry of Education, to give an insight into the effectiveness of the programmer from a different perspective. As this study focused on the football coaches' knowledge and behavior during the coaching process, future research should consider expanding the study of the coaches' knowledge and behavior to coaches in other games or sports. Future research should also consider examining other football coaches at the national and international level and provide a comprehensive analysis of their knowledge and behavior during the coaching process.

### Acknowledgment

Special appreciation and thanks to the Research and Innovation Division of National Defense University of Malaysia and Centre for Coaching Science, National Defense University of Malaysia and all those who have contributed to this research.

### References

Amorose, J.A., & Horn, T.S. (2001). Pre-to Post-Season Changes in the Intrinsic Motivation of First Year College Athletes: Relationship with Coaching Behaviour and Scholarship Status. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, **13**, 355-373.

Barnet, N.P., Smoll, F.L., & Smith, R.E. (1992). Effects of enhancing coach-athlete relationships on youth sport attrition. *The Sport Psychologist*, **2**, 111-127.

Baumgartner, T.A., Strong, C.H & Hensley, L.D (2002). *Conducting and reading research in Health and Human Performance*. (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). McGraw –Hill Companies.

Bengoechea, G.E., Streat, B.W., & Williams, D.J. (2004). Understanding and promoting fun in youth sport: coaches' perspectives. *Journal of Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, **9**, (2), 197-211.

Bloom, A.M., Steven, E.D., & Wickwire, L.T. (2003). Expert Coaches Perceptions of team Building. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, **15**, 129-143.

Bloom, B.S. (1985). *Developing talent in young people*. New York: Ballentine.

Chelladurai, P., & Smith, A. (1978). *Leadership*. Ottawa: Sociology of Sport

Monograph Series, Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation.

Grisaffe, C. et.al., (1996). The effect of head and assistant coaches uses of humour on collegiate soccer players evaluation of their coaches. *Journal of Sport Behaviour*, **25**, 104-107

Hollembek, J., & Amorose, A.J. (2005). Perceived Coaching Behaviours and College Athletes' Intrinsic Motivation: A Test of Self-Determination Theory. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, **17**, 20-36.

Kassim.M. (2008). *A Qualitative Study of the Relationship Between the Knowledge and Behaviour of Coaches in two Football Academies in Malaysia*. Unpublished doctoral thesis, Loughborough University, UK

Kozub, A.S & Pease, G.D. (2001). Coach and player leadership in high school basketball. *Journal of Sport Pedagogy*, **7**, 1, 1-12

Lyle, J. (1999). The Coaching Process: Principles and Practice. In Cross, N & Lyle, J.W.B (Eds.). *The Coaching Process: Principles and Practice for Sport*. (p. 1-24).

Lyle, J. (2003). *Sports Coaching Concepts. A Framework For Coaches' Behaviour*. Routledge. Taylor & Francis Group.

Martens, R. (1990). *Successful coaching*. Champaign, IL: Leisure Press.

Nachmias, C.F. & Nachmias, D. (1996). *Research Methods In The Social Sciences*. (5<sup>th</sup> Ed.). London. Martin Press.

Orlick, T. (1990). *In pursuit of excellence*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Sherman, C. A; Fuller, R & Speed, D. H (2000) Gender Comparisons of Preferred Coaching Behaviours In Australian Sports. *Journal of Sport Behaviour*. **23**, (1), 329-404.

Smith, F.L., Smoll, F.L., & Hunt, E. B. (1977). A system for the behavioural assessment of athletic coaches. *Research Quarterly*, **48**, 401-407.

Smith, R.E. & Smoll, F.L. (1977). Coach mediated team building in youth sports. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, **9**, 114-132

Smith, R.E., Smoll, F.L. & Curtis, B. (1979). Coaching behaviours in little league baseball. In F.L. Smoll & R.E. Smith. *Psychological perspective in youth sport*. (pp.173-201) .

Subramaniam (2005). *Interview session with Youth Development officer of the FAM*.

Vallee, C.N., & Bloom, G.A. (2005). Building a successful University Program: Key and Common Elements of Expert Coaches. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, **17**, 179-196.

Vallee, C.N., & Bloom, G.A. (2005). Building a successful University Program: Key and Common Elements of Expert Coaches. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 17, 179-196

Walton, G.M (1992). *Beyond Winning: The Timeless Wisdom Of Great Philosopher Coaches*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics