DEVELOPMENT CHARACTERISTICS OF FOOTBALL COACHES IN AUSTRALIA AND MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

Sport coaches play a crucial role in contributing to individual and team performance. Unlike the scientific study of athlete development, scant attention has been paid to the intricacies of coach development across the full spectrum of coaching levels. In the current research the defining stage development characteristics of A, B and C license soccer (hereafter referred to as football) coaches in Australia and Malaysia, were interviewed about their development journey, especially dating back to their first involvement in football through to the present.

Methods

This research was guided by evolved grounded theory (EGT), (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) principles. Evolved grounded theory was used and is well suited to developing an understanding of the complexities of sport coaching development (Pellegrino, Chudowsky, & Glaser, 2001). Furthermore, EGT is inherently adaptable and is data driven but with the capacity to consider relevant research with a view to developing an explanatory model. Coaches' learning changes as they learn from different sources that change their cognitive structure (Werthner & Trudel, 2006). Suitable accredited football coaches were progressively recruited based on the principles of theoretical sampling (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998).

Interviews

In-depth semi-structured face-to-face interviews were used to explore how participants organized and understood their coaching development perspectives and experiences. I used a semi-structured interview guide with a recursive design, whereby themes were identified and explored in later interviews. The transcripts

from twenty-four interviews conducted over an 11-month period in Australia and Malaysia were transcribed and analyzed according to EGT principles. Probe questions were also used to explore idiographic themes and issues relevant to each interviewee. Initially data analysis involved creating verbatim transcripts of each interview resulting in 372 pages of single spaced text. Following the principle of Strauss & Corbin's, (1990) EGT, I systematically conducted data construction, data deconstruction, and data reconstruction stages.

Results

As expected, development emerged as a central overarching category. Based on the analysis, the following four core development themes emerged, a) pre-accreditation, b) characteristics, c) learning and d) challenges. These core categories were relevant for both Australian and Malaysian football coach samples were underpinned by over 15 selected common codes, over 70 axial codes and close to 3,000 open codes. These four development themes formed the basis for the resultant evolved grounded model. Although the development themes for the Australian and Malaysian coaches were very similar two sub-themes related to egalitarianism coaching attitudes in Australia and hierarchical practices in Malaysia emerged.

Conclusion

The use of EGT proved to be a useful methodology to delineate key development themes for accredited football coaches across a wide spectrum of coaching contexts. The aims of the study were achieved and the accredited football coach development model (AFCDM) will hopefully provide an impetus to

examine further coach development and particularly strategies and techniques to ensure all coaches are well supported, trained and developed.

STUDENT DECLARATION

"I, Zulakbal Bin Abd Karim, declare that the Ph.D. thesis titled "Development characteristics of football coaches in Australia and Malaysia" is no more than 100,000 words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, and references. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my work".

Signature: Date: 31-03-2016

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In sport, football is referred to as soccer in Australia, is often considered the most popular and influential sport internationally (Sugden & Tomlinson, 1994). Throughout this thesis, I have chosen to use the term football rather than soccer. Given the cultural significance of sport (see Kinkema & Harris, 1998), and football, in particular, the organizations that regulate football are considered major forces.

Indeed, the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) is a major trans-global socio-economic and cultural-ideological force (Sklair, 1991). There are approximately 250 million football players worldwide (Goldblatt & Acton, 2010). The cumulative television audience of the 2010 FIFA World Cup in Africa reached over 3.2 billion people worldwide, and the global football industry has been valued at more than $500 billion per year (Murray, 2011). Currently, FIFA has 209 member countries, more than any other global organization, including the United Nations (FIFA, 2014).

There are currently an estimated 780,000 male and 190,000 female players registered representing 2,300 registered clubs with the Football Federation Australia (Goldblatt & Acton). Football is currently the most popular sport among Australian children in participation (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012). The most popular sport in Malaysia is football (Pundyk, 2004). In the FIFA world rankings, Malaysia was ranked at 166th (FIFA, 2016). There are currently an estimated 9,930 registered and 575,000 unregistered players reported in Malaysia (National Football Development Program Malaysia, 2014). Football, however, is still considered as the number one sport in Malaysia, based on television audiences (Hamid & Kendall, 2008).

The corresponding total number of accredited football coaches in Australian and Malaysia is arguably less than required to support the growth of football. For example, according to Football Federation Australia (2009), there are approximately 3,000 active and registered coaches in Victoria, with 17,000 registered on FFV database as having completed a course, but are not necessarily active. In Malaysia, there are 11 Professional Diploma coaches, and more than 700 B license coaches (318 Advanced coaches-equivalent to B license), more than 4,000 C license

coaches (more than 1,000 Preliminary coaches-equivalent to C license, (Gopalkrishnan, personal communication, March 1, 2012). Therefore, investigating the development pathway for Australian and Malaysian football coaches is highly relevant to ensuring demand for high quality coaches are met across all levels.

According to Mageau and Vallerand (2003), although football is increasingly popular and has a crucial role to play in developing players' performance, the support systems available are generally in place for the player, not the coach. Collectively, coaches are expected to produce outstanding results at the professional level, but also play a central role in fostering the "social capital" and healthy living at the grassroots and community levels (Nathan, Birourre, Evers, Mackenzie & Henly, 2010). Nathan et al. claims, the coach, is vital at the community level because sport can be a mechanism to promote social cohesion, encourage strong community bonds, and to access positive mentors. These positive influences are particularly important for communities with a high proportion of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. FIFA prioritizes the importance of football as a vehicle for healthy and positive development of participants at the community level.

With the sheer scale of football participation worldwide it is difficult to underestimate the collective influence that coaches play in the lives of participants. Consequently, building robust systems and infrastructure to recruit, develop and support football coaches is necessary. According to Berger (2011) and Peacock (2008) coaches need stronger support if the football governing bodies and ruling governments are serious about football progressing. With sport coaching science research there is a growing body of evidence that can potentially be applied to support coach development. For example, researchers investigating coaching effectiveness almost universally report that coaches greatly influence an athlete's

performance, behavior, and emotional well-being (e.g., Andrew, 2009; Chelladurai, 1990). Although it is difficult to determine specifically, the uptake of recently acquired coaching science knowledge by sports organizations, the growth in University based sport coaching programs and relevant research provides an ongoing source of new knowledge. The current doctoral research was used to focus specifically on understanding the key development needs of football coaches with the anticipation that this knowledge be potentially disseminated where appropriate, using the principles of knowledge transfer and exchange (KTE).

Football coaching can be a fulfilling and rewarding vocation. Inherent in the coaching role, however, are many challenges and stressors. Football coaches face demanding schedules and time commitments, excessive workloads, conflicting roles and the pressure to win and cope with defeat. According to Surujlal and Nguyen (2011) football coaches face challenges, frustrations, conflicts and tensions, the enormity of which can be underestimated. McNamara (2001) suggests the “chaotic lifestyle” of a sports coach includes travel, regular dislocation from family and friends, long undefined hours, limited time for oneself; and lack of job security. McNamara also stated that the complex and extraordinary demands placed on coaches also stem from having to perform multiple roles including educator, motivator, counselor, advisor, trainer, manager and administrator. Research designed to illuminate better the key challenges for coaches at points along the development journey can potentially be applied to support coaches in both anticipating and responding to these challenges. Coaches who are better informed and more conversant with the key challenges they will likely face as they develop should be better placed to respond proactively in their development journey. Thus, investigating the development pathway of coaches should be a vital source of knowledge to ensure coaches are

deriving the task satisfaction that can sustain their ongoing self-efficacy and coaching involvement.

One of the main ways to enhance coaching preparedness, efficacy and effectiveness are through coaching education programs (Feltz, Short & Sullivan, 2008). To provide continuous growth and development, all coaches need quality coach education programs to assist coaches in developing a growth mindset (Treasure, 2007). Numerous countries have invested in structured coach education, including; the United Kingdom through the UK Coaching Certification initiative and UK sports coach; Canada through the National Coaching Certification Program; United States of America through the National Council for the Accreditation of Coach Education and Australia through the National Coach Accreditation Scheme (Trudel, 2007). Researchers have demonstrated that many coaches do not perceive that their coach education courses delivered the type of information required to improve their coaching skills and expertise (Fung, 2004; Jones & Turner, 2006; Werthner & Trudel, 2006). Some experts have also suggested that the available coaching education courses are often presented and assessed in a format that does not encourage learning (Abraham & Collins, 1998; Gilbert & Trudel, 1999; Haslam, 1990). The reality is that many coaches attribute the development of their coaching knowledge to their experience observing other coaches (Coaching Association of Canada, 1998; Gould, Greenleaf, Guinan, Dieffenbach, & McCann, 2001). Furthermore, the stages and critical issues of coach' development are considered important in the design and presentation of coach education courses (Erickson, Côté & Fraser-Thomas, 2007). The results of the current research should provide relevant knowledge for coaching coordinators of governing bodies to tailor training by incorporating evidence-based education on coach development themes.

Over the last fifteen years, considerable emphasis has been placed on the identification and development of sporting talent with the establishment of talent identification development (TID) systems in numerous countries, e.g., Australia (Hoare, 2000). The focus, however, has almost exclusively been on TID athletes with little consideration to identifying and developing talented coaches. Houlihan (2000) suggests that national sport's governing bodies, coach education providers, sports clubs and youth organizations should work together more effectively to enhance the performance development pathway or a system to identify, develop and support coaches as well as athletes. That is, better support and development for sport coaches has multiple benefits. These benefits will likely fit within the broader domain of providing support to enhance the coaching experience and link to perceived benefits and satisfaction for coaches, rather than purely as a conduit to a better experience for athletes.

Collectively, sports coaches and coach education coordinators need to understand how coaches develop through the stages of development to inform the best training possible (Wiman, Salmoni & Hall, 2010). Nash and Sproule (2011) state that in the sports context, the conceptual and theoretical examination of these stages is somewhat limited, especially in the community or novice level across the full spectrum of issues that affect the coaches. Nash and Sproule (2009, 2011), also believe more attention is required to understand the pathways that coaches follow, as there is a paucity of information as to how coaches develop and transition.

The overarching research question for the present study was; how do Australian and Malaysian football coaches understand their development needs at different levels of coaching? In the present research evolved grounded theory Strauss and Corbin (1990) was used to examine critical development themes for

accredited Australian and Malaysian football coaches at different license levels (i.e., ‘C’, ‘B’ and ‘A’ levels). A comprehensive review of literature is used to discuss sport coaching and especially relevant research in sport coach development. For the reasons listed above the general aim of the research was to delineate the primary coach development themes from the perspective of accredited Australian and Malaysian football coaches.

In this study, I explored how accredited Australian and Malaysian football coaches with “A”, “B” and “C” viewed their development. The multiple country approach corresponds to the recommendation by Erickson, et al. (2007) who suggested that additional coach development research in a range of countries would add depth to the overall understanding of coach development. Similarly, Morgan (2006) has concluded that football is an under-researched area regarding coach development. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were used to elicit the coaches’ views, experiences and plans. The question guide used in the interviews evolved iteratively and was grounded in the theoretical concepts outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1990). The interview data was subjected to EGT principles that enable coding, analysis and retrieval of the data. The experiences, reflections, thoughts, feelings and personal introspections formed the constituent data. Specifically, the concept of how coaches view themselves in terms of their development was explored in addition to early life experiences that collectively shaped their later development as a coach. The resulting accredited football coach development model (AFCDM) presented in Chapter 4 evolved from numerous iterations.

THESIS STRUCTURE

Chapter 1 Introduction

The first purpose of the introduction was to demonstrate the popularity of football globally and thereby demonstrate the huge number of accredited football coaches that are required to meet current and expected demand. The second purpose was to link the importance of sport coaches in contributing to healthy communities and social capital. The third purpose was to demonstrate that ongoing coach development is partly contingent on the need for institutional support including well-planned accreditation and training programs. That is, quality training and accreditation are an important cog in equipping coaches to negotiate their development pathway successfully, respond to challenges and attain crucial knowledge of how to be the best coach they can be. The fourth purpose was to introduce the participant sample and methods used in the study. The overarching research question for the present study was; how do Australian and Malaysian football coaches understand their development needs at different levels of coaching? The research method (EGT) was intentionally employed to answer the research question, purpose and aims by facilitating the development of a football coach development model.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

The purpose was to review the relevant literature of global trends in sports coaching and specifically development themes of coaches at different points along the development pathway. The review is also used to introduce and contextualize some defining features that inform the study; including, the selected sport (football) in two South East Asian countries; Australia and Malaysia from which participants in the current research were recruited. Overarching global and generic themes such as

coaching role expectations, coaching effectiveness, coach training and education, and coaching challenges are then discussed. The review is then intentionally focused on areas directly related to coach development, including sections on coach education, career development, coaching pathways and stages of coach development. Finally, the rationale for conducting the study is discussed. See Appendix A for key operational terms used.

Chapter 3 Method

The research method chapter is used to describe participants, procedures, and relevant background information. Furthermore, the method chapter was used to frame the design of the study and key features of the data collection and analysis process. The reasons Evolved Grounded Theory (EGT) methodology was chosen are explained in additional to descriptions of the participants and procedures.

Chapter 4 The Study

The first purpose of chapter four is to establish and delineate the coach development for journey for accredited football coaches in Australia and Malaysia. A second associated purpose was to develop a grounded model of accredited football coach development. A final purpose was to focus on similarities and differences in cross-culturally. Throughout the chapter, representative quotes are used to demonstrate the axial, common and core themes extracted from interviews with twenty-four coaches that informed model development.

Chapter 5 General Discussion and Conclusions

This chapter is used to summarize and draw together the main findings. First, the general discussion is provided to summarize the results of the study, especially the most salient points that emerged such as the challenges that coaches face, the range of learning development opportunities that coaches engage in and

characteristics related to coach development. Also, discussions of the specific limitations of the current studies are discussed. Finally, the conclusions are presented in the context of recommended areas for additional research and transferring the findings of the present study into a practical context.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Over the past 15 years, sport coaching science researchers have investigated various aspects of coach development and expertise. The resultant body of literature describes sports coaching as a complex and multifaceted array of skills with expertise taking many years to develop. Given the huge diversity of proficiencies that sports coaches are expected to attain, it is hardly surprising, that coaches report how challenging and stressful coaching can be (see Fletcher & Scott, 2010; Olusoga, Butt, Hays, & Maynard, 2009). Arguably, one solution to assist coaches in better understanding coaching tasks and requirements is a clearer understanding coach development pathways. For example, appreciating the often subtle differences between generic coaching skills and context specific coaching skills is important for sports coaches. That is, which skills and expertise do sports coaches need to possess irrespective of age, gender, culture or level of participation and how are these skills exercised in a context specific manner? Also, coaches require sufficient insight to understand themselves, their strengths, weaknesses, personality, coaching philosophy, aspirations and their development history as interacting factors regarding their specific development requirements (Bloom, Durand-Bush, Schinke & Salmela, 1998). Discernment from sports coaches of skills are not only relevant but how relatively important are these skills within different contexts and at different points in the development journal is critical.

In this chapter, I provide a review of the current literature relevant to the development of coaches generally, with a particular focus on the role of coach education, accreditation and coach development and accreditation. There are subtle

differences between coach education and coach development that require a brief explanation. Coach development is defined within the International Sport Coaching Framework (2012) as “the range of mediated and unmediated education and professional enhancement activities available to coaches” (p. 8). Whereas, coach education has been defined as avenue for “Sports coaches to participate in a range of learning opportunities (informal to formal) that contribute to their development to varying degrees”. Mallett, Trudel, Lyle & Ryne (2009). The review is focused initially on the sport of football (i.e., soccer) especially from the perspective of development in Australia and Malaysia, from where the participant coaches have been recruited. Next, the relevant global and generic themes, are discussed including, the role of the coach, coaching effectiveness, coach training and coaching challenges. These overarching themes inform and provide a foundation from which to explore specific and contextual issues. The review then brings together key research trends in coach expertise, role clarity, and coach effectiveness. The review is then funneled into the specifics of coach development including the following sub-themes; coach education, career development, coaching pathways and stages of coach development.

Football in Malaysia, Australia and Globally.

I have deliberately situated the present research in the popular sport of football. Many authors attest to the profile and mass appeal of football internationally (Behrent, 2011; Giulianotti, 1999; Giulianotti & Robertson, 2009; Goldblatt & Acton, 2009; Lanfranchi, Eisenberg, Mason & Wahl, 2004; Tiesler & Coelho, 2008). Parker (1994) has discussed football as an important and well-recognized element of popular culture, a game embraced by millions of people and the sport of choice for millions of amateur and recreational football players globally. Football is not only of huge public interest, but professional football is also a powerful industry with the

associated commercialism estimated at US$250 billion worldwide annually (Brown, 2000; Vaeyens, Coutts, & Philippaerts, 2005). Football is also closely linked with tourism.

Historically football in Australia came into national prominence in 1974 when the Australian team first qualified for the FIFA World Cup in Germany. In the intervening years, the popularity of football as a spectator sport has steadily increased with large television views numbers and attendances at World Cup qualifiers and matches. The numerical and financial growth of football in Australia has arguably direct implications for the 3,000 coaches around Victoria, who are servicing this growth sport (Rendell, 2012). There is also a direct impact on over 450,000 registered players, comprised of 60,000 adult males, 6,000 adult females, 323,000 youth players who participate in organized football competition with 12,000 clubs and schools affiliated to FFA (Oliver, 2006). Rendell (2011) reports that over 40,000 players and more than 3,000 coaches are involved annually in competitive football in Australia. Also, football is going through an extended growth phase in Australia, and additional coaches are required to service this growth (Hay, 2006).

Football in Malaysia was introduced by the British, towards the end of the 19th century and has become a central pillar of most sports clubs in Malaysia. Nearly three million Malaysians watched the South East Asia Games final between Malaysia and Indonesia in 2009, and 1.7 million people watched the Malaysia Cup Final (FAM 2011). These figures confirm the status of football within Malaysia as arguably the most popular and intensely followed sport. During the glory days of Malaysian football in the 1970s and 1980s, the Malaysian national team qualified for the 1972 Summer Olympics in Munich and the 1980 Moscow Olympics.

Despite the popularity of football, scant attention has been given to coaches, especially regarding how coaches develop over time (Côté, Young, North, & Duffy., 2007). That is, despite the popularity and influence of football, the role of the coach at all levels has not been thoroughly appreciated, documented or researched. Moreover, Bales (2007) also suggests that less developed countries in sports coaching (e.g., Malaysia) can benefit from the lessons learned by countries that have worked through the issues of establishing coach education systems (e.g., Australia). Moreover, all countries and sports organizations can learn from targeted research aimed at closing gaps in coach development and training. The current research can be viewed as an opportunity to contribute new knowledge relevant to the development and support of sports coaches. Furthermore, the current study represents a potentially useful source of information to drive and reshape aspects of coach education and coach training.

Global Themes in Coaching

Sports coaching: The Role and Expertise

A reoccurring theme in the sport coaching literature is the breadth of and multi-layered scope of coaching duties. There are numerous responsibilities and expectation of coaches irrespective of the point they are at in their development. Petitpas and Vernacchia (2004) describe the role of coaches as performers, educators, leaders, planners, motivators, negotiator, managers, and listeners. Coaching involves the interaction of three fundamental variables: the coach, the athlete, and environment (Côté, Yardley, Hay, Sedgwick & Baker, 1999) with the coach being at the heart of the process, an essential part of the jigsaw (Cross & Lyle, 1999). Cassidy, Jones, and Potrac (2008) view the coach as a holistic problem solver involved in the planning, prioritization, contextualization and orchestration of

provision in an ever-changing environment. Lusted (1986) stated that coaching is fundamentally a social, cultural and pedagogical practice that comprises the interconnections between the teacher, learner, content, and context. According to Jones (2006), coaching, in whatever guise is essentially a social-educational enterprise. Social, because it involves human interaction, and educational because it extends from learning to include fun and mastering basic skills through to knowing about the intricacies of body adjustment and tactical awareness.

Fundamentally, a sports coach teaches and supervises, gives directions, instruction and training both on and off the field. A key aspect of the coach's job is to transfer their knowledge and experience to develop and improve the skill level of the athletes. Coaching also entails the application of sports tactics and strategies during the game or contest. According to Cassidy, Jones, and Potrac, (2009), many coaches frame their coaching practices around rules and regulations. They are expected to provide and maintain a disciplined environment and at the junior level, especially act as a role model. There are also health and safety responsibilities with coaches often needing to ensure that players are safe and protected during training and games. Cassidy et al. also notes that coaches must draw on many knowledge sources and decide how to amalgamate and utilize their knowledge. Furthermore, coaching requires intellectual and technical work that involves higher order thinking skills to deal with the humanistic, problematic and dynamic nature of the tasks involved, (Cassidy, Jones & Potrac, 2009.)

According to Abraham and Collins (1998), a coach is someone who orchestrates learning activities and mediates the social climate while diagnosing and remediating performance. The implication is that there is much more to coaching than in-depth technical knowledge. The coach must create an environment that

provides a structure for learning, and is also conducive to open communication, shared goal-setting and collaborative decision making (Miller & Kerr, 2002). Coaches face the challenge of encouraging learners to be self-directed and intrinsically motivated while creating an environment that is structured enough to stretch learners into “new domains of complexity” (Larson, 2000). Coaches need to be aware of learning theory, motivational climate and knowledge construction, as well as the technical detail of their sport. Understanding age-related changes, perceptions, physical competencies, emotions, social influences and achievement behaviors are critical for the effective coach. Sport coaches also need to develop outstanding communication and decision-making skills along with management and analytical proficiency.

Based on the current practices, a coach is much more than a subject matter specialist (Squires, 1999). The coach has multiple responsibilities and operates within given structural constraints in a dynamic social environment, (Cassidy, Jones & Potrac, 2009). According to Robinson (2010), it is essential that the coach holds appropriate qualifications and is adequately insured to practice coaching. The expert coach can operate effectively within his/her specific context, making decisions, solving problems, and operating at the unconscious (autonomous) level (Lyle & Cushion, (2010). Many coaches’ actions occur because of a complex interaction of knowledge and memory of similar situations, honed by years of experience and reflection (Schon, 1987).

The complexities of the coaching role, especially when designated as a performance coach are evident (Claxton, 1988; Doug & Hastie, 1993; Lacy & Direst, 1985). A broad range of required competencies and skills including; communication, planning, networking, knowledge acquisition, development in pedagogy, psychology,

and sociology. The ability to successfully manage these numerous roles and relationships contributes strongly to an effective coaching program. Regardless of the level of knowledge and skill of the coach it is the application of knowledge that constitutes excellent practice (Matt & Christopher, 2006). As sport has become increasingly professionalized, the roles of a coach have become more complex. Coaching roles have evolved to become more pedagogical, technical, and demanding of multi-tasking competencies (Salmela, 1996). Ives (2008) asserts that a key contextual factor is how coaches have to deal with problems that are often difficult to plan for (e.g., initiating a training program for new incoming athletes, uncertain environments, variable financial resources, pressure to win, and maintaining multiple communications and relationships (e.g., assistant coaches, athletes, parents).

The coach may be involved in a multitude of distinct activities, but the basic task is to develop and improve the performance of teams and individuals (Lyle, 1996). When a team does well, most coaches feel good about themselves and may experience an increase in their self-esteem. Many coaches also find satisfaction in the process of coaching, not just in winning (Chelladurai & Ogasawara, 2003; Sullivan & Nashman, 1993). When challenged by planning for a difficult competition, coaches have an opportunity to experience a sense of mastery when teaching athletes new skills, tactics, strategies, and values.

Sports coaching: The Expert

The expert coach is someone who can make appropriate decisions within the constraints of his/her coaching practice, reinforcing the belief that coaching is a cognitive activity (Lyle, 1999). Researchers have invested heavily in developing an understanding of expertise in different domains and also generic indicators of

expertise (Abernethy et al., 2003; Barnett & Koslowski, 2002; Guest, 2001). These developed propositions are reasonably robust across the different areas of expertise (Berliner, 1992)**.** Within coaching, researchers have attempted to understand expertise through observational instruments and quantitative measures of coach behaviors in practice and competition (Chelladurai et al., 1996; Franks, 1986). With these approaches lists of observed behaviors have been compiled, offering a snapshot of expert coaches' behaviors. Dissatisfaction with behavioral approaches to evaluating coaches, however, led Jones, Housner and Kornspan (1995) to state that direct observation techniques should be supplemented by investigations into the processes coaches use to develop expertise.

Researchers have focused on the knowledge of experienced coaches, using questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and protocol analysis (Côté et al., 1995; Jones, Housner & Kornspan, 1995; McPherson, 1993). This research, although insightful lacks the capacity to capture the dynamic nature of the coaching situation because of the focus is necessarily one particular aspect e.g., communication, planning skills, feedback (Bloom, Durand-Bush, Schinke & Salmela, 1998; Chelladurai & Quek, 1996; Claxton, 1988; Jones et al, 1995; McPherson, 1993). The basis for defining coaching, and therefore, the job of the coach, must start with the recognition of the various components of the role. Conceptual models that have been developed for this type of purpose are not always used in practice. For example, a theoretical model of teachers planning strategies was developed and utilized in academia, whereas, the actual models used in the classroom varies considerably (Byra & Sherman, 1993; Griffey & Housner, 1991). By studying the skill development of coaches, we are better placed to understand which skills and competencies are required and in what circumstances.

According to Nash and Sproule (2011), the expert coach adapts their practice to the emerging situation by synchronizing the key variables while the novice coach mimics perceived good practice during their sessions. Nash and Sproule have shown that experts can derive more information from environmental patterns than novices, for example, in football; a defensive player misses a tackle that leads to the opposition scoring a goal. A novice coach may wish to solve this problem by practicing tackling in training, whereas an expert coach may observe not just the missed tackle but also a lack of cover and players being out of position, hence representing a more comprehensive and overarching analysis. During training, rather than concentrate on the surface issue of a missed tackle, the experienced coach would likely attempt to solve the more abstract problem of poor positional play. I expect that evidence of how knowledge is constructed and utilized will ‘emerge’ from the participants at different levels of training and experience in the present study.

The sport coaching science literature consistently reflects the view that the role of coaches is exceptionally diverse and becoming increasingly complex. An ongoing challenge for sports coaches is in simultaneously, acquiring the requisite coaching competencies, closing individual development needs, staying abreast of and responding to industry trends, meeting contextual coaching requirements and finally, possessing sufficient self-awareness to understand themselves and communicate effectively with the athletes they coach. Developing role competence and expertise is necessarily time-consuming, and while this development journey may differ from coach-to-coach, common development themes should be both evident and instructive. I expect that participants in the current study will discuss their development within the context of understanding and fulfilling their role.

Coaching Effectiveness

Arriving at an agreed understanding of what constitutes effective coaching is difficult because it is dependent, rightly or not, on the performance outcomes attained by the team or athlete. In comparison to many professions, obtaining reliable and well-calibrated evidence of effectiveness is difficult to determine in sports coaching. For example, if we identify and describe the competencies of so-called effective coaches based solely on athletes' performances, we fail to appreciate the poor fit between available talent, sporting outcome and coaching expertise (Berliner, 1992). Excellence and effectiveness in coaching are more than win-loss records, more than the achievement of individual athletes' trophies and personal records, and more the degree of mastery observed in athletes during training sessions (Mallett & Côté, 2006). For example, Wooden and Tobin (1988) believe that success in coaching or playing is not based on the number of games won or lost, but the degree to which individual abilities are developed. Furthermore, According to Bloom, Durand-Bush, Schinke and Salmela (1998), the contribution of coaches in contributing to the healthy physical and psychosocial development of athletes is highly relevant and exceptionally difficult to measure objectively. Since coaches affect not only their athletes' physical performance but also their psychosocial well-being, an effective coach must be attuned to the personal and individual needs of athletes. Also, the simple accumulation of coaching experience does not necessarily translate automatically into effective coaching skills and knowledge (Côté, J., Young, B., North, J., & Duffy, P., 2007).

Nash (2008) states that excellent coaches consistently evaluate their personal characteristics (what they can and cannot do), the athletes' personal characteristics, the level of development, and relevant contextual factors in estimating the approach

they will take to coaching. These estimations are a mental model or cognitive template that dictates the behavior that is important in competition, organization, and training. Coaches mental models of appraising what is likely to work in specific coaching contexts results from their accumulated understanding of situations and dealing effectively with the various issues they face by considering the different levels of athletes' development and the competitive levels of the sporting context, (Côté, Young, North, & Duffy, 2007).

Prominent researchers (e.g., Gilbert & Trudel, 2005; Lyle, 2002) have suggested that effective coaches are aware of the over-riding sports context in which they work. That is, coaches must be conscious of the variables affecting the coaching environment. Notwithstanding the specificity of coaching expertise and contextual environmental fit of coaches, researchers, to date, have not actively examined the capacity of coaches to coach effectively in environments in which they are less experienced (Cushion, Nelson, Armour, Lyle, Jones, Sandford & O'Callaghan, (2010). For example, can an elite coach successfully adapt to a participatory or community level of coaching and vice-versa. Based on the available evidence excellence in coaching is developed over the long-term and that the specific contexts in which a coach develops determine their domain of excellence (Erickson, et al. 2007); Werthner & Trudel, 2006). A coach who develops over years of practice in a recreational sports participation context may be ill-equipped to function successfully in a sub-elite or elite context and vice-versa. The weight of current evidence, albeit relatively sparse, favors the conclusion that knowledgeable and competent coaches excel mainly, in particular, contexts (e.g., Lyle, 2002; Trudel & Gilbert, 2005).

Quality coaching is a cornerstone in both player and team development. Nash (2008) advocates that excellent coaches know how to align their competencies

congruently with the needs of athletes they coach and the context in which they work. To this end, excellent coaches are knowledgeable and constantly use their knowledge to assemble the mental model that enables them to manage the central duties of coaching–organization, training, and competition. According to Côté, Salmela, Trudel, Baria and Russell (1995), high-level coaches can simultaneously manage the organizational, training, and competition requirements, while also considering their own (coach) characteristics, the larger sports context, and the characteristics of the athletes. In the academic domain, Berliner (1992) describes one prototypical feature of teaching excellence as 'flexibility' a competency observed when a teacher is responsive to student needs. Likewise, effective coaches understand and are responsive to athletes' needs in the different environments in which they coach.

A definition of coaching excellence should be multifaceted to reflect the highly variable roles that a sport coach assumes; it should reflect the constant personal exchanges and interaction between coaches and their athletes in training and competitive environments. The definition of coaching excellence should also describe the competencies that coaches require when interacting with athletes of varying competitive levels and in various sports contexts.

Coach Development

Coach Education & Training

The focus of coach education courses should be to provide opportunities for coaches to construct knowledge, not just receive it (Hubball & Robertson, 2004). In describing a route for developing coaching expertise, Salmela and Moraes (2003) suggest that formal coach education courses should be the central source of knowledge alongside other sources including, interaction with peers. This suggestion

seems to reinforce the experiential approach recently advocated by Cushion et al. (2003) and Gilbert and Trudel (2005) referred to as situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991), whereby knowledge is constructed by interacting with the situation in which one confronts a problem. By situating learning within social and cultural contexts, the individual is less involved with objective de-contextualized knowledge acquisition but is constructing knowledge through direct experience of coaching practice (Gilbert &Trudel, 2001). Situated learning within social and cultural contexts is viewed as an active process, with coaches seeking out information related to the task and the given context and testing this within the context formed by the task and the environment. The role of coach education, and, therefore, coach educators, within this process, is to facilitate the construction of knowledge through experiential and contextual practice in coaching environments (Nelson et al., 2006).

The educational development of sports coaches is complex and for many coaches combines group and individual learning. In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the provision of coach education programs and the importance attached to them (Gilbert & Trudel, 1999; Lyle, 2002). According to Lyle (2002), this can be primarily attributed to two key factors; the increasing accountability of coaches for their actions and the desire among coaches to gain recognition as bona fide professionals. Sport coaching is a complex, untidy and a challenging process (Bowes & Jones, 2006; Jones & Wallace, 2005). Similarly, coach education is complex because of its sport-specific nature, multi-levelled structures, evident voluntary/professional distinctions, and diverse underlying outcomes.

At the core of this process is the qualification of the national governing bodies coaching (e.g., Football Association Coaching Certificate). In Australia, for instance, these coaching certificates are delivered under the broad umbrella of the National

Coaching and Accreditation System (NCAS) and overseen by the Australian Sports Commission. These courses tend to occur in short blocks of time, usually several weeks if not months apart (Galvin, 1998). Typically, the certificate awards consist of taught and examined elements including coaching and training principles, ethics and safety as well as sport specific training and coaching theory. This professional knowledge is delivered through traditional lecture/seminar formats. Also, practical skills are taught through demonstration.

To date, the literature on coach education has focused on coach development and learning (e.g., Cushion et al., 2003; Gilbert & Trudel, 1999; Malete & Feltz, 2000), coach effectiveness in the context of youth sports (e.g., Smith & Smoll, 1990; Smoll et al., 1993; Smith et al., 1995) and the limitations regarding the technical ability of a coach (e.g., Abraham Collins, 1998; Schempp, Manross, Tan & Fincher 1998; Jones, & McEwen, 2000). While this literature has provided scholars and practitioners with valuable knowledge about the role, nature and impact of coach preparation programs, little is known about how coaches experience such programs including; the structure, content and assessment and the value that coaches attach to them (Cassidy et al., 2006; Jones et al., 2004; McCullick et al., 2005; Sullivan & Campbell, 2005;).

Researchers in the parallel field of physical education have reported several interesting findings of how trainee teachers perceive and respond to their formal preparation programs (e.g., Anderson, 1997; Curtner-Smith, 1996; Doolittle et al., 1993; Matanin & Collier, 2003). Trainees often enter teacher education with well-formed views about what it takes to be an effective teacher, how students should behave, what knowledge needs to be transmitted and how students should be assessed. These beliefs subsequently act as filters that guide their decisions to

accept or reject the material and ideas exposed during teacher training programs (Schempp & Graber, 1992). Such beliefs also shape the ways in which trainees engage with the coursework and assessments required during their formal preparation period. Coach education experts have suggested that coaches adopt particular strategies to certification process (e.g., Cushion et al., 2003; Jones et al., 2004). The knowledge and methods presented to coaches on formal coach education programs may also potentially provide insights into the subjective and interactive nature of coach education through revealing its complex and messy realities (Jones & Wallace, 2005).

Sport coaching science researchers have been strident in pointing out the shortcomings and limitations in formal coach education programs. Gilbert and Trudel (1999) have called for a more comprehensive evaluation of coach education programs. According to Nash and Collins (2006), many of the existing coach education courses produce mimic coaches, as the evaluation criteria require mimicry of the course tutor, with little allowance for independent thought. Furthermore, there is no compelling evidence that the requirements and preferences of coaches have been considered in the design of courses. It is difficult, if not impossible, to teach learner autonomy through conventional didactic teaching methods. A more helpful approach might be to consider the coach educator as a facilitator of learning experiences and opportunities, through which skills can be developed. Skills such as analysis, decision-making, critical thinking and evaluation, all encapsulate the need to reflect and make sense of what has been learned (Abraham & Collins, 1998). This proposition necessitates the current coach education provision. Further research designed to capture the collective voice of coaches regarding their perceptions of how coach education programs are delivered is warranted.

If quality coaching and guidance are accepted as cornerstones in the development of athletes, it is vital to ensure coach education training not only covers basic competencies but is designed to provide meaningful ongoing professional development and extension. Furthermore, if coach certification is accepted as a relatively minor part of coach development how should certificates integrate with other learning opportunities?

The role and necessity of formal coach education within the broader gamut of coach training remains somewhat ambiguous. Very few high-level coaches have been recognized as experts based on completion of formal education programs (Jones & Turner, 2006). Sport coaching is one profession where formal qualifications are not necessarily viewed as mandatory with former athletes sometimes employed within elite sport based purely on their playing experience. This on the job training approach is surprising. However, Cassidy and Rossi (2006) point out that coach accreditation, training, and education are relatively "low impact" compared with the hours spent as a player or assistant coach. Possibly coach accreditation in its present form is of secondary importance compared with the coaches' integrated sporting and coaching experiences (Marchant & O'Connor, 2012). Numerous high level coaches have found that formal qualifications had little practical value in developing their knowledge as elite coaches (Cushion, Armour & Jones, 2005).

Football coach education: Australia and Malaysia. Football in the Asia region has its own accreditation system known as the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) comprising of 'C','B' and 'A' coaching certificates. The 'C' course is aimed at training coaches by developing their basic techniques and skills, and the course is designed to teach coaches to organize, direct and conduct basic coaching practices targeting especially at young players. The C course comprises 13 days and requires

a minimum of 85 hours of study time with both the practical and theoretical sessions. In the final examination, students are assessed on their practical coaching abilities, knowledge of the laws of the games, in addition to learning and understanding of the theory contents of football. The “B” certificate is for coaches who already have the “C” certificate. The “B” course is designed to educate coaches in advanced technique and skills, and help them develop a better understanding of individual and groups, tactics and mental requirements. The duration of the “B” course is 20 days and contains 107 hours of theoretical and practical content. The examination focuses on the coach’s practical coaching abilities, knowledge, and understanding of game theory, in addition to a brief presentation of a thesis to the class (an in-depth coaching assignment). The AFC “A” coaching certificate course is for coaches who hold both the “C” and “B” certificates. The duration of the course is 27 days, with a minimum of 148 hours. The “A” course is designed to educate coaches in tactical and advanced technical requirements of teams and team management. The teaching of sport sciences such as physiological and psychological needs of players are included, and particular importance is placed on enhancing the coaches’ understanding of the game at this “A” level. Students are examined on the practical and theoretical aspects of the game and are required to submit and present a thesis (an in-depth coaching assignment).

In Australia, coach education is a key component of the Football Federation of Australia (FFA) development plan. Coaches at all levels play a crucial role in ensuring that football is an enjoyable experience for players and to lay the foundation for the development of better players (FFA, 2009). Footballers are broadly divided into two streams: those that are playing at a recreational or community competition level, and those that are playing to reach or have reached the highest levels. These

are the ‘participation’ and ‘performance’ streams in Australia; FFA has labeled the related coaching courses as community courses and advanced courses. The community courses are short in duration, affordable and locally available. Community stream courses are geared toward amateur coaches at the entry level, whereas the advanced courses are longer, more expensive and intensive, aimed at those who intend to coach at sub-elite and elite levels (FFA, 2009).

Coach education programs designed to train large numbers of football coaches have not been evaluated by independent researchers and their effectiveness, therefore, is not clearly determined. It is also unclear the extent to which courses are designed to go beyond basic competencies to the stage development needs of amateur coaches at the grassroots and community level. Many of the courses are not evaluated by national sport governing bodies and those that are, have no vehicle for feeding this information into an evaluative process (Nash, 2008). National governing bodies typically collect course feedback after each course, but the majority of the information collected is coach demographics and organizational data, although an evaluation section regarding the course delivery is often included. Course quality control is a pressing issue of importance because large scale coach education programs are designed with specific time and content guidelines, but consistency in course delivery may vary widely. Coaches undergoing training may not necessarily be graduating from similar programs (e.g., “C” license) having been exposed to the same material cannot be guaranteed.

The Australian Quality Framework (AQF) is the national policy for regulated qualifications in the Australian education and training system. It incorporates the quality assured qualifications from each education and training sector into a single comprehensive national qualifications framework (Young, 2003). With the increasing

importance placed on the AQF, sporting organizations including football will invariably need to demonstrate how their training fits within this framework. That is, sporting organizations will need to match their training directly against recognized standards and level of training (e.g. certificate, diploma or degree program). For example, regarding the content of the coaching course, an “A” soccer license is not equitable with a degree program. The importance of AQF cannot be ignored because of its official status as governing vocational training standards and pathways in Australia (Marchant & O’Connor, 2012).

The second and related issue that must be addressed is whether the coach education programs offered by the AFC accord with the AQF guidelines regarding the length of the course. For example, for one to reach an advanced status, the learner must undergo rigorous and extensive training meeting progressive learning requirements as laid out in the AQF guidelines. For example, a Bachelor Degree is typically three years in duration, whereas the coaching courses offered by AFC advanced stream equate as a collective to approximately 60 days of coaching training (i.e., accumulation of 13 days in “C” course, 20 days of “B” course and 27 days of “A” course). There a mismatch between what is offered by football governing bodies and with what is outlined in the AQF guidelines (Marchant & O’Connor, 2012).

Career Development

For coaches seeking to develop by improving their knowledge and skills ongoing professional development is a priority area. Professional development (PD), irrespective of how it occurs, informs Coach progress. Research focusing on the professional development of coaches has highlighted the importance of the training received and how coaches develop their career pathways (Abraham, Collins, & Martindale, 2006; Bloom, Salmela & Schinke, 1995; Jones, Armour, & Potrac, 2004;

Jones, Armour, & Potrac, 2004; Salmela, 1995). Researchers have also identified a need for further research from a biographic perspective, e.g. how certain factors could affect the process of becoming an expert (Gilbert, Côté, & Mallett, 2006). Models of career development that relate to sport coach development can be drawn from other vocational fields. For example, the model for expertise development in medicine comprises the acquisition of biomedical knowledge, practical experience and amalgamation of these two into knowledge encapsulation (Boshuizen & Schmidt, 1992). It is not completely understood how this integration or amalgamation phase occurs, whether as a direct consequence of both knowledge and practice or whether there are other influential factors.

Professional development (PD) for sport coaches is essentially an agent to facilitate continuous improvement. The importance of PD for sports coaches was evidenced by Sparks (2004) who found that a lack of PD was the third highest reason coaches stopped coaching. In taking a broad interpretation on what constitutes PD a huge range of learning activities and opportunities are relevant. For example, there is evidence that online training is becoming increasing relevant for coaches (see Mallet and Dickens, 2009). Other evidence-based PD that informs coach development includes mentoring (Jones, 2006; Jones, Harris & Miles, 2009; Schoenberger, 2015) and communities of practice (Lyle & Cushion, 2010; Culver & Trudel 2008).

Coaching has not yet been recognized as an established profession, and consequently, issues of continuing professional development and career pathways remain largely unresolved (Cushion, Armour & Jones, 2003; Lyle, 2002; Woodman, 1993). This lack of a defined career pathway and professional recognition could affect the selection, employment, and deployment of potential coaches. Continuing

professional development is viewed as a cornerstone of education policy in the United Kingdom (Armour & Yelling, 2004).

As the demands associated with competitive sport have increased, so has the academic interest regarding sports career transitions. As a result, a considerable research agenda has been established concerning the career transitions of athletes (Lavallee, Sinclair, & Wylleman, 1998). The significance of career transitions among sports coaches has also been highlighted by several authors (e.g., Gordon & Lavallee, 2004; Hawkins & Blann, 1993). However, the particular issues concerning career transition from a coaching perspective have received less attention. The extant research on sports career transitions has focused primarily on the adjustment difficulties experienced by retiring athletes. One of the inevitabilities in high-performance sport is that eventually every competitor will have to terminate his/her sporting career. There is evidence that some sports performers do experience serious psychological difficulties when faced with retirement (Grove, Lavallee, Gordon & Harvey, 1998). As a result, theoretical models have been constructed to gain a better understanding of the processes involving to retirement in sports. The most frequently employed transition model is the model of human adaptation to transition proposed by Schlossberg, (1993) and Schlossberg, Waters and Goodman, (1995). Based on the Schlossberg et al. adaption model, successful transitions are predicted in relation to how individuals see the transition they are currently facing, the personal characteristics brought to the transition, social support networks and how they characteristically to cope with transitions. Empirical support has been demonstrated for this adaption model among several samples of retired athletes (e.g., Parker, 1994; Sinclair & Orlick, 1993; Swain, 1991), however, no theoretically driven research has been conducted with sports coaches to date.

Whatever the stage of coach development, more consideration needs to be given to life beyond coaching. Researchers working with retired athletes have shown that elite sport environments require an extreme commitment in terms of time and energy and often leave individuals with little time for pre-retirement planning during their careers (Gordon & Grove, 1996: Lavallee, 2005; Lavallee, Taylor & Ogilvie, 2001). Career awareness and (pre-sport) career planning have been shown to be effective in helping retired athletes make successful transitions out of sport (Grove, Lavallee, & Gordon, 1998; Lavallee, 2005). Sport coaches have been highlighted as a special population worthy of closer investigation (Gordon & Lavallee, 2004; Hawkins & Blann, 1993; Wylleman et al., 2004). Hawkins and Blann (1993) administered the Australian Coaches Career Transition Inventory (ACCTI), to national and international level coaches in Australia representing a broad range of individual and team sports. The purpose of the Hawkins and Blann study was to assess levels of career awareness, post-sport career planning involvement, and career transition needs, types of programs most useful in meeting career transition needs, and projected future perceptions of life satisfaction after sports for coaches. Hawkins and Blann reported that the majority of coaches did not think about their coaching career ending or felt it was important to plan for such an event despite overt expressions and awareness of job insecurity. The participants in the Hawkins and Blann study were also found to be so focused on maintaining and enhancing their coaching career development and they very little regarding career planning during their coaching careers. Moreover, ensuring that social support was available was another key area identified. Finally, Hawkins and Blann suggested that career transition interventions for coaches should be developed, designed, and delivered in

ways that appropriately the coaches' spouses, significant others, and families of coaches.

Gordon and Lavallee (2004) believe researchers should extend the pioneering efforts of Hawkins and Blann (1993) by examining the career transition experiences of retired coaches. Wylleman et al. (1999) recommend a closer examination of specific variables including; career awareness (Lavallee, 2005; Schlossberg et al., 1995); post-sport career planning and social support (Webb et al., 1998); coping with transitions general (Schlossberg, 2003); and career transition needs (Webb et al., 1998).

Coaching Pathways

The academic or scientific study of sports coaching has included attention to the development pathways that coaches progress through, including the particular skills needed at different stages of the development pathway. A widely cited coaching pathway distinction exists between participation and performance coaching (Lyle, 1999). Participation coaching is distinctive because competition performance is de-emphasized and participants are less intensively engaged. The objectives are short-term, and the focus is on more immediate satisfaction where the ends are immediate rather than part of an integrated, progressive preparatory process. Importantly, there are few attempts by the coach to control the variables that affect performance, either because athlete commitment is limited or because of developmental concerns (e.g., not age-appropriate). Lyle contends that participation coaching is largely focused on initiating, improving and maintaining participation, while performance coaching is more intensive and involves specific preparation for performance outcomes in sport. Nathan et al. (2006) asserted that the role of the coach is vital at the community level because sport can be a mechanism to promote social cohesion, encourage strong

community bonds, and access to positive mentors. These positive influences are particularly important for communities with high numbers of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. A case can be made for the role of the expert participation coach as someone who is skilled and experienced in this particular environment. Experienced, knowledgeable and educated individuals need to be developed to meet the needs of all individuals in sport at all ages and stages.

This capacity for successfully responding to different circumstances requires coaches to be flexible and adaptable. For example, participation coaches of children athletes in the sampling years (6 - 12 years) need to focus on ensuring the sports experience is primarily about having fun and enjoyment. When well coached young sports participants should benefit because the sport is inherently interesting and involves structured opportunities to develop fundamental movements and skills in a safe environment. Nash (2008) also believes that young athletes require an environment that facilitates the social aspect of relationships through developing friendships and the refinement of personal and social competencies. Participation coaches should consequently plan to de-emphasize competition and performance that might compromise the key priorities of the sampling years. The focus, according to Erickson, et al. (2007) should be on intrinsically motivating behaviors related to ‘deliberate play’ opportunities rather than on highly structured, time-constrained, externally controlled activities such as ‘deliberate practice’ (Ericsson, Krampe, & Tesch-Römer, 1993).

According to Fraser-Thomas, Côté and Deakin (2005) when designing activities coaches should plan for children to assume different positions or roles within a sport and those activities should maximize time on task while minimizing inactive wait time. Fraser-Thomas, et al. believe that it is incumbent on the participation coach to

consider broadly the psycho-social and healthy development of children through sports participation. From this perspective, enabling children to learn important life skills, such as cooperation, discipline, leadership, and self-control is an end in itself. A further requirement for successful participation coaching is the willingness of the coaches to modify flexibly the play and practice environment without imposing a rigid structure. With this in mind, coaches should be open to allowing children to change game activities as they see fit and advocate the use of 'game sense teaching' (Griffin & Butler, 2005).

According to Côté, Young, North, & Duffy, (2007) participation coaches for teenagers and adults in the recreational years (13 years plus) elect to remain involved in community sport because they thrive in an environment where young athletes have fun, are challenged, and enjoy competition. Recreational sport participants stay involved in sport because they derive enjoyment from playful competition, learn sport-specific and life skills, and such as how to socialize with peers (North & Duffy, 2007). Participation coaches design activities that teach fundamental movement skills and sport-specific skills. Importantly, by around twelve years of age, sport participants have developed the tendency to compare themselves with others. To counter this, Côté, et al. (2007) advocate that coaches should relate competitive aspects to personal mastery and challenges, and deflect the potential for public evaluation from individual players to the team. From a broader organizational perspective, it is recommended that participation coaches for teens and adults should nurture the intrinsic values of sport participation while endorsing and cultivating the social side of the sport. Similarly, coaches should integrate principles of positive youth development in their practice to foster positive assets that can be transferred to non-sport contexts (Fraser-Thomas, et al. 2005).

Performance coaching entails a more intensive commitment to preparation and competition with a focus on planned attempts to influence performance variables. To this end, there is a high degree of specificity in the program that coaches and support staff where relevant deliver to athletes (e.g., physical conditioning, skill acquisition, psychological training). Lyle also suggests that performance coaching is essentially a cognitive activity with contributory elements such as, managing the training and competition environments and implementing short and long terms plans to develop specific expertise and competencies. The early stages of the performance environment involve adolescent athletes in the specializing years (13-15 years). Coaches are starting to transition the athlete into a performance developmental trajectory in sport. Athletes still need to experience fun and enjoyment; however, this is now complemented by their need to receive the correctly structured training and to acquire the sport-specific skills necessary to reach more advanced competitive levels (Côté, et al., 2007). These athletes are no longer involved in sport for intrinsic benefits alone, but extrinsic benefits affiliated with competition and performance goals, e.g., winning, rewards, and being selected for representative teams are becoming a driving force. It is important for coaches to arrange training, competitive, and organizational elements in accordance with the athletes' needs.

From a training perspective, excellent performance coaches for young adolescents plan for a balance between activities comprising deliberate play and practice, (Côté, et al., 2007). Deliberate play will afford athletes the opportunity to continue experiencing the intrinsic enjoyment of sport participation. The coach should prescribe more structured, purposefully planned practice (i.e., deliberate practice) to improve each athlete's current level of performance (Nash, 2008). Consequently, coaches need to be proficient in task analysis for each athlete to

determine which skills require improvement and then plan and enact drills that will remediate these skills and further challenge the athlete to improve. Coaches must be capable of addressing the goals and needs of individuals with varying skill sets. Furthermore, coaches should switch the focus from the development of fundamental movements to the teaching of sport-specific skills. Coach competencies, therefore, relate closely to instruction, and conveyance of sport-specific feedback (Coker, Fischman, & Oxendine, 2006; Smith, 2006). During this stage of development, coaches will or should encourage the athlete to find opportunities to test his/her skills on a public stage in regional and state level contests (Scanlan, Ravizza & Stein, 1989). More frequent competitions also provide opportunities for positive reinforcement in the form of extrinsic rewards, and social recognition (Bloom, 1985).

In the performance coaching environment, coaches are often also charged with the task of talent selection and choosing members of competitive teams (Côté et al., 2007). These decisions are critical as they contribute to whether athletes remain in the elite developmental trajectory, the participation stream, or perhaps withdraw. Excellent coaches will convey the importance of increased practice demands, recognizing that athletes in this category should regularly be training in their specific sport. The coach must possess competencies to train sport-specific skills and to provide numerous competitive opportunities while still providing an environment that is enjoyable for athletes.

According to Côté et al., (2007), in a performance context, athletes in late adolescence and adult athletes are pursuing elite level involvement and investing intensively in their primary sport. Their desire for competitive performance at the national or international level is typically their key priority apart, from having fun. These athletes require carefully structured sport-specific training and are investing a

large proportion of their time in training and competition. Athletes in this category are characterized by the integrated regulation of extrinsic forms of motivation, such as winning, being chosen for a national team, or establishing a sport career. To meet these athletes' training needs, coaches construct a regime grounded in deliberate practice and focused on sport-specific skills. Training is structured purposefully to improve current performance levels and to circumvent arrested skill development (Ericsson, 2006). Thus, coaches must be highly tuned to the athlete's skill-set and should be able to prescribe sport-specific drills accordingly. At this level, deliberate practice should be physically and mentally taxing. Expert coaches help athletes negotiate these effort constraints by scheduling appropriate work-to-rest ratios and by encouraging athletes to find time for deliberate recovery strategies (e.g., recovery-based training) (Goldsmith, 2006; Young & Salmela, 2002).

In the general preparatory and specific preparatory phases of the annual cycle, coaches should prescribe supplementary training activities (e.g., weight training, plyometric, pilates) aimed at improving sport-specific performance (Côté et al., 2007). From an organizational perspective, coaches should surround each athlete with the physical and social resources that they will need to overcome the effort and motivational constraints associated with deliberate practice. For example, coaches should understand the importance of centralizing selected athletes at camps/national team sites to optimize resources and enable athletes to benefit from mixing with athletes sharing the same aspirations. Excellent coaches of more mature or adult athletes recognize that their relationship with an athlete will likely change to become more collaborative, less top-down in nature, and reliant on a continuous interchange of ideas between the coach and the athlete (Kalinowski, 1985; Sedgwick & Côté, 2003). Coaches should acknowledge and respect that these athletes are sacrificing

other life opportunities for their sport, and make efforts to promote the benefits of such an investment. According to Abraham and Collins (1998), the expert coach is someone who can take account of the many degrees of freedom and still produce a coaching session appropriate to the player or players being coached.

Stages of Coach Development

Mainstream psychology researchers have conducted extensive professional discipline stage based professional development research. Rønnestad and Skovholt's (2003) for example, proposed distinct phases in the development of practicing psychologists, therapists, and counselors. The Rønnestad and Skovholt's model is comprised of six stages that describe therapist development from before an individual enters formal training through to professional retirement. The six phases are as follows a) the lay helper phase, b) the beginning student phase, c) the advanced student phase, d) the novice professional phase, e) the experienced professional and phase f) the senior professional phase. Tod, Andersen & Marchant (2011), successfully applied the Rønnestad and Skovholt therapist development model within a sport psychology context. Tod et al. stated that using recommendations from the counselor development model when creating and reviewing courses and programs can enhance students' educational experiences and allow realistic and appropriate training goals to be developed. Hence, the Rønnestad and Skovholt's (2003) therapist development model is relevant to the current research as a reference point or as possible theoretical scaffolding.

Collectively, sport coaches and coach education coordinators need to understand how coaches progress through stages of development to inform best practice, and training and development needs (Wiman, Salmoni & Hall, 2010). Nash and Sproule (2011) state that in the sport context, the conceptual and theoretical

examination of these stages is somewhat limited, especially in the community or novice level across the full spectrum of issues that affect the coaches. There is a mismatch between research and practice in coaching, although this is gradually being addressed. More attention is required to develop pathways that coaches follow, as there is a paucity of information as to how coaches develop and transition (Nash & Sproule 2009, 2011). The stages and critical issues of coach' development are considered important in the design and presentation of coach education courses (Erickson, et al. 2007).

Several stages in the formative coach process have been identified (Bell, 1997; Berliner, 1992; Jones et al., 2004; McCullick, Cumings, & DeMarco, 1998; Salmela, Draper, & Desjardins, 1994; Salmela, 1995; Schempp et al., 2006). Schempp et al. (2006) for example, outline four stages of development; a) beginner, b) competent, c) proficient, and d) expert. Beginner coaches with less than three years of experience were more concerned about athlete behavior than about transmitting knowledge. With experience, the coaches started to develop skills that allowed them to minimize the time spent on non-coaching tasks, leaving more time to improve player performance. Coaching competence was described as the stage when a coach can use previous experiences to solve a new experience or situation. Once a considerable amount of knowledge and experience had been acquired, proficient coaches could distinguish important from unimportant issues. Coaches tended to respond using less rational thought, and more instinct and intuition, and they felt personally responsible for the successes and failures of athletes. In the expert, stage, the main distinguishing feature of the coach is his/her intuition and automaticity in decision-making.

Nash (2008) also provided a framework involving four stages of development and needs from the athletes' perspective. A key benefit of this approach is the dual considerations of both coach and athlete. The four stages of development are life experiences, educational, coaching experiences, and the development of expertise. Nash also suggests that there are four coaching typologies; a) sampling years; b) recreational years; c) specializing years and d) investment years. For each typology, coaches need to acquire different types of knowledge and skills and construct a different mental model of each coaching situation to be effective and potentially excellent. For each stage, Nash considers the prevailing competitive contexts and stages of athletes' development, provides a summary of the athletes' needs and recommends coaching behaviors training, competition, and organization. Within each typology, coaching excellence is thus defined by the different competencies that coaches are required to display when working with athletes, and more specifically how their knowledge and skills should correspond with the needs of the athletes.

Similarly, Bloom (1985) identified key stages in the development of talent across some domains. Bloom describes the early years where enjoyment is the key; the middle years are where increased commitment occurs and in the later years, talent is refined through hours of practice under the guidance of an expert. Researchers have suggested that to become an expert one must spend years of preparation and practice in a selected domain, which normally follows a series of distinct, identifiable stages (Bell, 1997; Berliner, 1992). To examine the development of high-performance coaches, Schinke et al. (1995) conducted an examination of the developmental experience of six expert basketball coaches. Based on their previous research, they outlined seven stages of athletic and coaching development: early

sport participation, national elite sport, elite international sport, novice coaching, developmental coaching, national elite coaching, and international elite coaching. Although Schinke et al. provided a useful stage-based explanation of coaching development, now some 20 years later; there is scope to extend their research. The Schinke et al. Stage model was essentially based on retrospective accounts from six experienced elite level coaches. By further examining key development themes of coaches using different coach populations, a more sophisticated and contemporary model may be developed. Schinke, et al. in their examination of the progression of six expert Canadian basketball coaches, have laid out the development stages model starting from the coaches' first athletic experience to their present coaching positions. The results revealed that when their athletic careers came to an end, the coaches searched for possible ways to remain affiliated to the sport. The novice and developmental coaching levels reflected a search for an appropriate coaching philosophy and new skills. Concurrently, the developmental coaches acquired theoretical and applied knowledge from academic institutions and mentor coaches. Due to their successful records, the coaches were all hired to work with university teams. The difference between national and international level coaches was minimal and apparently those who became international level coaches made winning a higher or more strongly targeted priority.

As suggested by numerous researchers (e.g., Erickson, et al. 2007; Nash & Sproule, 2009, 2011; Stephenson & Jowett, 2009; Wiman, Salmon & Hall, 2010) studies conducted in different countries and coaching systems can add depth to our understanding of the development stages of coaches. Hence, a central purpose of the current study is to identify key coach development themes relevant for a cross section of football coaches in Australia and Malaysia. Many of the sub-themes and

concepts presented in this thesis lean heavily on research and reviews of sport coaching that pertain to stage development such as, Bowes and Jones (2006), Nash (2008), Salmela, et al. (1995), Schinke, et al. (1995), in particular, have been reviewed and will be elaborated upon later in the discussion section of the thesis. The approach adopted in the current research for delineating development characteristics of football coaches in Australia and Malaysia is similar in some respects to the stages of coaching expertise proposed by Salmela et al. (1994). Importantly, however, rather than specifically investigating progression from a participation coach for children to performance coach for late adolescents and adults the construction of coach development themes in the current research is based on coach accreditation levels. The results from the current research may potentially assist coach education coordinators and govern national football associations in producing more efficient and effective coach education training programs, particularly about matching program content to the specifics of coach development and expertise. Despite the widespread popularity of football worldwide there are no published studies reporting examinations of “C”, “B”, and “A” license football coaches. Sport coaching researchers have focused on elite coaches and typically retrospective. The aim of current study, therefore, was to knowledge knowledge by examining coach development themes across two cultures.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

In this chapter, I describe the background, research design process, data collection, participant selection, interviews, data analysis and discussion. First, I begin with early experiences that have shaped my interest in football and positionality as a researcher in relation to my interest in the current research project.

Personal Background

Some years ago after my appointment as Coaching Director for Kuala Lumpur state football association, I began to think more seriously about coaching development, and the research methods used to understand coach development processes. Later, after enrolling in the doctoral program, I reflected deeply on the most suitable methodological approaches from which to examine potential research questions relating to coach development themes. My eventual decision to take a qualitative route was also informed by my experiences in football, first as a child attending football games, second as an elite junior player, and finally as a coach myself. Furthermore, I was influenced by the reality that because sport coaching science is a relatively new discipline, the large proportion of published research is founded on qualitative approaches. Finally, a qualitative approach had the added advantage of allowing me to draw on my experiences in my chosen sport of football cross-culturally, in both Malaysia and Australia.

Informative Early Experiences

My interest in football began at the age of 10 years when my father took me to a South East Asian Games final between Malaysia and Singapore. I vividly recall the thousands of spectators and how huge the stadium seemed through a child's eyes. I remember the crush of the turnstiles and terraces, the smell of burgers, coffee, and

tobacco, at a particular weekend evening game. I was standing near the front of the terrace. The ball went out for a throw-in and an opposition player, an imposing figure, ran across the field. Steam rose from his shoulders; muscular and athletic, his legs glistened with oil. He took the throw and moved effortlessly. After Malaysia had won the match, the seed was undoubtedly sown. I was hooked as a spectator and immersed in the atmosphere. That early personal encounter with football engendered my dreams of footballing stardom. In hindsight, I believe this early experience probably influenced me in later adopting a qualitative framework for my research because of my respect for the importance of understanding personal encounters and perspectives from an inductive point-of-view.

My involvement in football increased through school, as a player and later as a coach. After successful interschool football involvements, I was signed as an 'apprentice schoolboy' with a Kedah professional team. I trained and played in every age group tournament at the national level until the age of 16 when I was offered a full-time backup squad place. I then became involved in the 'Reserve-league' scene and played until the age of 19 while also playing for the Malaysian under-18 team in the Asian School Championships. After finishing as a full-time paid league team player, I enrolled as a training sport teacher at Tuanku Bainun Teachers Training College. I loved football and planned to stay involved, but then my ambitions were redirected toward coaching. My first taste of coaching was as a playing assistant coach at teachers' college after being sent by a lecturer to attend a "C" license coaching course at age 21. I became involved with the schools and youth football development and also returned to the University of Malaya to complete a Bachelor of Sport Coaching degree. This signaled a kick starting of my journey into coaching as a career. Since graduating in 2003, I have constantly been involved in coaching. The

highlights have been as the head coach for Kuala Lumpur state youth team and guiding the under 19 team into the final of the National Youth League in 2007. I was also appointed a national head coach for the Asian Schools team that played in Seoul, Korea. I have endeavored to fast track my coaching education by completing every coach education course available to football coaches through FAM, including an “A” license.

More recently, my role has changed and become more closely linked to formal coach education programs, since being appointed Coaching Director for Kuala Lumpur State Football Association. Before that appointment, I attended an instructorship course and was appointed the AFC accredited coaching instructor. Since then, I have been an instructor for many coaching courses. Through playing, coaching and administrating football, I have interacted with other football coaches for the past 21 years. I have drawn on these experiences in developing my coaching philosophy, and I have firm ideas about what constitutes effective and ineffective coaching. Moreover, the evolution of my career has engendered a more intentional focus on how football coaches develop and the stages they progress through. Consequently, apart from my inherent interest in the development journey of coaching, I am also heavily invested in these topics from vocational and strategic perspectives.

I now feel that I am in the unique position where I can combine my experiences as a player, student, coach, and football instructor with a more academic perspective on coaching. These many positions have enabled me to develop a bridge between the academic or theoretical and the practical. Based on my accumulated experiences, I am well placed to take an insider’s perspective because of my appreciation of football culture, language and protocols.

Justification of Methodology

My intension almost from the beginning of the project has been to use grounded theory as the steering methodology to address my general and specific aims. I was aware that adopting grounded theory, whatever the form, would require a novice researcher such as myself to commit to a demanding process and to produce a defensible theory. A potentially complicating factor was that several permutations of traditional grounded theory (GT) have evolved over time and an informed decision was needed about what form of GT would suit the current study. Also, there has been recent debate in numerous fields including sport science (Holt & Tamminen, 2010a; Holt & Tamminen, 2010b; Weed, 2010) about what qualifies as GT and what does not. Although GT method designs are used in many domains, the rationale for adopting GT in sport coaching research was less obvious. Nevertheless, in recent years, GT approaches have become familiar with the sport coach literature. More specifically, one of the earliest and frequently cited studies using elements of GT in sport coaching was a multi-method study of the development 17 high-performance gymnastic coaches about how they used and accessed their expert knowledge Côté, Salmela, and Russell (1995). More recently, Bennie & O'Connor (2010) used a traditional version of GT with professional rugby and cricket coaches and players to investigate key underlying themes of effective coaching. Of particular relevance to the current study was an examination of video analysis practices of soccer coaches using evolved grounded theory (Groom, Cushion & Nelson, 2011).

I was first drawn to evolved grounded theory (EGT; Strauss and Corbin, 1990; 1998) where the "voice" of participants and previous theory is considered carefully along with theory already developed and how the researcher interacts with the data gleaned from that research. This makes sense given my experiences in football

described earlier, in this chapter and the available sport coaching literature. Also, maintaining detachment as described by Glaser (1978) would be extremely difficult for me as an inexperienced researcher because reading the relevant literature is an expectation for doctoral students and helps to clarify concepts and to delineate the topic of research. Also, my considerable experience as a former football player and accredited coach could not be easily or deliberately laid aside. Hence, rather than deliberately try to put aside ideas or assumptions about the situation being studied, as the researcher, on the contrary, I used them to understand better the processes being observed. This is a reflexive position advocated by Baker et al., (1992).

Strauss & Corbin (1998) point out that EGT requires time and theoretical sensitivity to move backward and forwards continually from the data to the theory. Evolved grounded theory, as the name implies, is inductively derived from the process of study and could be likened to a potter working with clay where the shape is ever changing and moving toward final form (e.g., theory). That is, one does not begin with a hypothetical theory and, prove it. Rather, the researcher begins by collecting the data in the field first then proceeds to analyze the data and generate a theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). According to Strauss and Corbin theory “consists of plausible relationships proposed among concepts and sets of concepts” (p. 278) and “grounded theory is conceptually dense (p. 279) and grounded in the multiplicity of perspectives of the actors in a situation” (p. 280). Typically, EGT begins with interviews and allows the researcher to accept concepts that emerge from the data on a provisional basis until they are repeatedly verified by other emerging data eventually leading to what is usually termed data saturation. That is the point at which new themes are not ‘emerging’ leading to the decision to finish the data collection process.

Nevertheless, engaging in any of the variant forms of grounded theory (GT) requires the researcher to address common characteristics, techniques, and terminology. For example, common elements of evolved grounded theory include; iterative or recursive process, theoretical sampling, theoretical sensitivity, constant comparison, theoretical saturation, fit, work relevance and modifiability, and the production of substantive theory (Holt & Tamminen, 2010). Also, depending on which variation of grounded theory is used and the epistemological position adopted by researchers, there is considerable variation in how rigidly or flexibly the common elements of GT are applied.

After considerable reading and reflection, I eventually committed to using Evolved Grounded Theory (EGT; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) as the steering methodology my research. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), data is generally collected from interviews, observations, diaries, or other written documents. The resultant theory is gradually built from the accumulation of raw data and evolves from the naming of phenomena and themes. For the study developed and described in this thesis, raw data was collected, coded, and analyzed with a view to constructing a model to link themes and encapsulate the overarching patterns that are evident in a manner consistent with how Strauss and Corbin (1990) advocate how EGT should be conducted. This version of EGT used has the substantive benefit of being holistic. For example, the coaches' development is seen as an interconnected process with the capacity to examine numerous dimensions, such as their pre-coaching knowledge, training and accreditation and sources of knowledge. In keeping with the approach advocated by Mascolo & Fischer (2005) a key focus of the present investigation was to develop an understanding of the inter-linkages and 'tensions' between those different dimensions. Furthermore, as Mahoney (2002) suggests a

potential advantage of qualitative methods is the potential to bring together different perceptions, aspirations, and interests to understand how these influence accounts for events, rather than attempting to reduce them to one version of reality (Mahoney, 2002). Another perceived advantage of EGT from my perspective is the fundamental leaning toward a heuristic, interpretative, and inductive position, thus, enabling constant evolution (e.g., iterative processes), rather than being restricted to pre-determined questions, assumptions or hypotheses.

Any investigation starts with a rigorous familiarization with the context, institutions, and policies assessed and progressively builds up a comprehensive understanding of the processes involved (Van Manen, 1998). As a result of the emphasis on understanding complexity, the scope and focus of this research are continually redefined to more fully encapsulate different parts of the football coach development process. The underlying rationale is underpinning the current research, therefore, dictated an iterative process of data collection and data analysis until adequate saturation was reached (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). I was interested in how accredited football coaches develop, but was also mindful of the need to take into account their individual differences in background, environment, education, and ambition.

I admit that I approached the research project with some fears and concerns. Excellence in qualitative research is challenging and demands a great deal from researchers. For example, highly developed interpersonal and technical skills contribute to good qualitative research (Tod, 2006). A particular concern was the implied expectation that theory would evolve from the research. I was hopeful that the research process would enable me to produce a theory but what if a research didn’t evolve or emerge? I was also aware that a number of sport related studies

have been published where experienced researchers have stopped short of concluding that their study is explicitly grounded or final by describing their work as ‘toward a grounded theory’ (e.g., Groom, Cushion & Nelson, 2011; Holt & Dunn, 2004; Morgan, T & Giacobbi, P, 2006). In the absence of a fully grounded theory emerging, I was at the least expecting to produce an informative model of coaching development. In the scientific sense, a model may be used to define or describe something and to specify relationships and processes, while a theory is a systematically related set of statements, including law-like generations, which is empirically testable (Lancaster & Lancaster, 1981). Because the findings of the current research led to the development of what I describe as a model rather than a theory the term model is used throughout the thesis when referring specifically the results of this research.

To summarise, my chosen epistemological research position is best described as constructivist grounded theory. I do not believe in an objective reality, but rather, socially constructed and individual realities that are rooted in coaching experiences and perspectives. As stated earlier, the interrelationship between me as a research and the participants culminates in constructed results and theory for this research. From an ontological perspective, in building the coach development model, I drew heavily on three sources to construct my knowledge paradigm; a) the collective terminology expressed in the coaching science literature, b) the language and expressions typically used in the day-to-day of football that I have been embedded in for many years, and c) the voice of the 24 participants who were intentionally recruited to represent football coaches more broadly.

Participants and Sampling

Participants were recruited based on locating coaches who might provide rich information about the issues being investigated and the aims of the research. In identifying suitable participants, I was guided by the theoretical sampling strategies recommended by Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998) specifically from a participant recruitment perspective. The theoretical sampling process of participants began with the identification of a relevant sample of accredited football coaches in Australia and Malaysia. As Silverman & Marvasti (2008) recommend, sampling should reasonably represent a broader or ideal sample. For the present research, the broader sample were football coaches and specifically accredited football coaches. In fulfilling the requirements of theoretical sampling, coaches were selected from lists of coaches recommended by the Football Federation Victoria (FFV) and the Football Association Malaysia (FAM). Participants were contacted and their availability and willingness to participate in this research were determined.

I was also mindful of the fundamental requirement that sampling is ongoing (Holt & Tamminen, 2010) and that data collection produce depth and breadth (Coyne, 1997). To increase the depth of data coaches with distinctly different levels of accreditation were recruited. Conversely to increase the breadth of data, coaches from two locations (i.e., Australia and Malaysia) were recruited. This approach is consistent with the tenants of theoretical sampling as described by Coyne. Both homogenous and heterogeneous principles were used to recruit informant coaches based on highest level of completed accreditation and country of origin.

Interviews

Considering the objectives of the research I used an in-depth semi-structured interview format. In-depth, semi-structured interviews are appropriate where the

questions are open and answers recorded in more detail, and where allowances are made for unanticipated issues that arise in the course of conversation (Patton, 1990). In-depth, semi-structured interviews were suitable for this study for the following reasons: (a) In-depth, semi-structured interviews “yield” rich insights into people's experiences, opinions, aspirations, and feelings (May, 1999); (b) In-depth, semi-structured interviews are ideal for eliciting information from athletes and coaches who can draw on and demonstrate their knowledge (Côté et al., 1995; Marshall & Rossman, 1989); (c) In-depth, semi-structured interviews enable the line of enquiry to be modified and underlying motives to be investigated (Robson, 1995). A distinguishing feature of in-depth, semi-structured interviews is the continual probing and cross-checking of information, with a cumulative approach to building on previous knowledge, rather than adherence to a fixed set of questions and answers (Woodhouse, 1998). I therefore, used in-depth, semi-structured interviews to explore how participants made sense of their development as a football coach. Specific questions were sequenced and worded to allow interviews to flow in a conversational manner. Relevant topics that participants raised, which were not in the interview guide, were also pursued as interview probes. A pilot interview (see Appendix B) with an undergraduate student “C” licensed football coach was conducted. For this pilot interview, the principal academic supervisor was also present. I later deconstructed the interview with my principal supervisor and made changes to the initial interview guide. Finally, a copy of the generic final interview guide (see Appendix C) is included to demonstrate the topics and types of interview questions. As noted above, probes and emergent themes were characteristic of the interview process and ongoing data analysis. Consequently, additional questions and lines of inquiry were opened up as part of the iterative process that culminated in the final

interview guide used in the final stages of data collection. A conversational interview technique was used because, according to Jones and McEwen (2000), conversational interview technique has the advantage of readily engaging the informant in the narrative in which thick descriptions and perceptions can be evoked.

Data Preparation & Analysis

All 24 interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim resulting in 372 pages of single spaced text. For data checking purposes, each transcript was read carefully with the aim of becoming familiar with the participants and to begin forming macro understandings of the data. Also, transcriptions were re-read to become more familiar with the content, and to gain additional insights, such as tone of voice, pauses, and the use of sarcasm. Following the basic principles of Strauss and Corbin (1990) and evolved grounded theory principles, the process of data analysis was conducted in concert with the actual data, tentative theory creation, and the memos being interplayed progressively, whereby the data collected was broken down, conceptualized, and tentative themes discussed. The data was transformed into codes and categories. The categories and the tentative themes were then verified against the data by comparing the categories, with the data and with my conclusions, as suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1990). Regarding sequence, the data analysis process commenced after the first three interviews were transcribed. Hence, data collection, transcription, analysis, and model building occurred simultaneously (i.e., the iterative technique).

Limitations

According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), if the researcher has preliminary assumptions about the research phenomenon, the analysis may be compromised. Some authors (Chenitz & Swanson, 1986; Smith & Biley, 1997) have pointed out that

previous knowledge is used in a phase where the researcher compares emergent theory with previous theories. For the present research, EGT was not created exclusively and totally based on data but was also influenced by previous knowledge about the research phenomenon. Nevertheless, I endeavored to be alert and self-aware of my own perspectives on football coach developed and to be guided by the data being collected. To this end, the EGT used here had a multi-grounded and constructivist bent. I conducted the analyses in close accordance with the seven steps of EGT as outlined by Strauss and Corbin 1990). Numerous researchers in sport coaching science have adapted Strauss and Corbin's (1990) guidelines, (e.g., Côté, Salmela, Baria, & Russell, 1993; Côté & Salmela, 1994, 1996; Groom & Cushion, 2004); Groom, Cushion & Nelson, 2011).

Step 1 - open coding.

Open coding involves assigning provisional conceptual labels to events and other phenomena. In the current research, each conceptual label was generated from a line-by-line analysis of the transcribed interviews. During this open coding phase, flexible coding was used to include any conversation event with the participants that were interesting or relevant to the general aim of the study. Throughout the study, the data were continuously questioned and compared and led to coding more incidents, memories, experiences, information, and knowledge provided by the participants.

Through the open coding procedure close to 3,000 codes were identified from participants in Australia and Malaysia. These codes resulted from line-by-line micro-analysis of the interview transcripts. Following the principles of Strauss and Corbin (1990), names were assigned to categories. These labels were an expression of the

respondents' words. That is, labels were assigned according to their common features and shared meanings.

Step 2 - theoretical sensitivity.

According to Glaser (1978), theoretical sensitivity is essentially a personal quality of the researcher, referring to an awareness of the subtleties of the meaning of the data. That is, researchers possess varying degrees of sensitivity depending on previous reading and experience within relevant contexts. Theoretical sensitivity refers having insight, the ability to give meaning to data, the capacity to understand, and importantly the capacity to separate the most pertinent information (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). This process occurs on a conceptual level, rather than a concrete level. Theoretical sensitivity is central to the development of a theory that is grounded, conceptually dense, and well integrated. My background as a football player, coach, and more recently early career academic was central to my theoretical sensitivity in these studies because my experience in football equates to contextual insight, ability to appreciate the nuances of the data and I believe the capacity to extract the most relevant information.

Step 3 - axial coding.

Consistent with the EGT model, axial coding phase was carried out to identify links between the open coding data to identify possible categories and themes. Data that appeared to fit the criteria as potentially causal conditions intervening conditions, or other components in the axial coding phase were provisionally placed until they were verified by further interviews and observations. For example, the themes "adaptability" and "vehicle" were in this manner identified as categories. The axial coding stage resulted in the themes being eventually subsumed under core overarching categories in the resultant model that was developed. Following the

approach popularized by Strauss and Corbin (1990), axial coding was defined and practiced as the process of relating categories to their sub-categories. Strauss and Corbin called this kind of coding “axial” because coding occurs around the axis of a category, linking categories at the level of properties and dimensions.

Simultaneous with both open and axial coding ongoing theoretical sampling was used to provide additional data and to strengthen the emergent categories. The data collected was later tested to fit the emergent model, and this model was refined until the categories were saturated. Although sampling during the beginning of the project was rather unfocused, it became more focused as the research progressed. As was mentioned earlier sampling ended only when all the categories were saturated.

Step 4 - selective coding.

Selective coding (SC) was used to determine core categories by intergrading and refining the developing model. At this selective coding stage, categories were descriptions of data and not yet a developed model. The first step in this SC process was deciding on central categories that represented the main themes of coach development from the perspective of the participant football coaches. After considerable analysis and reflection, four core categories were formed that underpin the eventual development of the final model (as demonstrated and explained in the chapter).

Each concept identified with open and axial coding was subsequently linked to one of the main categories. For example, in the open coding phase, a common term mentioned by almost all initial participants was “adjusting”. Based on the substance of related text, “adjusting”, was later renamed as the theme “adaptability”. While the selection of the core categories the story line was explicated. As the concepts and

themes related to each other during became evident the relationship patterns emerged. The core categories were used to link all of the main categories together.

Step 5 – the process.

I aimed to capture the process analytically by focusing on the action and interaction components by building what has been described as a paradigm model. A paradigm model, according to Pandit (1996), enables the researcher to think systematically about data and relate them in complex ways. The basic idea is to propose linkages and look to the data for validation. I moved between asking questions, generating propositions, and making comparisons. I analyzed the progression of events and rich descriptions of coaches using a recursive style over an extended period. My focus was to revisit continually the data, look for alternative explanations or frames from which to view the data using constant comparisons.

Step 6 - the conditional matrix.

Creating a conditional matrix affecting the model (Corbin & Strauss, 1990) is a conceptual procedure in which a wide range of conditions and consequences are examined (i.e., historical, social, and institutional factors). These conditions and consequences are often used to determine the questions asked, and the participants recruited. For additional details about the conditional matrix developed for this research see Chapter 4).

Step 7 - theoretical sampling (coding).

Theoretical sampling involves identifying, developing, and relating the concepts that prove to have theoretical relevance. In other words, concepts that emerge from the data are compared to concepts in the reviewed literature. These which were concepts repeatedly verified by the data were linked to concepts in the literature. Some concepts, however, are used to refute or expand concepts in the literature. In

this way, concepts from the literature can be integrated into the theory and "grounded," in the sense that they are empirically supported.

Triangulation

Inherent shortcomings in qualitative research can be addressed through triangulation (Bryman, 2004; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Jones, Mahoney, & Gucciardi, 2014). To address the issues of subjectivity, lack of transparency, and difficulty in replication, multiple methods, data sources, and theories were used in the current study. Triangulation helps expose the ways the researcher's biases and those associated with methods, data sources, and theories may influence the results.

In using triangulation in the current research, I was not striving for consistency across different samples, methods, or theories, because, according to Patton (2002) inconsistencies do not necessarily weaken research credibility but offer the prospect for more profound insights about the topics under examination. Data Source Triangulation (DST) was used to establish validity in these studies by analyzing a research question from multiple perspectives as suggested by Guion, Diehl, and McDonald (2011). According to Patton (2002) in a strict sense, any qualitative study that has a sample greater than one has achieved DST. Data triangulation was sought by recruiting coaches from three accreditation levels; "A" license, "B" license and "C" license. All participants were football coaches with multiple qualifications and experience in various coaching contexts.

The findings were critiqued according to participant and audience review strategies. In participant review, also known as member checking and consensual validation, participants were provided with their interview transcript. I also evaluated the accuracy of the transcriptions by focusing on whether the transcript reflected what they meant and also the preliminary research findings. The member checking

process was carried out to establish that the research findings were accurate representations of participants' experiences. Patton (2002) also recommend that having several people examine the data equates to analyst triangulation. In this research, other postgraduate research students assisted in providing feedback and suggestions. My principal supervisor reviewed the collected data (i.e., digital recordings of interviews and transcriptions) and provided an informed critique and comments, including recommendations for improvements to my interview technique and also data analysis suggestions. As a result, changes were made, and these are indicated where applicable.

The current research credibility was enhanced by audience review. The inclusion of likely consumers in the research process may contribute to tailoring outcomes to meet their needs and quality control criteria (Krueger & Casey, 2014). The results of the studies in this thesis were intended for consideration by football governing bodies, football coaches, sports coaching students and academics. The results of the studies have also been presented both locally and internationally; first to a cohort of sport coaching students, second to the Australian Council for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation (ACHPER) Conference, third at a University of Western Ontario research symposium (Canada), and fourth at the World Conference on Science and Soccer (United States of America).

In Chapter 4 the multiple theoretical perspectives drawn on during data analysis are discussed as a form of theoretical triangulation. For example, even though the study were guided from a methodology perspective by Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998), I also discussed perspectives of other authors, such as Schinke et al. (1995), Côté, Baker, and Abernethy (2003) and Côté and Thomas (2007). Furthermore, I used additional frameworks from other authors throughout the production of this

thesis. For example, I considered the work of Schempp et al. (2003), who defined four stages of coach development that are especially useful because they do not equate directly with coach accreditation levels and provide an alternative to understand coach development to consider when explaining the specifics of how coaches develop. Reference to the acknowledgment of this previous qualitative work on coaching in the present studies provides evidence of how I attempted to meet theoretical triangulation principles in this thesis.

I also considered potential influences relevant to environmental triangulation (ET) as described by Guion, Diehl, and McDonald (2011). According to Guion et al., ET involves the use of different locations, settings, and other key factors related to the environment in which the study took place, such as the time, day, or season. To provide a degree of environmental triangulation I conducted interviews in both Australia and Malaysia with accredited football coaches. Similar to the suggestion of Guion et al. (2011), these environmental factors are varied to determine whether the findings are the same across settings and if the findings are similar under varying environmental conditions. On this basis, validity is heightened, leading to greater confidence in the data as being broadly representative.

My background and perspectives undoubtedly influenced the findings of this study. As mentioned by Lincoln and Guba (1985), the influence of investigators' experiences and worldviews on their findings is inevitable. As Patton (1990) also suggested, researchers should acknowledge their orientations, training, and backgrounds. Consequently, I presented relevant information about myself in the earlier part of this chapter. Strauss and Corbin's (1990) theoretical sensitivity principles were adopted to ensure consideration of some possible interpretations of the data.

Scrutinizing the work

In the present study, I took a similar approach to Côté et al. (1995) who explained how investigators often receive intensive methodological guidance before the beginning of the project and conduct several simulated interviews under the supervision of an experienced qualitative researcher. Investigators are expected to acquire an additional understanding of interviewing techniques by extensive reading of the relevant material. As Winter (2000) pointed out, qualitative researchers require some means of scrutinizing their work. I scrutinized my motives for investigating the research question through self-examination and self-reflection. Self-analysis was related to my experience as a football player, football-coaching student, coach, and instructor turned football-coaching researcher.

I was prepared in several ways regarding competency for undertaking these planned studies. From the beginning, I familiarized myself with the relevant body of literature. I also undertook postgraduate training in advanced qualitative methods to develop further my interviewing and data analysis skills. Before collecting data, I practiced the methods employed in the present studies by carrying out several pilot interviews while being observed by my principal supervisor. Throughout the data collection and analysis present feedback and discussion was regularly provided by my principal supervisor. Hence, I made concerted efforts to improve or “calibrate” myself as a research instrument.

CHAPTER 4

STUDY ONE

Introduction

In this chapter, I present the aims, method and findings drawn from the sample of accredited Australian and Malaysian football coaches who were recruited and interviewed in keeping with the principles of theoretical sampling. Although some researchers have investigated coach development themes the majority related exclusively to high-performance coaches (e.g., Côté, et al., 1995; Erickson, et al., 2007; Schempp, McCullick & Mason, 2006; Turner, Nelson & Potrac, 2012; Schinke et al., 1995). In contrast, the key development themes for the large majority of the coaching population (i.e., participation, community and domestic coaches) have not been researched very extensively. In keeping with the broad aim of examining coach development for accredited football coaches, the following aims were established for the present study.

General aim.

Delineate the primary coach development themes from the perspective of accredited Australian and Malaysian football coaches.

Specific aims.

1.1 Identify and describe key development themes of Australian football coaches based on three distinct levels of formal coaching accreditation (i.e., “A”, “B”, and “C” licenses).

1.2 Identify and describe development themes of Malaysian football coaches based on three distinct levels of formal coaching accreditation (i.e., “A”, “B”, and “C” licenses).

1.3 Construct a model to describe the key development themes of formally accredited Australian and Malaysian football coaches.

1.4 Identify key similarities and differences in accredited Australian and Malaysian football coaches from a cross-cultural perspective.

Method

Participants and Recruitment.

Based on country of origin a sample of football coaches were recruited; Australia (n = 12; age range 21 - 50 years) and Malaysia (n = 12; age range 26 - 52 years). After progressive participant recruitment (see procedures) the final sub-samples comprised of eight ‘A’ license coaches, eight ‘B’ license coaches and eight ‘C’ license coaches. All 24 coaches were active in coaching at different levels at the time of data collection. To be suitable for inclusion in the study coaches needed to have completed the relevant football governing bodies (i.e. AFC, FFA, and UEFA) coaching accreditation program at either ‘A’, ‘B’ or ‘C’ license level. Regarding current working experience, all eight “A” license coaches were employed full-time at national, professional or elite youth levels. One B license coach was working full time within a football academy. However, the remaining 15 “B” and “C” license coaches were working part-time or were unpaid volunteers with urban and regional football clubs or private football academies (see Tables 4.1 and 4.2 below for additional participant summary details).

Table 4.1

Australian Participant Demographic and Football Coaching Background

Coach Label	Gender	Highest Academic Qualifications	Highest Coaching Qualification	Total Years of Coaching Experience	Years Coaching at Current Level	Occupational Status
AA1	Male	Bachelor	AFC A License	26	3	Full Time Paid
AA2	Male	Diploma	AFC A License	16	3	Full Time Paid
AA3	Male	Bachelor	AFC A License	4	2	Full Time Paid
AA4	Male	Bachelor	AFC A License	13	4	Full Time Paid
AB1	Male	Certificate	AFC B License	16	16	Part Time Paid
AB2	Male	Diploma	AFC B License	17	7	Volunteer Unpaid
AB3	Male	Bachelor	AFC B License	10	1	Part Time Paid
AB4	Male	Certificate	AFC B License	25	25	Part Time Paid
AC1	Male	Diploma	AFC C License	6	2	Part Time Paid
AC2	Male	Bachelor	AFC C License	4	2	Part Time Paid
AC3	Male	Diploma	AFC C License	16	4	Volunteer Unpaid
AC4	Male	Diploma	AFC C License	10	4	Part Time Paid

Table 4.2

Malaysian Participant Demographic and Football Coaching Background

Coach Label	Gender	Highest Academic Qualifications	Highest Coaching Qualification	Total Years of Coaching Experience	Years Coaching at Current Level	Occupational Status
MA1	Male	Doctorate	AFC A License	20	5	Full Time Paid
MA2	Male	Diploma	AFC A License	25	25	Full Time Paid
MA3	Male	Bachelor	AFC A License	30	20	Full Time Paid
MA4	Male	Certificate	AFC A License	18	18	Full Time Paid
MB1	Male	Certificate	AFC B License	24	24	Part Time Paid
MB2	Male	Diploma	AFC B License	10	7	Full Time Paid
MB3	Male	Certificate	AFC B License	8	8	Part Time Paid
MB4	Male	Bachelor	AFC B License	30	12	Volunteer Unpaid
MC1	Male	Diploma	AFC C License	5	3	Volunteer Unpaid
MC2	Male	Certificate	AFC C License	2	2	Part time Paid
MC3	Male	Diploma	AFC C License	10	6	Part time Paid
MC4	Male	Bachelor	AFC C License	4	3	Part time Paid

Procedures.

Permission to conduct the research was obtained from the Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee (HRETH11/280), see attached approval letter and Appendix D. In identifying football coaches, a letter was sent to the Football Federation Victoria to notify the Federation of the proposed research and for possible assistance in disseminating information about the study to suitable participants. A similar letter was sent to the Football Association of Malaysia (FAM). Once permission to contact coaches was approved FFV and FAM coaches were contacted and provided with information on the purpose, risks, and safeguards of the study before being invited to participate (see Appendix E).

Interviews.

Thirty-two coaches volunteered to participant in the study with twenty-four of these coaches interviewed over an 11-month period at mutually convenient locations. All interviews took place in Melbourne, Australia and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Before the interviews commencing participants were reminded of the study purpose, risks, and safeguards and given an opportunity to ask questions before signing the informed consent (see Appendix F). Participants were offered opportunities to review the interview guide before participating. Twenty-four interviews ranging in length from 45 to 90 minutes took place, and the digital file was later transcribed verbatim and analyzed in accordance with EGT methodology (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The interview guide evolved over time and consisted of introductory questions ostensibly included to build rapport and a brief coaching history followed by questions specifically focused on the broad theme of coach development. The interviews were then transcribed verbatim (see Appendix H for a copy of a transcribed and coded interview). The interview guide was developed

based on the relevant literature and discussion with my principal supervisor. The interview guide was first piloted with a Bachelor of Sport Coaching undergraduate student with a “C” license in the presence of the principal supervisor (see Appendix A). After the principal supervisor had provided feedback, the interview guide was modified. Furthermore, as a quality control measure, the principal supervisor was present for the first two interviews, and he provided follow-up advice and deconstruction of the interview content. A recursive interview process was used with the data being analyzed and the subsequent interviews being modified accordingly.

Data Analysis.

Because many of the principles of ETG analysis has been expounded in chapter 3, therefore, only a relatively brief summation of the methodology will be provided here to avoid unnecessary repetition. The procedures used in the current study are very similar to the procedures used by Holt & Dunn (2004). Notably, although data is presented side by side for the Australian and Malaysian samples the Australian data was collected first.

Coding and conceptualizing.

Following the Strauss and Corbin (1998) approach to data analysis, open coding, axial coding, and selective coding techniques were used. According to Strauss and Corbin, a code is a concept, often reduced to a word or phrase that signifies what is essentially going on with a piece of data. Whereas, the process of manual coding is the line-by-line or paragraph-by-paragraph examination of the data for significant events, experiences, and feelings. These are often denoted as concepts.

Open coding.

For open coding, at the initial stage of this study, microanalysis of the interview transcripts was carried out, with line-by-line analysis to identify potential themes and concepts. An open code was given to significant events, feelings and experiences denoted by the participants. Once a concept was identified using open coding, a label was assigned to it using keywords. There were times when the codes were classified as in-vivo, whereby the label was extracted directly from the words by the interviewee. In-vivo codes as mentioned by Saldana (2009) are codes taken directly from the text, usually in quotation marks. Nevertheless, there were also numerous instances where an appropriate summary term was used to describe the data. In total nearly 3,000 open codes were identified in this study.

Axial coding.

As discussed earlier, axial coding is “a set of procedures whereby data are put back together in new ways after open coding, by making connections between categories.” (Kendall, 1999). The coach development themes identified from the Australian coaches proved to be almost identical to the coach development themes that were later identified with the Malaysian coaches. Approximately 50 axial codes were identified in this study.

Selective coding.

In this study, selective coding was a two-step process. First, over 70 axial codes were selectively grouped around what eventually became 15 common codes/themes. Second, the 15 common core themes were selectively grouped in what eventually became four core categories. Given that similar interview guides and procedures were used with this Malaysian sample of coaches as the Australian sample of coaches it was not surprising that the same four core categories were

identified from the data analysis (pre-accredited, characteristics, challenges and learning). Selective coding was also used here to delimit the study and effectively speed up the analysis (Glaser, 1998). See Appendix I for a full copy of the coding labels (open, axial, selective) and the coding labels used for all 24 interviews.

Results

Organisation.

This chapter is organized to build toward presenting the final (current) evolved accredited football coach development model (AFCDM) that was derived from the interview data based on evolved grounded principles. Immediately before the AFCDM is presented, a conditional matrix is discussed and embedded in miniature form diagram form in the AFCDM (see Figure 4, page 141) to delineate important information that directly affects coach development but was largely outside the aims and scope of this study.

The AFCDM presented at the conclusion of this chapter can be interpreted as having fundamental chronological components (although not exclusively). Consequently, the results and embedded discussion are presented sequentially about the coaching development stages. I use the term stages not as a definitive term but because coaches inevitably progress through stages that although different for each coach are chronologically experienced. The style of how the data is presented may give the false impression that the interviews and data analysis occurred in a sequential and linear manner. In reality, the reverse occurred with the data being pieced together more like a jigsaw puzzle. Only when a significant number of pieces came together that the overall picture emerged. Eventually, the final picture (AFCDM) became the lens from which to identify each piece. Toward the end of this chapter the distilled AFCDM based on the data analysis are presented as

a schematic flow chart (see figure 4.1). The results and related discussion are first presented, based on each emergent or extracted open code, axial codes, selected common codes and selected core codes. Throughout the chapter, representative quotes are embedded to exemplify emergent themes.

Pre-Coaching (PAC)

Coaches, when prompted, were able to reflect and discus how their pre-coaching experiences influenced the type of coach they had become. Numerous axial codes were condensed into four selected common codes (people, personal, context and culture) with pre-coaching experiences selected as the titled for the core code.

People & Personal.

Previous coaches, mentors, idols, and family influence

Many coaches expressed how important previous key people had been in their subsequent development. Often they recalled in considerable detail about how people that had influenced them from many years ago. It was self-evident how important these recollections were as one coach said: “these memories are burned into my brain.” I was privileged to hear their recollections and how key people had influenced the participants. I also noticed that some coaches became emotional when talking about the influence of these key people which showed me how significant these people had been. The people theme shows how coaches cannot develop in isolation and need to be nurtured; encouraged and developed from a young age even before they make the decision to start coaching.

Coaches were able to talk specifically about the aspects of their current approach to coaching that was linked to coaches from their playing days. An ‘A’ license coach (AC4) mentioned the influence of a coach who sought high

achievement; “I guess he always set the bar high and show us thing that we opened up there, so we know of our limit of what we could do.” Coach MA4 mentioned that his initial information about the technical aspects and the system of play was introduced to him by his first coach. MA4 revealed, “What I learned most was when I first started, the information concerning the technical aspects and system of play, game formation, I would say was taught to me by [AFC instructor]. He gave me a very big scope of the system of play”. Coach MB1 added more detail, using his experience as an example, indicating that, “My coach who influenced me at that time was one of the gentlemen, and his coaching was more on discipline, punctuality, time, training, whatever they show us we must perform.” Coach MA1, for instance, said; “One of the coaches that I had was [senior coach in Malaysia], who coached me when I was 18. He was very kind but strict and understanding. All the players liked him, and we eventually became a very good team”. Some coaches deliberated over the influence of their coaches from many years earlier and were able to express how this affected them. Coach MA2 stated “I still remember that my coach at that time was my teacher. He was a teacher and his training was quiet under his guidance, and it was all right, a lot of running and game strategy”. Clearly some aspects of the coach development journey for participants in the current study was, in retrospect, linked back to these influential coaches they had been exposed too.

The capacity of coaches to recall vivid details of the influence of coaches from many years earlier on their later development as a coach emphasizes the importance of having excellent development coaches. For example, coach AA4 expressed that he had three coaches that still influence him now; one was his first coach at 14, an early favorite who “actually didn’t have to tell me a lot he let me discover as well, and there’s an impact on what I do now.” His second favorite coach

had influence with his motivational way of coaching; “He loved his players and always be a leader to his players”. Coach AA4, make a further statement that how his mentor coach had taught him and influenced him as a coach; “He showed me that without determination without desire without all those traits you can’t make it, and that’s why I was even more determined to play for him”.

Most of the coaches have icon coaches or influential coaches who have helped shape them and sometimes these influences provided them with unique perspectives. Coaches expressed how they learned from watching and observing people they admire and how they add variations of their own. One of the coaches constantly mentioned that he learned so much from his former coach, especially about individual work, which is not something they normally cover in the coaching courses. He mentioned that his coach gave him an insight into how players think, and when to make decisions as a coach. Coaches also mentioned that although former coaches provided examples of what they considered ‘good practice,' their effectiveness in dynamic and unique circumstances could only be judged by experience.

Not surprisingly, the family influence for many participants was strong, and these accredited coaches expressed, in numerous ways, how the family had introduced them either deliberately or unintentionally to football and supported their involvement. Sometimes it was a long time connection with the game through a particular family member. For example, coach MB2 commented; “Soccer is in our family blood because my late father was an ex-national coach and ex-state coach. So when I was a kid, my father already brings me to the field and talked a lot about football, about history in Malaysian football. And I was lucky that when I was a kid I can see all the top players training in front of me.” The participant’s father was often

the person who was discussed most frequently as the early driver in their football involvement. Coach MB3 said, “To me my father was the one who encouraged me a lot. He showed the path; he showed the way”. Similarly, AA3 noted that “All of my early football days were supported by my father particularly, but driven by the community.” Occasionally, for one reason or another, it was a different family member who was the critical early link. For example, coach MA2 mentioned that “My uncle was playing football, so, from there I catch-up the game. I always saw them playing, and I was just a ball picker. After that, I was playing with friends, and they encouraged me to play football. One of the state players was staying with my family so, from that time I saw him, playing in the Malaysia Cup series”. Finally, the combination of parents who themselves had excelled in sport and were perceived to be supportive was a powerful driver. Coach AA2 was a typical example of this theme; “They were always supporting me, my parents are really good sports people in that my mother was in the national team for track and field, my father was national team for track and field, and they also worked as scientists at work, so they sort of combined this stuff”.

The prevailing influence of childhood idols was also another trend with coaches talking about the inspiration and drew from mentally connecting with high profile players. For example, Coach MA1 said, “The one and only person or icon who influenced me was Pele, the Brazilian legend when Brazil won the World Cup in 1970……when I was ten then***.”*** In a similar way, coach MB2 “We called it Legend, Abang Mokhtar Dahari”. Quite possibly, the mental connection to an early idol figure serves a useful long term emotional connection.

Some coaches even reflected on the “bad” coaching they have witnessed and were influenced by their mentor and use the experience by preventing themselves

from repeating the same “bad” coaching with their players. The benefit of hindsight sometimes led to a more sobering view of previous influential coaches. Invariably, the first coach for each participant, when they were starting as a player left an indelible mark. Coach AA1 stated; “I had a [European descent] guy coaching me in Under 11, and he was a great influence because [European county] at that time was big”. Coach AA1, however later assessed his experiences as the practical session gained by playing, and admitting that “now I know probably half of them were flawed, and as a coach I now know there were a lot of stuff that you should not do, they could have used their time much, much better”. A more dramatic example was expressed by coach AA4;

> I saw this coach coaching I think 8,12 years old, boys, you could see the body language, that the other team is just, you know what “Just Shut up”… “Don’t talk anymore” but the guy continue “Ah, you need to do this, you need to do that, come on you got to, you stop dribbling to pass rather,” I mean 12 years old wow.”

The powerful long-term effect on the development of a coach was traced back to the theme of their playing career teaching them about the game. The coaches recalled instances and examples of how playing helped them understand all aspects of the game. The underlying development connection was varied; for example coach MA1 discussed leadership “I chose to play as a defender, and I was big, and my teachers and coaches felt that I would better off being a defender. Well, from the time I started playing for the school at the ages or 12 to 18 and for the districts and state….I was made Captain of the team. Even in the senior sides, I was the vice-captain.” Coaches in this study were found to credit their playing experiences into their coaching. For example, coach MC3 asserted that has been trained by many

coaches and this contributes to his current approach; “My playing experience can give an important contribution to football using my coaching because I have been taught by many coaches, good coaches.” Playing experience alone may not make a coach proficient, but those coaches who had long history playing had a deep well of experiences and exposure to draw later on.

In summary, the sustained influence from coaches, family, and other key figures was a consistently expressed for football coach participants. There was a consensus on this issue even though it means different things to different coaches, using different approaches and differing viewpoints as to what they extracted from these key people.

Context & Culture

The common code titled context and culture refer to sub-themes relating to circumstances, conditions and events that influenced the participants and therefore, their development. For these coaches, there was often a long-term conditional involvement in football. Also, environment related themes were also evident such as the geography of where lived; for example, adjacent to playing facilities. The powerful effect of their playing experiences connecting to their development was also evident. Finally, many of these contextual themes were overlaid by a cultural influence.

The type of environment that was associated with early football experiences was relevant for some coaches. Sometimes, coaches had learned how serious football was considered in the environment that they had been bought up in that in the following instance led to success and further development as a player. Coach AA2 for instance suggested;

> From my environment it was serious from the start, it was quite serious, because over there if you are not good enough by age nine they will; probably tell you, well okay soccer is not for you go and find something else. And I was quite successful in a way, to progress through the levels. And sort of from nine I was selected to get to the special sort of development school, and over there I played until I was professional.

For other coaches, it was a circumstantial connection with the community in which they lived. Coach MB3, for instance, said, “When I came back from school….I played with my neighborhoods friends in front of my house… when the senior players came to the field, I joined them and played”. Coaches also talked about the long-term engagement with football that commenced from a young age. Sometimes this connection was simply about where they lived. For example, coach MA3 said “Actually went I was young, my house was only 100 meters from the field, public field….I got to practice whenever I wanted”. The football engagement might also be a function of a domestic circumstance. For example, coach MA4 mentioned. “We looked forward to Sunday because on Sunday at 3 o’clock there was a time and we have black and white TV. So, Sunday at 3 o’clock we will glue to the TV watching All-Star soccer. So, it was after the All-Star soccer show; we will jump behind and just get into our backyard and start playing the game. That was how we got the interested”.

Football has long been associated with different cultures and the early involvement, and shaping of a football character was threaded through the responses of participants. This type of socio-cultural influence is seen in the comments from Coach AA3, “Having a non-English speaking background, like my father and mother as well as other family members. They gravitated to Croatian

Clubs and the main sport by being Croatian was soccer, and that was just why that I ended up playing soccer. Another perspective on culture was the proposition that football is a culture itself. For example, coach MC3 said, “So football is my culture at that time, during that time our interest in life is only playing football.”

The Decision to Coach: ‘Tipping Point’.

The actual decision to commence coaching or the ‘tipping point’ was initiated by a range of circumstances. Often the move toward coaching was precipitated by the feeling that they still wanted to be involved with the game they love. This was especially the situation for those coaches who were attempting to balance the requirements of continuing to play and commencing coaching. Often coaches were working through the decision of when to stop playing competitively and continue by coaching exclusively. Some coaches, however, commenced coaching immediately after their playing career ended, whereas some coaches ‘stumbled’ into coaching. That is, they had not planned to coach, but circumstances transpired, whereby, they took up coaching. For example, a serious injury may have forced their early retirement from playing professionally. Rather than cursing their bad luck on what was obviously a traumatic experience, these athletes sought opportunities to commence coaching, and they took up the coaching challenge with enthusiasm and determination.

Some pre-accreditation coaches began training their children or were asked to coach by parents of young players participating locally. Often, this type of beginning coach was formerly well known or a high profile player. Coach AA1 discussed how he decided to commence coaching because he was not enjoying playing anymore overseas, and believed he could probably give more as a coach. “I just decided to get into coaching straight away, and it is just taken off from there.” Similarly, coach

AA2 started coaching when still at university, and he progressed from there because it was part of his university degree, “I went and did my degree at University and just started coaching there and I continued at every level”. Coach AA2 also mentioned that he started his coaching career while still playing and asked his club to be a little flexible, “they gave me a bit more flexibility with the club and a bit more money, that is why I decided to coach while playing.”

Meanwhile for coach AA3, the start of his coaching career was completely unplanned. He was asked initially to coach by a parent who knew him as a player; “A tiller did some work in my kitchen, and his son asked me, can you coach me? Suddenly I felt the urge to do it” … “I want you to do some private coaching with my son, and it started from there.” Coach AA4 explained how he had begun thinking about getting involved in coaching, initially because of an injury saying; “I had played for about 4 or 5 years before an injury occurred and that’s when I started to think about coaching.” Interestingly, coach AA4 later added that like most of the coaches in this study he started his initial coaching long before gaining formal accreditation and started at schools where his mentor asked him to replace him; “I still remember when the school’s masters were busy and said to me, ‘you take the warm up, you take the training session’, and that was how I started coaching at 14, for the 14 years old boys”.

Some coaches discussed the importance of key influential figures, coaches or mentors on their later decision to start coaching. Coach MA3 had a person he mentioned as an influential figure, and he used as his initial source of knowledge as a coach. He chose to attend the first coaching course and was encouraged to become a coach in school after a playing career in a teacher training college team under the guidance of his mentor, saying that, “It was another coach who inspired

me initially in coaching, He told me ‘You all teachers, once you go for your first practical you will be going to give those children knowledge’”. Coach MA3 felt that he had been given a lot of support by his mentor, in fact, it was his mentor who was the one who gave him a lot of guidance and he chose to coach at the grassroots level because of the guidance and encouragement he received, reflecting that, “He gave a lot of support; I feel another reason was we have the right people to work with the kids. He was the one who identified, and he had a passion for football”.

Pre-Accredited Coach

The term pre-accredited coach (PAC) was used to denote the phase when an interviewee had started coaching but had not yet completed any specific football training accreditation. Coaches in the PAC stage typically discussed how they relied mostly on and transferred what they had gained from past playing experience in their initial coaching experiences. That is, they often consciously or unconsciously mimicked the communication and coaching style of their previous coaches. Presumably, coaches found this mimicking process their most authentic way to carry out day-to-day coaching sessions, and sometimes to impress parents and the club board. Some coaches talked about relying on the collective expertise of other coaches. MB1 claimed he had been influenced, saying that, “Initially I did not have any license. I coach according to my experience where all the senior coaches give me advice on how to coach and all about training methods”. There were, however, several other sources of knowledge for these coaches at the PAC such as learning by watching vision of games and videos, sourcing information from their limited coach network, trial and error, squad training sessions and so forth.

After participant coaches had related their football background and entry into coaching the interviews were focused more intentionally on their coaching

development profile. All coaches were asked directly about development topics such as stages, accreditation, knowledge acquisition, etc. The following section is used to report on the emergent development themes (i.e., characteristics, challenges and learning) that were extracted from data.

Characteristics

Coaches as with all people think and behave partly as a function their unique set of personal characteristics. The selected core code of characteristic is comprised of four selected common codes; personality, cognitive style, current skill set and facilitators.

Personality/Traits

The association between a coaches thinking and behavior with their unique personality is unquestionable. It was, therefore, not surprising that personality related themes were evident for all the football coaches interviewed. The adaptability of a coach, their attitude, conscientiousness, drive, and openness were all typical sub-themes.

Some of these coaches conjectured that what influenced them was personality from the perspective of expectations, drive, and discipline which affected their coaching career. Coach MB1 acknowledged that within his football team, “What influenced me as a player turned coach is that, it’s all about the hard work you put in, effort, time, we don’t waste time at training and then at the end of the day, you get no results”. Coach MB4 disclosed that as a player, he was very much disciplined and very dedicated. The same type of thinking was evident for coach AB1, who remarked “I’ve always been ambitious [achievement striving] person regarding if you are going to apply that much time to it then there is going to be something that I can achieve out of it. I’ve always been one to achieve the best out of it that I can do.” Another

coach (AC3) talked about her characteristically competitive personality “I am very competitive, I don’t like losing, but I’ve learned to sort of how to accept losing.” Coaches invariably talked about their goals and ambitions such as coach AC4, who said: “I would like to be a professional coach and be successful with my team.”

Some of the coaches, however, expressed how their motivation was linked to their development through their coaching ambitions. Some had set a target for themselves, for example; initially completing their “C” license. After several years, they would often further their education with the “B” license and eventually follow the path toward an “A” license. There is a cycle of the qualifications providing motivation to keep progressing. Coach A3 stressed the point that “what drives me the most is my ability to obtained coaching license, from “C” license to “A” license in a short period, as I wanted to do it as soon as I possibly could.” Coach MA1 noted that, he was fully motivated to become an appointed official at the highest levels of football; “I have served FIFA and AFC for 11 years as a match commissioner, and currently I am an advisor and consultant to the [county name deleted] Premier League, this to me is recognition and the greatest achievement”. Coach MA2 enthusiastically stated that he was excited about being able to achieve a position as a national team coach in the [name deleted] and the team became a champion the [name deleted]. “We managed to bring the cup for [name deleted], and we get [name deleted] there.” Beyond that, he stated that because of his successful involvement in international football, he had been awarded a high rank in his career as a teacher, and this ambition was another motivator for him.

The coaches in Australia were very mindful of the need to constantly change and adapt and the axial code of adaptability reflected many open coded quotes. Coaches expressed the need to adapt readily to their coaching environment. For

example, since 2006, Football Federation Australia (FFA) implemented a new National football curriculum. The FFA believes a 1-4-3-3 is the most suitable formation to execute pro-active, possession-based playing style for Australian teams to be competitive internationally. The coaching courses conducted by the FFA and State FA's have emphasized how to train players to play the 1-4-3-3 system. According to the coaches, candidates in the coaching course are assessed for their competency and capacity to demonstrate sufficient knowledge of the national curriculum. This directive for some of the coaches in this study was perceived to be too 'robotic', but they also acknowledged and appreciated the unifying aspects of these guidelines. According to most coaches, however, once they go back [after the training courses] to their club they adapt the acquired knowledge into their sessions to match the situation and the demands of the game. Coaches demonstrated their adaptability between the coaching course sources of knowledge with the reality of the club training session. For example, coach AA1 stated;

> I need to change because there is a lot of unpredictability; philosophy is always evolving around the current football-related situation. I will go on seminars that change my views. Players are changing, the side is changing, and information technology is changing, so do our football philosophies.

Regarding adaptability, other coaches in this study appeared to have similar views. Coach AA2, for example, stated, "I have to understand the players, I have to be up to date with all the latest trends of football, understand people, and sometimes, I have to be like a politician as well." Coach AA2 also thought "the way we are playing has changed, but even how I would coach would be completely different, now, more game orientated." Coach AA2 also suggested the importance of adaptability in coaching based on his experiences of needing to modify the game to

suits his coaching sessions and also highlighted the challenge to manage different workloads, because the training is two to five times a week. Nevertheless, this adaptability characteristic had helped coach AA2 develop; “I modify the game to a certain extent, and create the environment that one has to do certain things”. Coach AA2 also added that he also adapted to his individual players’ circumstances and recovery schedules. For example, some of his players apart from playing at school also trained and played with their local club. Essentially, these players trained and played two to five times a week, with seven or eight hours a week of training and therefore, he would be dealing with the various physiological challenges;

> For me it is more about recovery processes, at the same time, they still need to learn how to play well. This is quite the challenge for me to adapt to the different set of players and their different schedules.

Coaches were constantly seeking to adapt by upgrading their knowledge through continuous improvement and knowledge acquisition. Coaches understood and reported their fundamental belief that football teams’ need skillful coaches who are competent in solving problems and decision making. Hence, upgrading was managed through both formal and informal ways to improve their knowledge, skills, and practices. After the formal up-skilling of knowledge at the 'front end,' coaches reported needing to adapt these skills to their current understanding or 'back end.' For example, coach AA4 suggested that coaches need to adapt the theory they have learned and the reality of practice even in the language they choose to use;

> There is a lot of protection for children. When I was in University, they said coaches can’t say certain words to kids, but the reality is different; coaches are still swearing and yelling.

Coach AA4, suggested that he has adapted by comparing his behavior to other

coaches, and he believed his behavior is appropriate; “I said to myself, I am not going to swear at my players, talk back to my players but give reasons to them and try to educate them.” Coach AA4 later added that based on his experiences coaching overseas. Most of the coaches were very, very aggressive, direct, old school compared to his approach; “Whereas, in comparison, I am talking and trying to give reasons, that’s my trait, I’ve changed the way I think about football.”

Other aspects of adaptability were considered helpful by some coaches, with Coach AB2 reflecting that he has learned management skills that have helped him to develop. He discussed how he appreciated that coaching was a spectrum of skills well beyond just what happens on the field; “I had to adapt in developing a range of skills including my player management skills which in turn helps me develop as a coach.” Coach AB4 discussed how he used considerable self-reflection and self-questioning strategies; “I would always question myself, always try to ask myself did I say the right thing, did I talk too much? I was developing myself as a coach, thinking that more was better but less is better”. Coach AB4 also discussed how he has evolved with the different groups of players he has coached, by saying; “when I was coaching in [country deleted] from 1998 to 2012, I quickly learned to be the first time I ever coached females”, I was coaching these girls and asked myself, am I coaching like I normally would with boys?” Coach AB4 added that he also needed to adapt to the demand of the current group of players he was coaching respond to the demands of the club owner. “The president will say, look they are athletes,' are you coaching the athletes or coaching the gender; I found that there is a difference in coaching males and coaching females to a certain level.”

Some coaches discussed how they adapted the information and coaching style to the circumstances. Coach MA2, discussed how coaching information acquired

from the internet, for instance, needs to be adapted first before he applies it to his player; “Sometimes I surf the internet, download some diagram and I try out the drills on my boys after I adjust it to suit my team, I need to because not all available in the internet suits my players”. A “B” license coaches discussed another type of adaptability by talking about his experience coaching handicapped players. In attempting to meet the needs of the handicapped population he apparently adapted his coaching practices;

> I started coaching the Malaysian handicapped football team and at that time I didn’t have any license to coach players with special needs, but I used my initiative to adapt the coaching knowledge from the coaching course, for the players with special needs.

Adaptability is not only part of the technical aspects but also involves the ability of a coach to adapt the information obtained from the course instructor or literature to local conditions. According to the coach MA2, what might be considered best practice in Japan and Korea for example, might not work when applied in Malaysia, “In different countries they play a different type of football, and there will be a different football culture, which we can learn and adapt to our local needs.”

Current Skill Set.

There were numerous comments throughout the interviews relating to how coaches perceived their current skills matched up to their perceptions of what was required in their coaching roles. Sometimes these were perceived strengths and sometimes these were perceived weaknesses. The theme current skill set relates to development because coaches need to constantly assess their skills and determine which areas they need to develop further.

According to coaches in Australia, the ability to motivate players is a desirable

trait that some coaches possess more than others. This somewhat elusive ability to motivate players is nevertheless a “tool of the trade” among successful football coaches. The coaches working at the higher levels also expressed the view that even at the highest level desire and ability do not guarantee success. The coaches explained in different ways at length the many benefits of motivational skills as a coaching tool. According to the coaches interviewed, coaches seek to help athletes by motivating them to overcome their weaknesses and build on their strengths. Coaches also discussed how there are many different forms of motivation and how motivation is a complicated phenomenon.

Coaches also discussed how they work to gain the cooperation of players and assistant coaches, in effect initiating a bargain whereby they receive two-way communications from their team in return for treating the players and assistant coaches respectfully. For example, Coach B3 stated that;

> I emphasized the humanistic approach through my honest and open communication. Honest and open communication means being real with my players and assistant coaches, rather than aloof and unapproachable. Honest communication also means listening to what my players and assistant coach have to say.

Coaches are very aware of how well they communicate. For example, AC2 mentioned, “We can always develop on communication, how you deliver the message I think I do it quite well, but I think one can always improve the delivery of the message, what you are trying to say, especially when you coaching a different group of players.”

Cognitive Style.

Attitude, positive thinking, self-improvement, innovative/creative and self-evaluative.

For this study cognitive style was selected as a common code to refer to how coaches processed information and their characteristic ways of thinking, solving problems or reflections. Coaches often commented on how they think, perceive and respond to the mental challenge of football coaching. Some sub-themes emerged that directly link to the coaches' cognitive style and how they process information. I found it interesting hearing from coaches about their cognitive styles because these themes emphasized how important clear thinking and forward thinking are for football coaches.

Characteristic thinking styles such as expressing creativity or types of attitudes were often discussed. Coach AB4 placed emphasis on the opportunity to be creative and express himself in the absence of a coach being present. I think playing the game with no teacher, or no coach allowed, I felt this allowed me to try a lot of different things, and we were discovering things." Another coach (AC4) also discussed how he was able to "…create my concept about a football game to develop a whole idea about how to design and develop a training based on my criteria and concepts." Coaches consistently used thinking styles such as self-reflection, self-awareness, and self-evaluation in reflecting on their coaching and how they are progressing. Reflective thinking often led to summary comments such as coach AC4, who said, I reflect a lot because I've been doing the skill acquisition program for twelve months now with FFA and FFV here in Victoria. One of the thing that matters me a lot is that you've thinking about my child hood as football players.

Facilitators.

The common code term facilitator is used to describe instances where coaches talked about aspects of their coaching that make them feel good. These facilitators may counterbalance challenges or difficulties are mainly about aspects of coaching that were perceived to be reinforcing, such as, self-efficacy, sense of pride, sense of belonging or self-efficacy. The facilitator theme was dominated by the pride that coaches feel when the players they coach succeed for progress to higher levels.

Coaches were enthusiastic to talk about their achievements as a coach and the associated pride. For example, one coach said “We managed to put up the program for the under 15 and catered for 20 boys. The program was successful, as at that time nothing was done throughout the country except in my state for developing football players”. This coach added that he not only managed to produce good players through the program but also managed to produce great students in their studies at school up to university level. ” We managed to produce some good players, but at the same time they were also successful in their studies, so they chose to play football and at the same time carry on with their other career." The same type of expression was shared by coach (MB1) as he explained that he was motivated when one player became a successful player. The player whom he trained in his football academy has successfully become a player in [European country name deleted].

Coaches derived tremendous satisfaction and pride from players’ achievements. Indirectly, they develop further because they wanted to produce more outstanding players in the future. The affirmation of the players implies that the coach as developed their coaching craft to a high level. Coach AA3 also gave a similar explanation about how his players provide him with motivational moments that fuel

his passion for coaching; “I get goose bumps...the reality is out of two hundred kids I might see over a week, one of them might go and play in the [major European league deleted]”. Coach AB3 also attributed the player’s improvement as a motivating force. For example, he explained that “at one point they cannot even kick the ball properly using both feet and after a certain period they eventually make a basic pass.” For some coaches, their ongoing legacy toward players they have coached represents a sense of satisfaction and ongoing motivation to continue and develop further. Coach AB1 commented;

> I coached one of the players since he was 10, and then he went to the VIS where I helped him get into and played for the AIS, that is one proud achievement because he always rings me to talk to me about stuff when I’m not even his coach now.

Sometimes it was more than players’ achieving it was the influence they had on players broadly. Coach AB1 later stressed how he is inspired by seeing many kids he has coached become good football players while others become good family men. For this coach, his players excel because of the disciplines they had acquired from football and he believed his influence shows that even if they do not become ‘top end’ in football, but they can be ‘top end’ somewhere by using these same disciplines; “I guess showing what sports can offer in terms of life disciplines and set them on the right track, that’s a massive, massive satisfaction”.

Football coaches also like to provide a conducive coaching environment by encouraging players to nurture each other, for example, coach AB1 discussed how experienced, talented players can strongly influence other players by supporting and nurturing; “In every team, there was an older and an outstanding player such as [well-known players], who played for Australia, and there were many other talented

players, came out of that group of boys [well-known players]". Coach AB1 also disclosed, how own his nurturing qualities were predicted on the circumstances of his background in a boarding school; "Sport was a significant aspect of my life because of school and the coaches. I had some really good Christian brothers that were not just good coaches but taught us good values". Likewise, coach AC4 mentioned that his love for football had been nurtured by playing the game itself, and he wanted to reciprocate the values his coach had adapted.

> Coaches were certainly aware that without the cooperation and confidence of their players and fellow coaches, they would not succeed, as coach AA4 described; To coach a team constructively and successfully, I should, first of all, create a confidence base between me and the team. It is essential to the construction of this mutual trust that I, as the coach, accept and respect the people sitting in front of me.

This coach was clearly mindful of how important building trust, fairness, and empathy are in coaching football teams. Furthermore, coaches' almost universally believed in nurturing positive relationships and working together with players and fellow coaches by using a concept that was described as the group's 'working consensus.' The input and ideas of all are gathered and synthesized to arrive at a final decision acceptable to all. "Through consensus, we are working to achieve better solutions, and also, promote the growth of our club members and trust." Based on the collective interviews, most coaches, especially at the participation and developmental stage, would likely be described as a 'players' coach'. They believed that a coach must respect the players, value them, and support them as individuals.

A further nurturing feature was coaches developing each other. This was especially expressed by those holding an "A" license certificate, playing an important

role in nurturing their fellow coaches with “B” and “C” licenses. Ultimately the coaches with the “A” license are leaders who hope to create awareness among the players, parents, football clubs and associations of the need to support the young and beginning football coaches, as this can contribute and facilitate an increase in the quality of the football fraternity. Coach MA1 mentioned an example of the nurturing characteristic. “I was lucky because I was conducting the courses that allowed me to impart my knowledge to the participants.” Another Malaysian “A” license coach (MA1) was looking for someone to succeed him as a high-level coach and instructor. The replacement he was looking for was a person who would be capable of making the necessary sacrifices. “I want to guide him, I need to have someone who is willing to learn and spend time, to that extent I can help, but you have to be willing to work.” Coach MA2 shared his views about the value of nurturing other coaches. “We cannot forget the ripples of water. If a stone is thrown into a pool of water, ripples are produced which creates a lot of networking. The more that someone shares their knowledge and information, the more that the coaches will be able to understand”.

The coaches regardless of their qualifications talked about striving to be a role model to players. The coaches portray positive values and ethics to gain respect and reduce communication barriers. This in turn contributes to player performance and loyalty to the team, thus, making it easier for the coaches to give instruction and delegating their tasks in training sessions or matches. The importance of being a positive role model was sometimes linked to having experienced the benefits themselves. Coach AB1 stated that he had an ‘old chappie’ (former coach) as a role model when he was young. This role model apparently treated his players more than as just football players; “at the end of the day; he treated us like his sons. He was a very good coach back then”. He also expressed his appreciation for another former

coach; “he was such a genuine guy. I can remember this ‘Pepe,' always made me wanted to go to an environment where he was coaching, rather than getting dragged there.”

According to the more qualified “A and B” license coaches the ability to delegate is vital to ensure shared responsibilities. It is also important to generate a sense of involvement and engagement among the coaching staff. According to these coaches, delegating promotes trusts and a sense of appreciation that contribute to the overall performance and culture of the team and club. Delegating also enables the junior coach and assistant coach to be groomed and gain experience as well as understand the vision and mission of the head coach. As a lead coach, the head coach also needs to delegate some of the coaching task to the assistant coach. By delegating responsibilities, it makes organizational sense and will also promote trust, confidence, and loyalty within the team.

Similar to delegation the ability to motivate players is a desirable trait that some coaches possess more than others. The coaches explained in different ways at length the many benefits of motivational skills as a coaching tool. According to the coaches interviewed, coaches above all seek to help athletes to realize their personal potential by motivating athletes to overcome their weaknesses and build on their strengths. Coaches also discussed how there are many different forms of motivation and how motivation is a complicated phenomenon.

Challenges

As with all professions, personal development for football coaches is often associated with successfully negotiating challenges. Both in Australia and Malaysia a broad range of challenges were encountered by participants. In the present research, the aim was to delineate what these challenges were rather than to

determine what strategies coaches use to resolve these challenges. The core theme of challenges was comprised of six selected common codes (see figure 4.1).

People.

Many of these coaches considered that a challenge for Australian coaches was how coaches were perceived. Coach AB1, pondered, “Unfortunately football coaches are not respected in Australia, It’s such a volatile sport even within the coaching ranks that everybody has got an opinion, and everybody is critical of others”. Coach AB1 later added that the culture and attitude among football coaches itself inhibit football growth. Coach AB1 was sad that people are so critical of others and disunity; “there are those out there that pretend that, they’ve got their license, they’ve got their badge, they’ve got this, and they’ve got that”.

Coaches sometimes had assistants to delegate tasks too but sometimes found the assistant was often not capable of running the coaching session fully or competent enough to handle the tasks they were given. This was a common thread among the “A” license group of coaches as to whether there was sufficiently reliable personnel to be appointed as their assistant. Coach MA3 thought that “The greatest barrier and deficiency I would say is unqualified personnel handling the teams, they kill the interest of most of the beginner coaches. Secondly, they do damage to the players with their small amount of knowledge”. Coach MA4 had the same perspective in his effort to look for a reliable successor for his current coaching position, “I like to have people who are equivalent or can be better than me. I am still looking for one or a few who can be better than me to train them up, but I cannot find anyone suitable”. Coach MA4 also expressed strong views concerning the lack of reliable assistants to delegate tasks; “I am getting old, so my challenges are still to find someone to take over, someone who is willing to spend time to work, to work

with me, to understand the work and he must have the same qualities that I have".

The theme "no reliable assistant to delegate tasks" refers to the situation faced mostly by the senior coaches and head coaches in Australia and Malaysia. Coaches mostly mentioned this kind of challenge with an "A" license. It was also mentioned by coaches who have been appointed to lead a team either in the "club land" or within the national elite development program in both countries. Another example came from Coach MA4, who has the same perspective on his effort to look for a reliable successor for his current coaching position. He mentioned that "I would have people who are equivalent or even better than me as a coach educator but. Unfortunately, I am still looking for one or a few who can be better than me. Until today there is nobody". Therefore, according to these head coaches, they need to delegate some of the jobs to their assistant to enable them to concentrate planning and delivering coaching sessions. Unfortunately, some head coaches also reported that the assistant and cannot be trusted, lack reliability or are incompetent.

Systemic.

The category termed systemic was relatively broad with many challenges linked back to the system such as financial limitations, facilities, resources, the accreditation system, limited job opportunities, and football politics. A common challenge discussed by coaches was around financial and job prospects. Many coaches in Australia expressed the desire to 'turn professional' or coach full time. Unfortunately, for them the likely remuneration, if they were to be a full-time coach, would be insufficient to sustain themselves and their families particularly in Australia with the high cost of living. Consequently, they feel restricted in their potential development because they are part-time coaches. Furthermore, because of the large land mass of Australia, many coaches spent considerable sums of money traveling

to matches, tournaments and attending coaching courses. There were also development issues tied up with financial constraints. Coach AA1 also felt that the financial constraints had been a barrier to his development; “I’ve got four coaching jobs, at different levels, academy based and technical, a team that is ‘cut throat’ every week and development of future stars or future players. All these are different competencies I have to develop”. Coach AA2 had similar thoughts regarding the financial challenges; “Financially we are limited. Firstly, I cannot be a full-time professional coach, unless I am at one of the ten teams in the ‘A’ league, I’ll tell the truth, for me it would be very challenging”. Coach AA2 later expressed his view on the financial realities. By 35 to 40 you have a family, you have to think about, and this money is not good enough, I would concentrate on my business, and I will do some coaching because I can, and I do not need the money this way.

The majority of coaches involved in this study questioned the football coach education curriculum was not sufficient to fuel aspects of their development. Most of the coaches especially those with “B” and “C” licenses expressed how they believed the curriculum alone did not produce quality personnel. According to them, this situation occurs because most of the coaches have not been exposed sufficiently to the sports sciences in the curriculum. Even some of the coaches with the highest FAM qualification could not express their understanding beyond a limited view as MA2 demonstrated; “We don’t have the people... we don’t produce... knowledgeable coaches. Maybe our coaching curriculum has to be revised and to be more scientific. The scientific aspect of the training must be there. I think that this aspect is still lacking among Malaysian coaches”. However, Coach MA2 was optimistic that the next generation of coaches may bridge this gap in knowledge; “Our players from sports schools, these boys are coming out, and some of them are going to university

taking up other levels of education. Maybe this group can change the football coaching scenario in the country". Coach MA2 had stronger views concerning the challenges related to football coach education and his knowledge on this subject matter was relatively deep; "What we can conclude is that we must have a knowledgeable coaching culture widespread throughout our country."

The existence of football governing body (FGB) is to help foster the development of football. Linked to fulfilling this goal is to understand what coaches need. This awareness is important, to support them in their development and foster the game. Ironically, according to some coaches one of the challenges they face, is working within the management system of FGB itself. For example, coach MB1 felt; "Most of the coaches and management in Malaysia, they just talk more than do their work. They seem to talk without thinking, and overrule most of the coaches, but our coaches have very backdated knowledge". Also, Coach MB1 stressed the point about what the FAM counterpart in Korea and Japan has been doing is their development programs. He later added, "Japan spends a lot of time to do research and development. From there they changed to be better". Coach MB1 also felt there was unequal treatment of prospective coaches by the governing bodies and commented that FAM were for passing the national ex-players in getting the coaching license as compared to non-national trainee coaches no matter how hard they have worked to get a license.

Coach MB1 suggested that the development of the coaches should be outsourcing offshore; "Now we are having a very big, big problem in our football. Malaysia must send coaches to [country name deleted] for a course, to learn football there". Coach MB1 shared his experience in one of the best football clubs in the world and expressed the view that FAM should learn from what is practiced in [region

name deleted], for example regarding diet and nutrition of the players. He mentioned that from his experience it [club name deleted], he found that; “the coaching, principals of training, the drills it was a very high level even at the age of 12, 13, 14, 16 until of the age of 20…the method of training was different.”

Some coaches felt that the certification system lacked flexibility and was one dimensional in delivery. Coach AB4 expressed his perspective by stating that he has learned from some very rigid instructors in courses. What that instructor wanted was just to follow them, without question. Not surprisingly, as a coach AB4 thinks that he must treat every player individually; “you have 12 different players; you are going to speak to [name of player, deleted] differently with the way you speak to [name of player deleted]”. What he has experienced in the coaching course was different; “all they see is 50 coaches that wanted to get their coaching license, that’s it, this is it. This is the structure, and that’s it we can’t deviate from them”.

Coaches also complained about their experience of having to deal with politics or culture-related challenges in football. For example, coach AA2; commented, “There is a lot of backstabbing happening, I think, and that is what I did not appreciate.” According to coach AA3, the small number of children and youths playing ‘street’ football is a challenge. Because the western culture in Australia doesn’t encourage it. According to coach AB1, there is a mismatch between the development program and demands of the real world of games. He said for instance; “They cannot play street football, they can’t come and play in the premier league because the way we play our football outside those environments.”

Coaches in this study revealed that one of the other challenges they face is their career development is in the football governing body and club board members. These kinds of challenges are faced especially by coaches in the early career stage

who are looking to progress quickly and be part of FFV or FFA programs. They believe this challenge occurred because after they have been involved for several years in the “club land” (a colloquial name for coaches at community club level). For example, coach AB3 mentioned that “the system has made it difficult for me to get into the program; it would be easier if I had played for the national team before, and, therefore, I can only coach at the club land up to today.” Coach AB4 felt similar; “I think being told by the Federation this is how you need to deliver your message; I felt, a little bit taken back by the bureaucracy.” This coach also described the need to acquiesce and not question too much I think that’s where I wanted to challenge it, but I quickly learned, if I wanted to get to the next level I would have to just listen, let them do their practice topic and then just copy it.

Coaches also reported sometimes battling a lack of job security as a challenge in their football coaching career. As coaching positions rely on a winning record, coaches reported feeling insecure at times when their team was losing. This is also stressful because, to a degree, it is determined by other people. “For those who are working in the system or working with either [names deleted], officials will determine whether they are rehired or fired at the end of the season, regardless of their qualification, experience and competencies”. Similarly, this lack of control occurs for coaches working at the club. Their career is determined by the club board or club owner or even on occasions, the club sponsor.

Despite desiring to coach full time, coach AA2 started a few businesses because he felt there was no genuine security; “I have started few businesses because coaching is not a full time job in Australia, not like in Russia”. Regarding job security all the coaches in this study appeared to share this view. Coach AB1 also thought the same as he mentioned coaches at the lower level or stage of

development in Australia who were coaching as a part-time job; “The FFA curriculum is excellent if you are a professional but when you drop down it needs to be modified purely because what is recommending does not suit the lower levels because they are part-time football coaches”.

The coaches believed they would be better off if there were a clear pathway for them to follow to develop themselves regarding qualifications, accreditation, and competencies. Moreover, all the coaches were acutely aware that, should results go against the team they coach, their ‘job would be on the line’. They frequently mentioned that they love helping players improve, but if they do not get results, they would not have a job next season. Some coaches seemed to be uncertain of what path to take and expressed dissonance. Coach AB2 expressed his uncertainty by stating; “to be honest, I am not sure what I want to do with a career in coaching in the long term.” According to coach AB3, the pathways in football coaching can be difficult. From his perspective not having been a national level football player he needed to take a different approach to progress and his pathway was unclear; “Where am I heading to as a coach? I just want to take one step at a time and just to keep adding on and keep progressing the way I am going”. Coach MA1 outlined his opinion, saying that, “Frequent sacking of coaches hinders the development of coaching as people are afraid to venture into something that is not consistent and long lasting**”..** Furthermore**,** Coach MA1 stated his view of the short term appointment approach of the clubs. He mentioned that those who have the power in the club often make decisions as they please, and the coach may be victimized; “It may be a profession in Europe, but it is not yet in Asia. Short term appointments and no definition of coaching as a profession, suggests that coaches can easily get the sack if they have a crazy owner who does not understand football”.

Some of these coaches admitted that they were not always able to plan their future career in football coaching because there were not many vacancies. Coach MA2 acknowledged that; “We don’t have so many teams. In the professional league we have only 12 professional leagues at the upper level and then next level maybe 30 teams, so we need 30 coaches only. So where do the other coaches go?” Coach A3 took this view even further, disclosing within his coaching environment and experience, he had no real control over his coaching career; “There is no security, if you want to coach full time, you have to think of so many things, family and financial constraints. That’s why I told you there is no security”. According to coach MC1, “I’m a full time teacher. This coaching I’m doing as part-time, and because of that, I cannot give full commitment. Maybe it is how I am stuck which does not allow me to go for further, to do better for football.”

Although many of the derived themes were relevant, there were a few variations or additional systemic challenges in Australia or Malaysia. For example, one of the biggest challenges in Malaysia football as a coach is match fixing. During the interview session, one of the participants mentioned that the match fixing “disease” is currently widespread in Malaysia. According to coach [code deleted], an effort by the football governing body worth millions of ringgit will not reach its objective because of the match fixing activities. He later added that only education of the younger generation of players could be used to overcome this challenge, “There has been an issue of coaches being involved in match fixing that is not good for the game.” He further mentioned the consequences caused by match-fixing activities as; “Clubs and National associations spend millions of ringgit to develop players from a young age just to lose them to match fixers. Though not all, just a few are enough to spoil the lot”. According to another Malaysian coach [code deleted], the year he became

involved in coaching at the senior level was not a very good one because of the corruption (match fixing). Coach [code deleted] also stressed that in the year [year deleted] when he coached one of the [name deleted] league teams he observed numerous bookies fixing hanging around the team, and they even offered him to take a bribe to fix the result of a game. Fortunately, he refused, and as a consequence, he was warned by the bookies, “A lot of bookies offered me which I don’t want. I turned them out. When I turned them out, they called me, they warned me...football has become like gambling”.

Perceived skill set

Coaches in this study often discussed or expressed concerns about a perceived lack of the required coaching skills. These feelings were mostly expressed by early career coaches (i.e., C license). Some coaches also felt that they lacked the required skills because they did not have a substantial playing experience. Some coaches discussed how they had sought to compensate by seeking further coaching qualifications and development opportunities to enhance their knowledge and equip themselves. For example coach MB4 reflected this approach;

> C license is more on technique for the players to improve, how to kick the ball, how to control whereas B license we go for more tactical. We go with 5 vs. 2, counter attacks and things like that. More development for the game situation…method of coaching, I’ll go for it.

A further example of the type of perceived skill set that coaches mentioned was communication skills. For example, coaches in Australia mention the important of communication skill, as coach AC1 stated that,

> As a coach you need to talk to people, not just coach them on the field. Like I said before you’ve to be able to pull them away off the field and chat with them

as a person rather than as a player.

Another example of perceived skill set is sports science knowledge and coaching methodology. Coach MC3 mentioned that, “you have to be creative to design the training. You have to do homework. You have to study your players’ weakness need to know sports science and methodology of coaching”

Balance.

Coaches discussed how one of the characteristics they need to juggle their daily routines as a football coach as well as either a worker or student. By working as both a part-time coach in conjunction with an external career, coaches need to divide their time between football and their other job(s) and thus, good coping and balancing abilities seems to be a requisite skill. This is exemplified by Malaysian “A” coach; “I had to switch between football, work, and studies. It was rather difficult, but for the love of the game, I managed it, as I was exposed to various systems, coaches and types of players”. Similarly, AA2 stated, “I have started few businesses, Yeah absolutely because I mean coaching, it is not a full time job in Australia, not like it is in Russia it is the only job.” The difficulty in balancing work, family and life was also discussed. Coach AC2 noted; “They took a role with [club name deleted] as a development officer… he did it for two years and he just too stress, too much effort 60 hours a week, not enough pay, that impacted his children, quality of life, even his wife.”

A number of coaches talked about the need to maintain balance within their actual coaching role. Sometimes the challenge was the diversity of tasks and a few coaches reported being initially willing to commit to these tasks but eventually found the role of coaching and managing different from what they expected. In particular, they often found the administrative management responsibilities to be tedious and

tiring, and they resented the loss of personal contact with players. Consequently, some of the coaches resigned and returned to coaching a different club, before finally settling as the first-team coach at a large local or community football club. This was a happy and rewarding time for those coaches, and they remained at the club for a long period. For the “A” license coaches, they reported facing a different challenge from their colleagues with “B” and “C” licenses. They found that with more responsible position comes more challenging job specifications.

> With being a head coach, comes managerial tasks with the job description apart from the main job of coaching. For example, you need to deal with planning a whole coaching year, for the different group of players; you need to deal with team organization, liaise with the management team, traveling arrangements.

According to the coaches involved in this study, the coaching job has now become more and more complicated. For example, nowadays they are responsible for the welfare of the players, scheduling and liaising with the governing body apart from their prime job to plan and execute the training sessions.

Because of the nature of coaching and related pressures, some coaches feel compelled to work exceptionally long hours which affect work-life balance. Some of the coaches mentioned that their career has taken them too many clubs at various levels. They tend to work ‘office hours’ during the week, although this often extends to intense and extensive involvement on game days, usually Saturdays and some Sundays. For them, the nature of the job coupled with high club expectations means that they rarely ‘switched off’ except, to some extent, during the offseason.

Contextual.

The selected code contextual was as the name implies directly related to the circumstantial challenges that were evident for some coaches whether they be cultural, geographical or situations. For example, according to the coaches, culturally in Australia, football is not considered to be a tier one sport compared to 'Footy' [Australian Football], Cricket or Rugby. For example, coach AA1 said; "Football it is still considered to be an ethnic minority, as much as we garnish it, put this coding on it with the A league, it is still an ethnic minority sport". According to the coaches, the print and electronic media coverage is relatively modest. Consequently, for coaches, this presents challenges because the best talent may choose other sports. As a result, the talent pool at the development level is relatively small compared to other more popular sports. Similarly, only a few sponsors invest in football because of the lack of media coverage. Coaches also thought that football culture could be challenging and had the potential to sully their coaching career and football development in general. The type of cultural issues embodied within the football community in Malaysia was constantly mentioned by almost all participants in this study. Coach MA1 summed up this sentiment; "We want young players to be exposed and learn football, do not give importance to results, but the politicians who lead the football association to say results are important, they are interested in short term results".

Football culture was seen as the culprit for many difficulties and poor outcomes, and some coaches expressed their views in forthright terms. For example, coach B1 further declared that "the main problem for me is the lack of resources. I have written many letters to a certain company to ask for sponsorship, but I get frustrated because they are not helping". Coach MC1 declared that "Here in Malaysia we have

not had a world champion. Now that situation must change, the mentality, the attitude, the thinking of the community, the parents, everything". Interestingly, all of the coaches in this study identified perceived problems with the football culture.

The club level attitudes' towards winning is also a cultural challenge. Coach AA1 expressed the view that the development of young players is deteriorating; "The behaviors' at the club is about winning at all costs. Think to yourself when we are going to start asking football questions". The culture of the club has also put the priority at the wrong place. For example, according to coach AA1, clubs have not put their allocations properly to the grassroots and development programs; "We need resources in clubs that educate and employ coaches on a full time basis where they know they can come and work, that's why we are all grabbing the little money that's around".

Coaches thought that the coaches at the initial levels should be assisted with more resources, equipment and facilities especially those who are coaching in rural areas. Coach MA3, for example, mentioned that "culturally Malaysians in the rural area are being neglected as compared to their fellow Malaysians living in the city and urban areas regarding sports facilities and equipment." A similar point was expressed by coach AC4 from Australia who also faces a challenge involving the geographical aspect; "in Australia the challenge is the players in the rural areas will have lesser exposure as there are lesser competitions and programs compared to the players in metropolitan areas". According to Coach AC4, there is an ongoing challenge to transport players based in rural areas for match days. Coach MC2 supposed, "The lack of football equipment and facilities in the rural areas compared to the city area." It means that the distribution of the football resources is not

balanced between urban and rural areas, causing the unequal opportunities between communities regarding football training, match, and football development pathways.

Learning

The development of sport coaching as with many professionals relies heavily on continuous learning. In the current study accredited sport coaches discussed many forms and types of learning. Within the core code learning three selected common codes were identified; informal learning, non-formal learning, and formal learning. It also became evident that learning was a mediated activity and a common code titled mediators was also identified. Not surprisingly, learning experiences did not also fit neatly into one common code and depending on how the learning occurred or was structured determined how it was coded. For example, coaches may use common forms of information technology (e.g., television, internet, iPhone and iPad) to watch informally games and stay abreast of results, statistics and football news (coded as informal). They may also use specifically designed apps through mobile devices and personal computers for a selected purpose (coded as semi-formal). Finally, they may attend a specific course to learn how to use a more technical or complex program (e.g., sports code or visual coaching pro) with the assistance of a trainer and personal computers (codes as formal).

A focus of the review of the literature was to express the breadth and depth of what coaches are required to do and know. Coach learning encompasses a broad range of information, skills, and expertise. For example, which drills are best suited to athlete developmental level and most likely to improve player skill levels. Coaches must also know how to condition athletes safely. They must know how to run a productive practice and how to make adjustments in game situations. However, knowledge alone does not guarantee success. It is important that a coach

understands when, where, and how to use information effectively. The coach will need to develop and maintain their communication and motivational skills to get their point across to players. The sources of learning emerged as one of the most prominent characteristics that shaped the results chapter of the coaches in the two countries in this thesis. Clearly, coaches from both countries use the advantage of the power of learning and knowledge to improve their coaching practices and prolong their career. Continuous learning for coaches may also contribute in assists coaches in their confidence and readiness for a career transition or make well-informed professional choices. Also, both in Australia and in Malaysia, coaches in this study were highly dependent on an array of learning mediums.

Formal accreditation courses and formal tertiary education are only part of the approach to strengthening learning. Coaches who lack understanding in a given area can develop it through educating themselves in a semi-planned or planned manner. Clinics, seminars, and classes are available for professional development. Less formal method are used including; watching games, vision or reading books and periodicals on topics of interest. Experience through, actual hands-on coaching in-situ coupled with education is important for coach development.

Informal.

The coaches also reported continually upgrading their knowledge of relevant information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Essentially, coaches made use of the advantages that ICT can provide to cope with new demands and challenges related to ICT advancement. They believed that developing their ICT skills would be advantageous in furthering their coaching career and also improve their coaching competency. Information and communication technology was used by the coaches to communicate with their players, sometimes parents and the club.

Information and communication technology was also important because FFA/FFV and other football governing bodies (FGB), nowadays, mostly use websites to provide information regarding the league (i.e., ladder, fixtures, and policies). Information and communication technology was also highly useful for coaches in obtaining information and knowledge internationally from the largest club websites (e.g., club deleted) and also private paid coaching blogs and football specific websites. Coaches reported using these websites and blogs to benchmark themselves with their national and international counterparts. The coaches often expressed the view that using ICT was essential to continuously learning and responding to the rapidly changing ICT developments.

The utilization of the ICT will help enhance coaches in their coaching development. Unfortunately, a current limiting factor for those coaches wanting to embrace ICT was the view that ICT infrastructure at the club level needed upgrading. These coaches relied on ICT to help their daily work regarding speed, accuracy, and reliability of the information and knowledge, which would be consequently influent their performance and decision-making ability. For example, Coach A1 mentioned that apart from other aspects in modern football, he needed to adapt himself to the demand of the ICT in this modern era; “ICT will provide me with better coaching analysis and better game analysis.” Coach AA2 reflected that information technology is changing coaches’ behavior; “it is changing everything, how you communicate, how quickly you can do it and meeting expectations.” Coach AA2 was amazed at the social media development; “Yeah, I want to keep up with the ICT, getting into the ICT, the era by communicating freely and quickly”.

Coaches lean heavily on various other informal sources of learning to fuel their knowledge and ongoing development. Coach MC4 did gain knowledge of coaching

by reading books and football technical reports on the Internet. He mentioned; “The most important thing is to read a lot, and it’s a never ending story. I have to go on and keep reading on the Internet, in books and asking friends that attended same courses”. The sources of learning according to the coaches involved in this research are vital for ensuring they are moving forward in their learning and by extension their development. Understanding how football coaches construct their learning experiences will enable people responsible for the design of coach education programs. According to these coaches, their learning resources also change over time and circumstances. Coach MA1 mentioned that his network of coaches expands all over the world by using the Internet as his source of knowledge; “I utilized the internet to get in touched with my connections all over the world. I also utilized the internet to get resources and information from books, magazines, vision and cd. Apart from that, I also attended coaching seminars whenever possible which are very enriching”. MA2 also mentioned that the IT helps in connecting worldwide, “The communications technology helps a lot in having working relationships. Just click and you get everything. You need a question answered, just go to the right person”. MA1 said; “I get books, magazines resources from my friend all over the world including video tapes, CD’s, etc.”

Coaches expressed how they can develop through formal and informal situations, and one informal way of learning is by observing the game either directly in the stadium or through live telecasts. Frequently, coaches mentioned that “the game is the best coach.” Coaches typically felt that the more they watch the game, the more they understand it and prepare their players. The coaches will watch the players and team playing but will also watch how the coaches behave during the match. They sometimes intentionally watch teams complete training sessions. As

coach AB2, showed, “The learning experiences I have had outside the formal learning has been more to do with watching good coaches and how they set up sessions, address the players and go about their business.” Coaches in this study had shown that they were ready to invest significant time and energy preparing themselves and their team for competition by watching vision and making an adaption to suit their players and team. Coach AB3 showed his passion and commitment to informal learning; “watching games on television, breaking it down and just reading other people’s stuff whether its book, comments, opinions, anything, talking but just watching.”.

This type of sentiment was also expressed by coach AB3, who stated; “I just try and learn off everybody. You’ve got to learn as much as you teach and there are different ways of learning like experts on forums”. Coach AB4 explained how he developed his football coaching knowledge by watching games on TV’, I would stop it, rewind it and that was my coach, my coach was the game, basically watching the game, taking notes.” Coach AA1, contemplated that, “The more games I have watched, the more I see, the more I see the behavior, the more I see things happening”. Coach AB2 also had the same opinion about the importance of learning by watching the vision, “Other coaches used to use a lot of vision analysis and would change the team to suit whomever they were playing. I think the video is a very useful tool when done in moderation”.

Coach MB3 had a similar experience, saying what he did came from when he was playing with the club that had their methods, whereas he has his system and skills saying that, “I gained my experience through observing, and I can rationalize after seeing it. That’s where I get my experience, and I am able to share it with my players now”. Coach MB4 recollected that normally if he goes to watch a match he

will look how the coach conducts the team. So from that, he will take the good things on how the coach of that team organized his players, how he talks, the way he dresses and everything else as he mentioned, “So from that I will take learn positive things, and look at the team who is playing, study a certain part, which I can use to develop my coaching career and the team that I’m coaching”. Coach MC1 recollected that other than learning from his coaches, he also learned from watching football especially during the World Cup, Euro Cup, and then the English Premier League. He said, “When I just watched, automatically I can see what the difference is between their league and our league. Why they are better than our players”.

Video and game observation is an essential component of self-development for coaches. The football coaches in Malaysia, involved in this research, suggested that when coaches have been exposed to matches with the coaches in action, especially the better and well-known coaches from high-quality teams, they are more likely to consider their coaching practice in a wider context. According to the Malaysian football coaches, learning by video and game observation is critical when combined with self-reflection and the more sources that a coach can employ to gain knowledge the more viewpoints can be considered for coaching development. The use of video and game observation in coaching sometimes encouraged coaches to exchange ideas with one another and pursue professional development goals.

Another prevalent theme was how coaches had engaged in trial and error techniques. In wanting to develop their style of coaching they have collectively tried many techniques that have often failed but they generally would remain unafraid to try new strategies and exercises, usually with the youth team, and reflect upon their outcomes. Such experimentation occurred in the context of already establishing a definitive organizational theme, in playing styles and had to be enjoyable for players.

Coach AA3 expressed this with his view; “We cannot learn in the course but through trial and error, that’s important and coaches only really find that out with trial and error experience. “ Similarly, coach AA4 mentioned that at different levels coaches need different styles of play and approach; “When I’m coaching my under 13 girls I have found out that everyone loves the positive re-enforcement, these I learn by doing it...trial and error”. Coach AA4 explained further; “As a coach you know the problem to fix, but you probably create a new task for the players to overcome, this can only be learned by doing it...by trial and error”.

The games, training sessions and tournament play are the embodiment of the coach’s skill, how they bring all the elements together and impart their plan to the team. Coach MA2 mentioned that he learned a lot about club coaching and youth coaching when he was appointed as a coach at the club level and youth level football. However, when he was subsequently appointed to coach at the national elite youth level, he learned something different from the club and youth level before, also by learning from the training sessions.

According to the coaches, the combination of all knowledge gathered from the coaching course and the playing experience of the coaches will provide the richness of the session conducted. Coach MA4 related the learning from squad session as a key competency of young and new coaches who are building their repertoire of coaching skills. According to coach MA4, the young and new coaches sometimes can be stuck during the training sessions because of their lack of experience meaning that they run out of ideas. Whereas, himself who is highly experienced from years of coaching, he expressed how never runs out of ideas. According to coach MA4, the young and new coaches need to have a good plan for every session to avoid becoming stuck in the middle of a training session. He mentioned, “If you are

not well prepared, you will feel lost in the session. You won't give whatever you intend to give, but if you plan your work you know what you want. That's what I learned from my years of conducting my squad sessions".

Many coaches believed that their playing experience provided the basic material for constructing professional coaching knowledge. In deciding what information to integrate into their developing coaching knowledge base, or what to reject, coaches often referred to their days as a player. They repeatedly explained their philosophy and actions regarding 'what I would have responded to as a player.' The players' perspective clearly remains foremost in the coaches' mind, of greater importance is how that knowledge is transmitted to players.

Coaches believe it is not necessary for coaches to have been excellent players, but there is an advantage if they were, at least, a decent player. For example, coach AC2 described; "for me, coaches who participated at higher levels and in more competitive pathways of football were more likely to exhibit higher levels of commitment to football and would pursue lifelong participation through coaching". Most of the coaches also mentioned that their playing experience will be even better with the knowledge they gained from the formal coaching course. Players would normally give them more respect if they had a high-profile playing career.

Coach AA3 reflected on his experience as a player and mentioning the importance of mixing the playing experience with the knowledge obtained in the coaching courses; "the playing experience is coupled with what we did not like as a player particularly." Coach AA3 believed that he can be an effective senior coach because of his experience playing senior football; "I have senior experience and trying to develop, the kid's technical ability from my senior playing experience, I have become very creative." Coach AB2 had a similar opinion "my playing experience has

probably led me to try and build a team from having a good defensive base". Coach MA2 outlined his approach, stated that; "I was playing in the league. We were not a very successful team, but that was where we got our structured training and game play that I am still using now". Coach MA1 had a similar approach as he said he relied on his ability to analyze the games of football and to select the most appropriate aspects to improve in the following practice sessions. This was because he had the advantage of playing experience because he was appointed as a coach while he was still playing the game. He mentioned; "When I played as a competitive soccer player, I was at the age of 15 until after my college days at the age of 26-27, and I use most of that experience in coaching now." Similarly, Coach MA3 apparently relies on his ability to put together experience and knowledge into his planning of the coaching sessions and to select the most appropriate aspects to improve in the following practice sessions based on his playing experience. Coach MA3 stated;

> As an ex-player, I have an insight already. I can foresee how it's going to happen and modify the training session to create a situation. Maybe others who do not have playing experience cannot foresee what would happen if they have not played.

Coach MC2 provided further balance and wisdom to this sub-topic by mentioning that, "There is a huge difference between playing experience and coaching even though they look similar." Coach MC2 emphasized that ex-players who want to become coaches need to be educated before becoming a coach as he mentioned, "Experience as a player is not similar to coaching. Therefore, ex-players need to educate themselves first before becoming a coach". According to coach MC4, being a player will bring advantages to a person if they subsequently become a coach.

According to him, those coaches with playing experience will have empathy with the players because those coaches have gone through the same situation as their players currently face. He summarized it as follows, “The most important point is there is an advantage if have good playing experience to be a good coach. We will have a better understanding of the player’s needs, such as understanding the routine of the players because we experienced the same”.

Non-formal.

Learning from foreign coaches and international experience is one of the most exciting and challenging aspects that coaches expressed in this study. Learning from foreign coaches and international experience has the potential to provide coaches with a fresh outlook and unique perspective on their coaching. Some coaches wished they had the opportunity to learn from their counterparts elsewhere in the world, especially from successful European countries. An “A” license coach had enjoyed short stint overseas particularly for the first time in [European country] where he obtained his UEFA “A” License coaching certificate. He constantly mentioned that he experienced a truly professional and high standard of football for youth and development in Italy something he could not get at home. He also enjoyed looking, listening and sharing what the coaches and coaches’ instructors were doing in [country deleted]. Furthermore, he was impressed by the facilities that had been offered by the FGB in [country deleted]. He felt appreciated by the football community and on one occasion been entertained by the star player personally while he was doing his coaching course. This coach also mentioned that he utilizes the networking he has with one of the coaches in [country deleted] and had a good time learning, observing and being involved with the club development program. The experience he had in these two European countries had given been a huge influence

in his coaching when he returned to Australia.

Another coach had initiated with the help the FFA, to spend some visiting [top European league club] and also a major European national team training center. In visiting in these two countries, he had a valuable conversation with a Youth Football Director and National Technical Director. He believed that what he obtained from these conversations and the observation of club facilities, football development program and football cultural has added to the richness of his knowledge, experience and qualifications. One of other “A” license coach was from an eastern European background, who migrated to Australia. According to him, football coaches in [area of Europe deleted] are required to obtain a sport science degree before they are allowed to obtain football coaching certificate. In reflection, this coach appreciated those requirements as a necessary preparation for coaching. For him, the players received higher quality coaching because of the in-depth sport science knowledge that coaches were able to provide.

Examining the different types of learning that football coaches have experienced included many aspects gained from both football and other life experiences. Collectively the coaches appreciated the experience and knowledge they had gained overseas. Coach AA1, explained; “I played overseas from 1992 to 1996 in the [country deleted] 3rd Division which was pro, from there I got scouted to go to a [country deleted] club, stayed there for 6 months, so I’ve been lucky enough to have an experience as a pro overseas”. Coach AA1 also highlighted the importance of the learning from foreign coaches and international experiences as pivotal to coach development. He regularly visited the [top European league team]. He also mentioned another international experience; “the first coaching course that I went to [country deleted], which is the Mecca of coaching in the world, it’s important

to learn from them."

Coach AA1; also make a comparison between what happens in Europe with what happens in Australia; "Even in Europe, in England, in the premier league... I have an opportunity to go there and talk to [Major European club], and I asked the youth academy coaches a lot of questions, and I love the working environment there". Coach AA3 considered that; "I find and build relationship overseas as regard a mentor with a lot more experience. It was wonderful just to see the difference styles and talk to people that have more experience, and it was fascinating". Coach AA4 learned from and was inspired by some of the most dominant figures in the world football. For example; "I met [well known European coach], very nice man, and he just says the right thing at the right time. I've taken a lot from him regarding player management, be personal with players and football philosophy". Coach AA4 described the second foreign coach who has inspired him "At present, I am interested in another [well known European coach] he was someone who I was like "wow", undoubtedly he is the most knowledgeable coach in the world". Finally, coach AA4 also described a third foreign coach who [well known European coach] had inspired him; "Listening to him, when he does an interview or watching his team playing, his philosophy". Coach AA4 also talked about how he wished he could spend six months with him saying that; "I think just to have a conversation with him, and just talk about football would be enough, just to understand how he does that's how I've extended my football knowledge."

The Malaysian coaches were also very interested in learning from foreign coaches and gaining international experience. These Malaysian coaches were optimistic about the possibility of foreign coaches and international experience representing a valuable learning opportunity by enabling them to convert these

experiences into their coaching environments. Coaches mentioned that the foreign coaches and international experience could be instrumental in helping to develop the many skills necessary for self-development, for example, decision-making, self-reflection, and critical thinking. Within this group of coaches, most had been fortunate enough to be able to gain experience from an international stint and foreign coaches. For example, Coach MA1 said; “I was in Germany for the UEFA license, during one of my research assignments. I was in [German city name deleted] and during that time I closely watched the German U19 national team training”. Coach MA2 also had a similar understanding of the benefits of learning from international coaches and having international experiences; “The FAM sent me to [name deleted] sports school, [country name deleted], and what I saw there made me feel better and I came back and took over the [name deleted] team after that”. Coach MA2 understood the benefits of learning from foreign coaches and gaining international experience from the broader cultural appreciation perspective after he was exposed to the German football culture and approach; “I visited a college for Physical Culture in [city name deleted] in Germany training center and I learned a lot.”

Coach MB1 acknowledged both the differences and similarities when he was learning from foreign coaches and when describing the international experience, he gained overseas, conveying his thoughts that, “I went to [European club]; I learned a lot of new things especially like coaching methods.” Learning from foreign coaches with international experience appeared to be appreciated by the coaches more than other sources of knowledge in this study, perhaps because of the chance to travel and enjoy foreign cultures.

Overall, foreign coaches and international experience are recognized as an important part of the sources of knowledge for football coaches. It is obvious that

coaches believe and want to see what their counterpart coaches are doing in other parts of the world. They appreciate the different coaching environments available overseas with more experience in a specific field, the technology used in football field work and they hope to learn from the situation. Most of the coaches, especially those at the beginning of their career, hope that many opportunities for learning from foreign coaches and gaining international experience will be available in coaching, and would like it to be formally implemented by the governing body of football as a new FAM coach education structure. The implementation of such opportunities in the FAM coaching framework would enable, in time, more support of coaches, allowing learning from foreign coaches and international experience and continuing professional development on a more formal basis.

Learning from others was a vital learning too for all the coaches interviewed. The perspectives on communities of practice that coaches discussed were interesting. These communities of practice ranged from informal to formal but are best described as semi-formal arrangements. Coaches seem to use the coach education courses as a forum for discussion and learning off each other in semi-formal networks. Coaching course also, for coaches to the forum to have their specific questions related to their players, answered, not necessarily by the course instructors, but by their fellow course mates. This could be viewed as, coaches developing their coaching network or community of practice, to benefit both: their learning and the performance of their players. This informal method of learning exemplifies how these coaches have developed their coaching knowledge as part of a knowledge-building community. This approach allows these coaches to construct knowledge appropriate to their particular coaching environment, making sense of their experiences in context.

These coaches also view learning from understanding both the structure of communities and how learning occurs within them. It reinforces the notion that knowledge is inseparable from practice. In the coaching context, it is not possible to know without doing. Coach MA2 had a similar opinion regarding learning from international networking, as he stated that as an AFC technical director, he can make a connection with a technical director of another country, and friendship starts from there, and they exchange information of course through that friendship. Coach MC3 had even stronger views concerning the influence of coaches networking to aid his knowledge acquisition and development. Coach MC3 stated that he is also learning by speaking and getting feedback, with the other coaches and sometimes even with the fans. According to coach MC3, “I use that information and feedback to help plan the next training session”.

According to all the coaches interviewed establishing networks and good rapport with other coaches is important. These networks can extend to people who can provide the coaches with knowledge, such as academics from a university and other sport stakeholders. Coaches discussed how they often extend their goodwill beyond their club to reach out to the wider society to create good public relations and knowledge exchange. There appeared to be distinct types of networks. One was among coaches who had played together formerly or even in opposition during their playing careers. Another network were coaches whom they met in coaching courses, among their club coaches and coaches from other clubs whom they play against. For example, Coach AC4;

> The experiences of doing, observing others and interaction among coaches is dominant in my learning process. My on-going interactions with other coaches in the football community, including ex-teammates and ex-opponents from

another club, ensure my ongoing development of knowledge and competencies.

Coaches AA1 explained how his social network had come from football by declaring; “from my social interaction with my mates that I played with. I still call friends that I played with overseas it shapes the way you are”. The different perspective learned from other coaches was another beneficial aspect; “some of them are coaching national teams, some at the “A” League, some from premier state leagues, and some of them are just helping. It is interesting to learn from different perspectives, and the groups have stayed in touch”. This learning through networking approach was also adopted by coach AA4 who considered, “I constantly speak to other coaches and find out their thoughts on certain things.”

Formal.

Formal football coaching courses provided learning situations where the teaching is curriculum-driven, and the learning recognized with grades or certifications. To complement certification programs, coaching organizations will often organize conferences or workshops that constitute ongoing professional development. Although coaches expressed some criticisms of their training they generally, appreciated their formal coaching courses. Some even mentioned that how they see football differently after the course or learned a lot regarding football organization. One coach, however, provided a counterpoint by mentioning that in the modern era, some sources of football knowledge are readily available on the internet, and perhaps course content needs to be rationalized in this context. Taking into account the coaches’ very personal and multi-dimensional view of coaching, it is not surprising they found official coach certification programs to be somewhat variable in quality and suitability. They considered that they gained useful information

from their accreditation programs, but were also exposed to information that was redundant.

Some of the coaches were specific about the coaching certificate courses regarding on their learning. One of the coaches that had gained his full FFA coaching badge some years ago (the previous highest coaching qualification in Australia) felt that the present system reinforces a robotic coach style and a robotic way of playing football. Some coaches were concerned that the FFA coaching certification course, is predicted on one system [Dutch style] of play, and essentially one style fits all philosophy and takes away variety and adaptability. What seems clear is that the coach certification, for some coaches, is too narrow regarding the style and capacity to transfer knowledge. Coaches' desire for ongoing high-quality coach education programs reflected their belief that the construction of their professional knowledge was largely their responsibility. They wanted to learn more about different coaching methods from abroad, although they emphasized that what they wanted was 'practical knowledge about how they do things elsewhere.' Many of these coaches, possess generic or academic coaching qualifications and did express a desire to discover more about coaching.

Coaches acknowledged that tertiary education could help them in their coaching career. Some coaches, for instance, had undertaken education courses in allied areas at University or a teacher training college. Coach MA2 is an example of a coach that commenced his certification from being a teacher; "Being a sports teacher, I started to be involved in soccer coaching, as a sports teacher and then because I wanted to get into sports specific at that time, so I took up a soccer coaching". Also, coach MA2 referred to the introduction of questioning and feedback that he experienced in higher education as being an essential part of his training that

he credits for improvements in his coaching. They also perceived that their professional developmental needed to extend not only to practical based information but reflect a theoretical basis. In this respect, coaching needs mirror those of practitioner type professions where ‘hands-on’ knowledge and theoretical growth are a constant interplay.

Regarding formal coach education courses, all of the coaches in this study appeared to share positive perspective of the “A” license, with Coach AA1, stating that, “the model here I think is fantastic honestly and I’m not saying that because I am a real supporter of the A License. I think it’s a great course”. Coach AA2 also thought that the formal coaching course in Australia is brilliant and for him, this formal coaching course constantly challenged the participants, within their vision of the game, style, and philosophy. Coach AA1, also highly recommended that other coaches take up the ‘A’ license coaching course; “it’s always underpinned by football knowledge, management competencies, technical competencies, and tactical competency.” Coach AA2 also praised the tertiary education he received from a university. For him, the educational background was very important in his development. Coach AA2 rated the coaching accreditation course highly because after the course he had a better understanding of many aspects, especially delivering the knowledge to players.

Some coaches were very frank in their self-assessments of the gaps in their learning and the benefit of course to fill these gaps. The coaching courses can provide a circuit breaker and better ones of awareness or ‘reality check’ for particular coaches. Coach MC1 for instance only realised that the coaching he had carried out was poor when he started to understand the principles of coaching during the first course he attended. “In the formal coaching course, I’ve learned many things. I also

have seen many coaches doing their coaching; they can add to my knowledge to improve my coaching style". Coach AC3 highlighted the benefits of formal accreditation in helping his development compared to simply relying on his playing experience. He mentioned how his football knowledge gained through playing was very limited and stressed that without completing his "A", "B" and "C" licenses, he would have been diminished as a coach; "Absolutely, everything I took from my "C" license and my "B" License and my "A" license are what I can actually draw upon, there will be nothing I can draw upon, from previous experience in my playing days".

Other aspects of formal learning were considered helpful by some coaches, with Coach AB2 reflecting that; "I have had fantastic experiences in the formally accredited coaches, each time I have attended the FFA/AFC courses, I have come away with a greater understanding of what it means to be a coach." Coach AB2 also considered that his journey as a coach has coincided with his attendance at the coaching courses conducted by the FFA; "Each time I have attended the courses, I have gained a lot of theoretical and practical knowledge that I have introduced into my coaching. It's the best possible chance of improving... opened my mind".

Coach education courses were considered to be important and relevant to these coaches at their particular stage of development. One of the coaches (AB3) who was also involved in coach education, as well as coaching, emphasized this point; "To get those qualifications obviously, you have to implement the national curriculum and understand it and apply it." Coach AB3 later said that accreditation is important but does not guarantee good coaching automatically. "The accreditation is important because you have to meet some basic standard. It's important, but it's not everything. I can have the certificate on the wall, but it doesn't make me a good coach". Initially, provision of coach education courses had met most of their coaching

needs, especially expanding their knowledge in sport-specific areas of drills and techniques. These coaches who had attended a coach education course recently discussed how they also have been exposed to the management aspects of football especially those who has attended the “B” and “A” license courses. Coach (AB1) declared; “They teach you theoretical, tactical, and technical, skill acquisition, drills and the other. But we’re not dealing with robots; we are dealing with human beings that respond differently”.

Coaches also look forward to attending their local coaching conference to gain new information and knowledge, as well as sharing their common experiences. This annual coaching conference represented a network building opportunity because time was provided freely to communicate with other coaches and develop wider networking locally and interstate. Coaches use this networking to exchange source of knowledge, for example, the introduction of a new coaching website, football coaching blog, books, and magazine and even arranging a pre- season friendly match. Conferences and professional development opportunities also allowed coaches to share periodically ideas and learn from respected experts. Coaches emphasized the importance of upgrading their skills through a continuous improvement and knowledge cycle. This general sentiment was expressed neatly by one coach who believed that the club and national football association needs skillful and knowledgeable coaches who are competent in solving problems and making decisions.

Learning was facilitated in formal courses when the instructors were perceived to be competent and expert. Coach MA2 thought that, “it is very important, because during your talks you look more professional and knowledgeable, it gives you better tips for your players, and they look upon you better”. Coach MA3 considered that

much of the impact of the course was dependent on the person who delivered the course, the coach educator. He also mentioned that; “Initially, when I started, I have zero knowledge, and then I attended my “C” license, after the 1989 AFC “C” license. After the “C” license I think I learned so many things, something new, things that I didn’t know before”. Some of the more experienced coaches had moved to the stage of assisting others in the learning as instructors themselves. All four Malaysian A license coaches (MA1, MA2, MA3, and MA4) were concurrently involved in the delivery of coach education.

Football coaches in both Australia and Malaysia, although sometimes critical of particular aspects of the accreditation system were mindful of the valuable learning and development that formal training had provided. The coaches seemed to use coach education courses to gain knowledge and as a forum for discussion, to have specific questions relating to players they coach, although not necessarily by the coach educators. Apart from the direct learning from instructor’s coaches also develop their coach networks when attending courses, and this provides an ongoing source of learning.

Learning Mediators

It was evident that the learning experience was mediated through reflective thinking, preferences for learning styles or communication styles. Whether this was inherent or learned through experience or particular training was not clarified. For coach AC2 the importance of communication was evident; “I need to develop, we can always develop on communication, how you deliver the message I think I do it quite well, but I think one can always improve the delivery of the message.” I don’t know how to do it properly. So I need to know it properly before I do it. Coaches identified a key ingredient of effective coaching was personal style. Although

coaches openly accepted the importance of learning from watching others, they were also at pains to emphasize that successful, coaches weave this knowledge into a personal style. Indeed, they feel that their greatest mistakes in coaching occurred when they tried to be too much like someone else.

Conditional Matrix

During the present research, conditional parameters were discussed with my principal supervisor and later conceptualized schematically. The resultant conditional matrix was informed by four inner ring questions that coach inevitably consider from time to time.

The conditional matrix is a set of concentric circles, each level corresponding to a different unit of influence. At the center are actions and interactions. The inner rings represent individualand small group influences on these actions, and the outer rings represent international and national effects (Strauss & Corbin, 1994).

Fundamental questions for all coaches to consider include the following. Why do I coach? Who will I coach? When do I coach? How do I coach? The conditional matrix was also informed by four outer ring factors. First, external or non-football related influences; second, coaching philosophy and; third, and local conditions and fourth, national and international conditions. The conditional matrix was important in helping to situate the current research specific to the development of accredited football coaches within a broader coaching landscape. The conditional matrix is inserted as a miniature embedded figure in the development model (see Figure 4).

Model Development

The model presented here has undergone some iterations and is best described as an evolving model in keeping with the principles of evolved grounded theory. As discussed at the commencement of this chapter there is a chronological

theme in the model presented to denote how coaches develop over time and in stages. This approach is consistent with the recommendation of Gilbert, et al. (2006) who recommend a life span perspective because of the importance of accounting for past experiences in coach development. The emergent model was titled Accredited Football Coach Development Model (AFCDM) (see Figure 4.1). The first of four core themes extracted from the research are titled Pre-Coaching Experience (denoted by a large yellow slanted box) is comprised of four underlying common themes; People, Personal, Context, and Culture. The participants consistently talked about how their football related experiences before they started coaching were significant in how they later went about their coaching. Coaches also discussed how at some point they made the decision to commence coaching. This is denoted in the model as a decision or 'tipping point' to start coaching (denoted by a blue diamond shape).

All coaches in the current study had made a decision to complete formal accreditation. Before making that decision, they are represented in the model as in the pre-accreditation stage irrespective of the period before they commenced their first football accreditation (i.e., 'C' license). This pre-accreditation stage (denoted by a green diamond shape) represents a mediated decision; *that is will I or won't I become accredited?* The current research showed that the decision to become accredited and at what level continued to mediate their coach development. Consequently, the three accreditation levels (i.e., 'C' license, 'B' license and 'A' license) are denoted in the model by green diamond shapes because they were mediated decisions that interacted with their continuous development as a football coach during and after these formal training experiences.

Three further core themes extracted from the data analysis that encapsulates the spectrum of development themes that these football coaches discussed are

presented. The core theme of characteristics (denoted by a large yellow slanted box) comprised four selected common themes; personality/traits, cognitive style, current skill set and facilitators that link to each coach. The core theme of learning (denoted by a large slanted yellow box) comprised three selected common themes; informal, semi-formal and formal. This resultant learning is experienced by coaches through mediators (denoted by a green hexagonal shape). Finally, the core theme of challenges (denoted by a large slanted yellow box) comprised six selected common themes; personal, people, systemic, contextual, perceived skills and balance. A range of reasons and likely, challenges, in particular, depending on whether they are resolved or unresolved may influence the coach to stop coaching (denoted by a blue diamond).

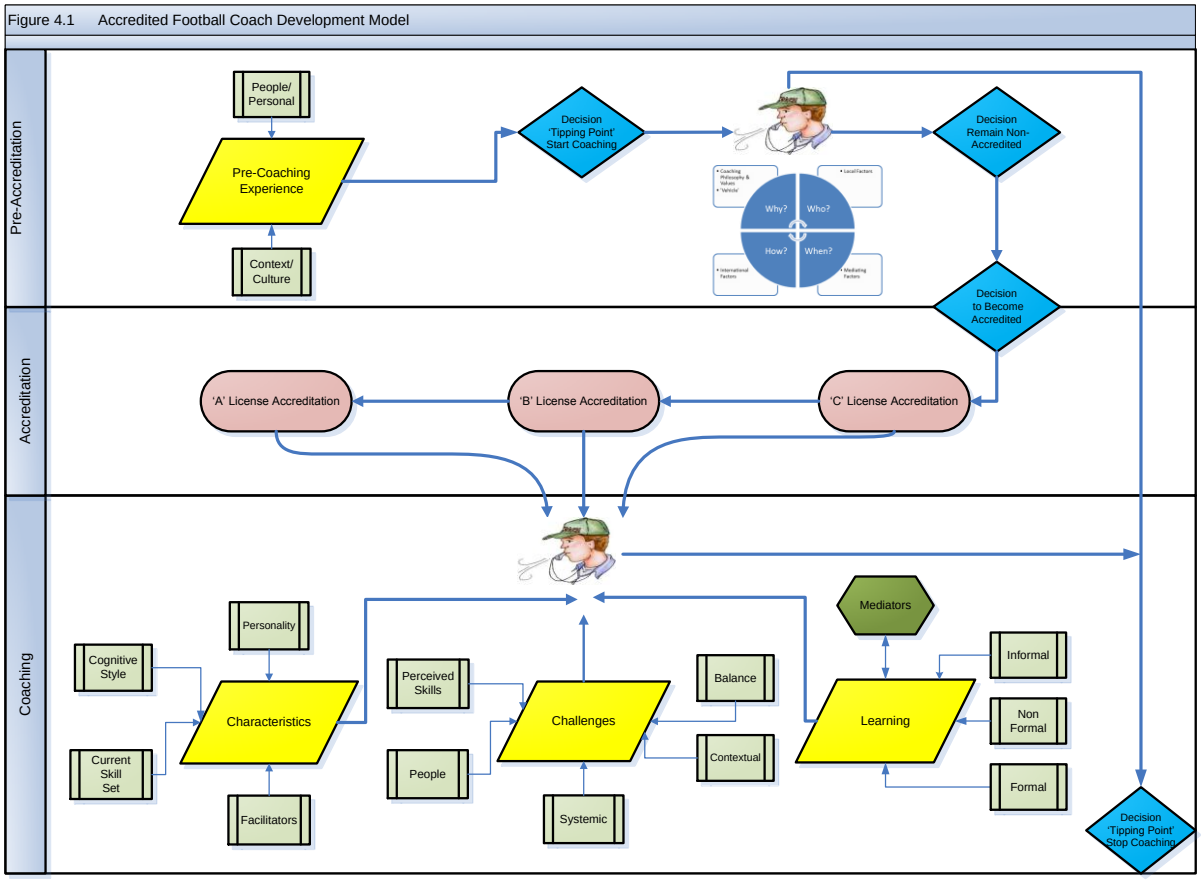

Figure 4 Australian Football Coaches Development Stage Model (see also enlarged electronic pdf file)

Similarities and differences in the development of Australian and Malaysian coaches

One of the specific aims of the current research was to examine both similarities and differences in accredited Australian and Malaysian coaches about their development. As discussed earlier in this chapter it became evident through data collection and analysis that the perspectives regarding coach development from Australian and Malaysian coaches were overall very similar. The original expectation was that two cultural specific versions of the same model would likely be developed specific to accredited football coaches in Australia and Malaysia. Because of the overwhelming similarities in coaching themes only one model eventuated (see Figure 4.1). Nevertheless, there were some differences that did emerge between the development of coaches in Australia and Malaysia that although not justifying separate models require explanation. This section is focused on presenting and the most prominent of these differences.

The first culturally derived difference evident from the data is likely related to broader societal trends and attitudes seem to infuse into how coaches interpreted their development. That is, coaches in Australia prefer their development to be horizontally structured and based on the context in which they are involved rather than dictated by their certification level. Some Australian coaches expressed a sentiment of egalitarianism by indicated that they believed regardless of their accreditation level of coaching either at grassroots, or senior levels were equal. This trend was evident with Australia coaches expressing the view that irrespective of whether they are qualified with a “C”, “B” or “A” license they are equal. This often means that coaches in Australia are ready and willing to coach at the grassroots

level even if they have an “A” license qualification. In Australia, instead of the old method that was based on a vertical approach, coaches can nowadays enter at the level appropriate to the age group they will be coaching, using a horizontal approach (FFA, 2013).

Conversely, for Malaysian coaches their stages of development following the hierarchical or vertical certification system as constructed by and offered by FAM. Unlike their counterpart coaches in Australia, most coaches in Malaysia have been conditioned in the football coaching certification tradition whereby they adopt a hierarchical command and control mentality regarding the certification system. In contrast to the Australian coaches the Malaysian football coaches collectively subscribed to hierarchical thinking. Hierarchy is defined as “any system of persons or things ranked one above the other”. Hence, it is not difficult to see that hierarchical thinking is akin to seeing the world through a system of domination or importance.

A second noticeable difference between coaches in both cultures related to the reality that Malaysian does not have their football curriculum and adopt the AFC European certification system curriculum (Gopalkrishnan, personal communication, May 7th, 2013). In contrast, Australia coaches are certified through the National Football Curriculum developed and tailored according to Australian football culture and needs. Amongst the AFC affiliate countries, only Japan and Australia have been approved to offer their football accreditation curriculum.

The third point of difference when comparing development themes for the Australian and Malaysian level of adoption of information and communication

technology (ICT) in football. According to the coaches in this study, Australian coaches are at the forefront in using ICT. For example, Coach AA1 stated;

> While ICT is an essential element of modern coaching, there are now many more services and resources available to support the coach. At the elite level, there is physiological testing, biomechanical analysis, performance analysis and a whole range of ICT that can be strapped on, attached to, or integrated into the athlete or their equipment.

Coach AA1 also mentioned that “much of this technology is now becoming available to all coaches. We’re talking heart rate monitors, GPS tracking devices, power, and other physical output recorders, video cameras, technical and game analysis software, and the list goes on”. Those coaches who are already employing some of these new ICT devices use them to provide additional information to enhance their coaching. They integrate the ICT into their planning of training and preparation for competition.

Furthermore, Coach AA4 discussed the usage of ICT as follows, “sharing our experiences using ICT can expand our knowledge base in football.” For these coaches, the state or territory institute or academy of sport should assist them and can provide opportunities to share best practice. Also, these coaches feel the need to be on the same plane as players who are very advanced in ICT intricacies. For example, Coach AB2 mentioned that “the coaches, especially the older ones, have to make an effort to familiarize themselves with ICT as ICT can be very useful for them to prosper as a coach.” Coach AA1 mentioned that “coaches use ICT to be in touch with their players, clubs and also in relation with FFA / FFV.” Also, Coach AB3 noted that “I have to adapt to ICT skills to get the latest information on football

around the world." The uptake and centrality of ICT, however, although highlighted by coaches in Australia does not appear to be a major adaptability aspect for Malaysian coaches. The reasons are not clearly stated but almost all the coaches in Malaysia spoke little about the importance or usage of ICT skills in their daily life as a coach. The coaches stated that coaching was traditionally (and still is) the art of knowing the athlete and applying years of tried and tested knowledge and experience of the sport to assist them to achieve their goals in football.

A fourth difference was the challenge for coaches in Malaysia that occur because of what they refer to as "match fixing". This particular challenge was reported by the coaches across a range of levels. Coach [coach code deleted] for example, mentioned that "the match-fixing 'disease' is currently widespread in Malaysia. The effort by the football governing body worth millions of ringgit will not reach its objective because of the match fixing activity". The Malaysian coaches believe this corruption element detracts from their development as a coach. Coach {coach code deleted) later added that only education of the younger generation of players can be used to overcome this challenge.

A fifth difference that was more or less expected were sub-themes that were culturally based. For example, According to the coaches in Australia, football is considered as number four sport as compared to footy (Australian football), cricket or rugby and it always relates to the ethnic minority sport. Consequently, coaches believed that it is football gets minimal coverage in the daily newspapers compared to these other sports. For example, Coach AA1 mentioned, "there is a disadvantage in that there will be less air time coverage for football as compared to the longer air time coverage for other games in the same season." This cultural disadvantage in

media coverage, according to the Australian coaches, is a challenge for many reasons. One of the reasons for example as Coach AB1 noted is that it is “difficult to have the best talent to play football as the younger generation will choose other sports than football because the popularity is low.” That is, according to these coaches, the pool of talent at the grassroots, youth, and development level seems to be very small compared to other more popular sports. Another challenge relating to the cultural aspect in Australia is that in Australia football coaches are paid less compared to the same job for other sports because there is little available money and sponsorship opportunities are not common football because of the reduced media coverage. These same issues were not evident for Malaysian coaches where football occupies a more prominent position with the public and media.

A different cultural difference specific to Malaysian coaches is embodied within the football community in Malaysia is centralized around the leader in the team or club. According to Coach MA1, “in Malaysia, nepotism ...favoritism ...racism...politicians …. are the challenges that obstruct progress in Malaysia”. He elaborated that, “when dealing with the young players we want to expose them to football and let them learn, and we do not give importance to results. The politicians in the club or FA say results are important”. Culturally in Malaysia, according to this coach, the football association is led by the high ranking politicians. The politicians are interested in short term results, whereas youth development is a long-term process. According to one Malaysian coach paradoxically, clubs or management that give the minimum facilities expect the maximum result.

In essence, at least, some of the differences between the Australian and Malaysian football coaches in this study may reflect their cultural background and

experiences that, in turn, could have direct implications for the content of effective football coaching training programs in both countries.

Conclusion

Broadly the Australian and Malaysian coaches are very similar regarding development themes, especially regarding their forms of learning. It was again evident that the challenges of coaching and specific requirements for coaches are different at the level of coaching more so than culturally specific. Nevertheless, the egalitarian thinking of Australian coaches and hierarchical thinking of Malaysian coaches was clearly evident.

From a knowledge transfer and training perspective providers of formal coach education courses might look to incorporate these findings into the structure of coach education. The noted differences in preferred sources of learning between coaches at the developmental level compared to those at the elite level of competition provides support for contextually differentiated systems e.g. “A” license for the youth coach as well as an “A” for the senior level. To account for the preference of coaches for learning from their mentor coach, efforts could be made to provide more formal guidance by more intentionally incorporating mentoring of early career coaches into courses including the appropriate training and guidance of the mentors themselves in their role. Furthermore, researchers might need to examine the efficacy and effectiveness of coach training in delivering the type of training required to support the stage development of coaches. Finally, in considering the informative and potentially useful trends that have emerged from this study, one must be careful not to overlook the idiosyncratic nature of coach development and flexibility of training options required.

CHAPTER 5

GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

This final chapter consists of an introduction, study limitations, general discussion, conclusions and finally recommendations. I reiterate that the overarching research question for the present study was; how do Australian and Malaysian football coaches understand their development needs at different levels of coaching? The most salient points that emerged from this study are summarized and discussed in reference to the study aims. The results of the study culminated in the emergence of four distinct coach development core themes that were underpinned by 15 common core categories. These core themes are central to the resultant understanding of how Australian and Malaysian football coaches understand and articulate their development at their respective levels. This was reflected in the specific study aims 1.1 and 1.2 to identify and describe key development themes of Australian and Malaysian football coaches based on three distinct levels of formal coaching accreditation (i.e., “A,” “B”, and “C” licenses). I am pleased to report that both these aims were successfully achieved.

Evolved Grounded Theory was intentionally employed to answer the research question, purposes and aims by facilitating the development of a football coach development model. Consequently, and possibly the most substantial outcome was the establishment of the Accredited Football Coach Development Model (AFCDM). The AFCDM essentially integrates the key development sequence and influences from the pre-coaching experience, and through the journey of formal accreditation and beyond. Within the AFCDM, the formal accreditation license levels are

represented as mediators of the three central core themes of coach development; characteristics, challenges, and learning. As a result, aim 1.3 to construct a model to describe the key development themes of formally accredited Australian and Malaysian football coaches was also successfully achieved. The current research project has resulted in new knowledge about important development themes and how these work for all accredited football coaches across a wide range of levels and experiences. Based on the high number of coaches accredited in the popular international sport of football coaches, coach educators and governing bodies should find the model helpful in guiding coach development support. Also, evolved grounded theory proved to be a useful methodology in developing the chapter ends with some concluding remarks and reflections on the outcomes of this thesis.

Closely linked to the AFCDM was the aim 1.4 to identify the key similarities and differences in accredited Australian and Malaysian football coaches from a cross-cultural perspective. The similarities of development themes were readily evident between the cohort of Australian and a similar number of Malaysian coaches. These similarities are described in detail throughout the study (see chapter 4). To fully address aim 1.4, I have also included a relatively brief overview of the key thematic differences in how Australian and Malaysian coaches develop.

Limitations

One of the limitations that possibly affected the study was the language barrier of the Malaysian participants. The majority of the Malaysian participants were not entirely fluent in spoken English. As a result, this sometimes limited their ability to elaborate fully further their ideas to me during interviews. The answers from the Malaysian coaches were shorter in duration than the majority of coaches in Australia.

As a result, I was somewhat suspicious that the Malaysian data was not as rich or expansive as the Australian coaches' interview data.

Another limitation was the focus entirely on the accredited football coaches. It was beyond the scope of the thesis to include non-accredited football coaches. Nevertheless, there are a large number of these coaches who have not received formal training, and their development processes are very important to understand. There is the possibility of a future study to compare non-accredited football coach development with the results of the current study. Also, a related limitation is the implied selection of 'A', 'B' and 'C' license coaches in this study as representing distinct development stages. There is substantial literature available to demonstrate that coach develops in a non-linear manner, and an 'A' license coach may not necessarily be more developed in some areas that a 'C' license coach. Despite this limitation, discretely different levels of coach accreditation were intentionally recruited as one method of sampling coaches of different levels of training and experience. In the same manner coaches from two countries were recruited to enable cross-cultural comparisons and the extent to which football coach development needs vary culturally. Whether the findings of the current study are relevant for football coaches in other countries and coaches in other sports cannot be confirmed at present.

I also found that the level of exposure and experience of all participants varied. Although this was not surprising the more experienced and highly qualified coaches were often much more expansive in their answer and suggestions. This trend was also reflected in the length of the interviews and hence, the transcribed data. For example, the majority of A license coaches were able to explain in details

with less direction or clarifications needed the questions that were being asked. Although this may be another possible limitation, the voice of the ‘A’ license coaches and also ‘B’ license coaches to a degree tended to dominate the findings of the study.

I admit that I faced difficulties to reach the required standard of English needed to write the thesis was a further limitation. I worked very closely, however, with my Principal Supervisor to overcome this difficulty. For example, in related to conducting this study using the EGT approach. My initial attempts were not very satisfactory. To resolve this limitation, I kept working closely with my principal supervisor who provided ideas to assist in developing and presenting AFCD model. Also, I found it difficult to express fully my ideas throughout the writing process of the thesis. To resolve this limitation, I received invaluable assistance from a professional proof reader.

General Discussion and Conclusions

Some coaching science experts have highlighted the need to provide descriptions and models of coaching development processes. For example, Gilbert, Côté & Mallet (2006) express the view that global expansion of coaching science in recently has established the need for a systematic description coach development. Furthermore, although Abraham & Collins (1998) called for greater efforts critically examine coach development surprisingly few overarching or holistic models of coach development have been developed in the intervening period. Nevertheless, sport coaching researchers have investigated characteristics that span the development from novice to elite sport coaches (e.g., Erickson, et al. 2007; Gilbert & Côté, 2003; Griffey, 1994; Nash & Sproule, 2009; Rutt-Leas, 1993; Schinke, et al. (1995)

Stephenson & Jowett, 2009 and Wiman, Salmon & Hall, 2010). Although a novice, community, and sub-elite coaches are afforded some attention in the literature, the focus of the bulk of the sport coaching development literature is on the development of high-performance coaches. Although this is not necessarily surprising arguably coaching science researchers should focus more intentionally on sub-elite coaches who comprise the large bulk of the coaching population. Dawson, Dioth and Gastin (2016) aptly expressed this lack of balance in the coaching development research by stating that “despite the advances in career development for athletes, there has been very little scholarly attention, nor resources provided for coach career development” (p. 1). The present study had multiple purposes and aims not the least being to develop a coaching model applicable to coaches across a broad spectrum of coaching activities.

The current study was designed to examine coach development themes in the high profile-high participation sport of football also referred to as ‘the world game’. In the present study clearly differentiated accreditation levels were used to understand football coaches using evolved grounded theory (EGT) in the Australian and Malaysian cultural contexts. The findings that emerged from data collected from 24 accredited football coaches have been deconstructed and reconstructed into an explanatory grounded model; the Accredited Football Coach Development Model (AFCDM). Consequently, the development of the AFCDM goes some way to responding to the perceived need to better describe coach development (Gilbert, et al. 2006). Four core themes; pre-coaching experiences, characteristics, challenges, and learning were eventually selected to encapsulate the data. The first core theme pre-coaching experiences was representative of two sub-themes names,

people/personal and context/culture. The second core theme characteristics were representative of four sub-themes namely; personality, skill set, cognitive style, and facilitators. The third core theme challenges was representative of five sub-themes namely; perceived skills, people, systemic, contextual and balance. The fourth core theme learning was representative of four sub-themes, namely informal, non-formal, formal and mediators.

The relevant literature confirms that the four core themes identified in the current research are consistent with the published findings of contemporary coach development literature. For example, elements of the theme titled characteristic in the present research was a reflection of the elements of the theme titled coach abilities in research by Becker (2009) that focused on great coaching. This similarity extended to the parallel finding that personality characteristics are highly relevant to both coach development and great coaching. Furthermore, regarding the perceived roles of coaches in the Becker study athletes viewed coaches as teachers, mentors, and friends. In the current research, football coaches also talked extensively about the importance of coaches as teachers and mentors in the both the characteristics core category and the pre-coaching core category. The relevance of mentors and other coaches is a consistent theme in coach development literature. Mallet, Rossi & Tinning (2008) conducted in-depth interviews with 15 senior and assistant Australian Football League (AFL) coaches. The type of learning development that these AFL coaches are engaged in was in close accord with the learning development that football coaches in the present research engaged in. Although formal courses and book learning were relevant from football coaches in the two football codes to different degrees, people related learning was heavily featured including; Informal

knowledge networks and functional communities of practice.

The importance of relevant pre-coaching experiences was thematically evident for coaches in the present study. Taken together, these experiences help to provide possible reference points that inexperienced coaches especially tap into such as past playing experiences and the behaviors, attitudes and behaviors of former coaches. Gilbert et al. (2006) established that the pre-coaching experiences amount to many hours of time. They reported that 13 years including several thousand of time was the minimum pre-coaching experience in sport reported retrospectively by coaches. The large proportion of the 24 coaches that participated in the current study also had reported having a long history of football participation before commencing coaching and collectively articulated the benefits regarding their development and expertise. Without attempting in the present study to compare the development phases such as Erickson, et al. (2007) have done previously the data from the current research is consistent with the give stages of development experiences that Erikson and colleagues have described. Apart from the ‘diversified early sport participation’ stage the other four stages namely; competitive sport participation. Highly competitive sport participation/introduction to coaching, part-time early coaching and high-performance head coaching were all common development stages for the participants in the current study. The ‘tipping point’ decision into coaching for the current coaches was mostly in the late teenage years or toward the end of their playing career for former high-performance players. This ‘tipping point’ into coaching was considerably broader in the current study that reported by Erikson et al. who interviewed a similar size cohort (i.e., 19 high-performance coaches).

Regarding the challenges that coaches face the importance of delineating these

challenges especially in particular circumstances is presumably important. Without a clearly outlined description of the many challenges that coaches face it is difficult to conceive of how they interrelate or how they can be resolved. The relevance of coaching challenges to coach development is underscored by polar opposite possibilities that coaching challenges present to the coach from a developmental perspective. Unresolved challenges may increase the likelihood that coaches will discontinue coaching while resolved challenges may maintain or increase the likelihood that coaches will continue. Although the current research was mainly focused on delineating coaching challenges the resultant schematic flow chart inevitably needed to consider the beginnings and endings of the development journey for coaches. The transition into football coaching was delineated through the range of reasons why coaches made their initial decision to start coaching. Conversely, the decision to discontinue coaching was not explored in the present research and hence connections between the selected common and core codes would be speculative.

Following the theme of challenges, the range of challenges that participants discussed in the present research was consistent with contemporary coach development research with coaches in parallel sports. For example, Dawson, Dioth and Gastin (2016) have recently shown that coaching challenges (termed ‘obstacles’) such as limited opportunities, financial implications of coaching and work-life balance and lack of institutional support for coaches were prevailing sub-themes. The findings of the current research as demonstrated in chapter also link these coaching challenges as a threat to ongoing development. Similarly, the relevance of facilitators, that is, factors that have a motivating effect is explained and

included in the current research and the in the work of Dawson et al. (2016).

The AFCDM is relatively complex compared to early coaching models (e.g., Côté, et al. 1995). However, the intervening 20 years have produced a considerable amount of evidence-based research to explain the complexities of coach development. For example, Turner, Nelson, and Potrac (20012) have suggested recently that the existing [development] approaches have paid little attention the complexities of coaching such as contextual contingencies and dependencies (Clancey, 2006). In accordance with these documented complexities, the AFCDM contains an almost infinite set of connecting contextual propositions that potentially link the four core themes with the 15 common code themes for instance. The aim of the current research was to delineate the model rather than explore the complexities of coach development, however.

Importantly regarding verification, the findings of the current research reflected closely the findings reported by Stephenson and Jowett (2009). The asserted importance is tied to the similarity in the cohort of accredited football coaches. Stephenson and Jowett reported on the key development themes found to be relevant for 13 accredited football coaches with a similar range of qualifications albeit with a greater proportion of less experienced coaches that the present study. The four major development themes that Stephenson and Jowett postulated as influencing the development of football coaches were formal learning situations; social learning; internal learning and external feedback. These themes are all reflected in the AFCDM with the possible exception of external feedback which was evident only at the open coding level.

All coaches in the current study were continually looking for ways to improve and

develop. It was not surprising that this cohort of football coaches valued formal education because they all had a minimum of a ‘C’ license. Their attitudes to formal coaching education were consistent with previous research where both positive and negative aspects of the training were expressed. Inexperienced coaches can and should improve their abilities through education. This step is important because all the coaches in this study began their initial coaching without certification or licensure. Ideally, qualified coaches to ensure quality and consistency should coach all players at the participation stages. Coaches should also be encouraged to upgrade their knowledge using informal learning and not relying solely on formal accreditation courses which although extremely useful for most coaches do not necessarily equate directly to coaching expertise in a vertical or lock-step manner. For example, this research confirmed that football coaches at all stages learn through a range of methods including attending coaching conferences seminars, reviewing match vision, networking, observing other coaches and mentoring. It was also confirmed that although coaches appreciated their formal coaching education experiences they also considered their informal networks to be of immense benefit in their developmental pathway, mentoring and observing other coaches also played an important role. The importance of informal learning such as networking and learning from mentors was underlined in the current research and is consistent with previous research (e.g., Nash & Sproule, 2009). Furthermore, accumulated experience and accumulating long hours of engagement in football were highly relevant in the development of accredited football coaches in the current study and recent evidence (e.g., Nash & Sproule, 2009).

According to the coaches in this study, the expertise of coaching is dependent

on the coaching context. They might be coaching in the participating and development stages, but they can also be considered an expert within that domain. The expert should not necessarily be restricted to those coaching national or A-league teams. This fits well with the egalitarian mentality of Australia coaches and reflects an international trend toward recognition of expertise as occurring horizontally rather than vertically with just so called elite professional level coaches being considered as the experts.

One key difference reported was that Australian and Malaysian coaches are different in respect to their view of governing authority and equality in coaching. Australian coaches are more bounded by a spirit of egalitarian in their perspectives; whereas Malaysian coaches are bounded by a sense of respect for authority in their perspectives. Perhaps the spirit of egalitarianism in the Australian sample echoes the broader society trend and historical context. According to the Australian Egalitarian Movement (AEM, 2013), egalitarianism means equality between all members of a social group or society. According to Gittins (2013), the spirit and tradition of egalitarianism are a source of pride for Australians. Australians identify with the adage that “Jack is as good as his master,” where first names and nicknames are commonly used, and men frequently address each other as ‘mate’ rather than the more formal and hierarchical ‘Sir.' Gittins argued that while many countries celebrate the ideal of human equality, none has it so culturally ingrained as Australia. Fraser (2005) relates egalitarian with an attitude of a refusal to accept being inferior. In sport, according to Fraser, many Australians have taken the difficult option of trying to prove and improve themselves. As a consequence of their attitude, Australia has achieved exceptionally high per capita achievements in sport.

Most likely egalitarianism in the Australian way of life has also influenced the football coaches involved in this study as egalitarianism also occurs in and has benefited sports. According to Tonts and Atherley (2005) in both team and individual sports, Australia is arguably the world's most successful sporting nation. Per capita, Australia has won more Olympic gold medals than all nations with populations above 5 million people. In team sports such as rugby union, netball, rugby league and cricket, Australia is one of the world's leading nations despite drawing its talent from a very small population that collectively play a huge range of sports. According to Howard (2001), one of the secrets to Australia's success is a reluctance of individuals to defer to people who appear to be superior in ability. Instead of accepting their inferiority when confronted by someone of apparently superior ability, the individual Australian will usually respond by training harder with the intention of giving a good contest. Goldschmied (2007) pointed out that Australian fans usually support the underdog. This further encourages the underdogs on the field to believe in themselves and not accept inferiority. Individuals who play Australian sport are indoctrinated into a culture that demands people to pull themselves up if knocked down. It also demands that they never be content with inferiority.

Historically, Malaysians, have been strongly influenced by British traditions, and it is thought that hierarchical thinking is most likely linked to those traditions. The effect of the long colonial relationship that emerged between Malaysia and Britain had continued indirectly in modern times when after independence the football governing body of Malaysia continued to refer to British football to develop the sport in Malaysia. The football coaching syllabus is heavily influenced by British football. Malaysian football coach education syllabus initiated by an Englishman, who had the

task of introducing a new coaching syllabus for the FAM coach education that formally had preliminary, intermediate and advanced level courses (Gopalkrishnan, personal communication, May 7th, 2013).

Krishnan pointed out that the syllabus was based on the British style and modules with improvements on the then existing syllabus. The “A”, “B” and “C” coaching certification course that was initially introduced by FAM, was later taken also adopted by the AFC. The syllabus of the FAM coaching certification course is standardized throughout Asia but not in Australia and Japan (Chon, personal communication, May 12th, 2013). Regarding coach education and training, coaches in Malaysia are heavily exposed to the European football system and mentality in general and British football in particular (Subramanian, personal communication, may 17th 2013). Hence, the European thinking and approach that has influenced Malaysian coaches follows what has been described by Eichberg (2008) as the pyramid - a monopolistic model and later explained that the pyramid structure is the essence of the European Sports Model and a legacy of European sports history. The pyramid is formed with the elite professional football at the top and an infinitely greater number of amateur clubs and volunteers at the base. The pyramid is thought of as a picture of bureaucratic and political control. The description of sports as a pyramid follows along the single sports disciplines, thus, confounds different levels of social activity: competition, self-organisation, qualification, amateur /professional status, bureaucratic control, and political representation. The hierarchical thinking of the football structure in Malaysia among the coaches involved in this study was reflective of the pyramid approach (Gopalkrishnan, personal communication, May 7th, 2013). Malaysian hierarchical thinking is shaped by the long history of the British

influence, and this extends to the development of the Malaysian football coaching certification system (Gopalkrishnan, personal communication, May 7th, 2013).

In conclusion, all the general aim and specific aims of this study have been achieved. The Accredited Football Coach Development Model (AFCDM) that emerged from the data collected from the participants of this research has been depicted with a flow chart schematic diagram. The AFCDM delineates the chronological development journey of accredited football coaches in Australia and Malaysia. Furthermore, the findings fit neatly with the accumulated body of coach development knowledge.

Recommendations

There is an apparent need for the football governing bodies to better meet the needs of coaches especially at the participation and development stages as most coaches at this early point of their coaching are looking for recognition and validation of their role as a coach. For football coaching to develop and become established as a profession, challenges need to be tackled proactively. Many of these challenges appeared to be within the organizational structures of football. Accredited football coaches would like more recognition for their contribution and provided with specific educational opportunities that meet the needs of coaches at their development level. This recognition is needed as a counterbalance because most of the coaches were keen to progress but also somewhat stifled and frustrated with the lack of full-time coaching opportunities. If the financial resources aspect can be improved in Australia, a potential pool of motivated coaches at the performance stage will be developed. Football governing body might consider more creative methods for providing opportunities for coaches at local, regional and international levels to

connect and share knowledge more regularly. Many Australian [and Malaysian] coaches also discussed the benefits of learning from and sharing knowledge with other coaches. For example, international travel with a non-formal purposeful self-development intent was common among these football coaches. There is likely scope for more planned communities of practice to be established. Coaches in these communities of practice must be supported and encouraged to share their expertise, organize and plan around common goals, generate a stronger voice to influence quality experiences for young people in the participation and development stage. The key themes identified comprise knowledge sharing among peers, playing experience, use of information technology and networking some of which are not currently reflected in formal coach education courses and also informal or semi-formal learning opportunities.

Reclassify the community and elite certification system.

To develop separate parallel community and elite certification systems is the preferred model of the coaches who participated in this study. Currently, Australia has dual elite (A, B, C) and community (one level) pathways, whereas Malaysia has only uni-dimensional elite (A, B, C) pathways. Coaches involved in this study did, however, have different views on their preferred coaching context. A number of coaches expressed a desire to remain as a grassroots coach or a “youth” coach despite having coached for many years, while a significance proportion of coaches wanted to coach in the "senior" coaching context as soon as they finished their career as a player, or as soon as they received their coaching certificate. According to the participant coaches, although they have different preferences for the coaching context in which they wish to be involved, they have no other option but to follow the

system of certification determined by the Football Governing Bodies (FGB) in Australia and Malaysia. Consequently, some coaches (see Chapter 4) who have undergone accreditation courses expressed the view that the content of the course sometimes did not specifically relate to the required knowledge for those who are coaching at the "grassroots" and "youth" level. Meanwhile, coaches in the senior and elite level also felt that the content of the preliminary coaching courses, such as “C” and “B” did not meet the needs and demands of their current position as a coach. In this regard, they expressed the view that a new separate coaching system is needed that establishes special pathways with an emphasis on “grassroots and youth” (possibly elite community) coaching as well as a certification system specialization to coach at sub-elite and elite levels, (possibly titled “elite pathway”). Both pathways were envisaged to have A, B, and C license options.

The different aspirations of coaches and their specific training needs are symptomatic of international trends toward a stronger focus on the specificity and requirements of coaching, in particular, environments, systems, and with players of different development and age levels. Wormuth (2013) discussed how there are different expressions of what type of coaching is required within the grassroots, and youth, senior and elite football contexts. For example, the German football coaching syllabus, the Deutscher Fussball-Bund (DFB), is relatively prescriptive about how young players are to be coached. Wormuth described how there is a similar development philosophy in grassroots and youth teams that are different from the coaching philosophy for senior teams. The DFB has a unique system in which the instructors demonstrate to the coaches the methodology for the grassroots and youth football, and infuse a large number of relevant exercises on how they could

coach to reinforce the systematic DFB requirements. In that regard, the DFB system is similar to the education system used in most European countries. However, Germany has many professional coaches working exclusively in the youth academies, and also professional coaches working exclusively in the DFB youth development system. There is a stronger emphasis on infusing quality coaching and specificity right throughout the system (Wormuth, 2013).

There is a perceived need for improved cooperation between education providers and sports organizations to meet the needs of coaches. For sport coaching to further develop and become established as a profession, barriers to coach development need removal (Nash, 2008). Based on the findings of the present study in this thesis, it is apparent that a barrier is a lack of specificity in training as delivered through accredited coaching courses. The coaches in the present study were clear that they would prefer to concentrate on their specific coaching context. Regardless of whether they are coaching at the grassroots, youth, or senior football coaching context, they expressed the desire to focus more on their current needs and not waste time in irrelevant learning or within a structure that has not been adjusted to enable the most effective transfer of knowledge to occur.

Formalize mentoring within the football certification system.

Coaches in the present studies were receiving ‘un-formalized’ mentoring, by identifying mentor coaches as one of the most important resources regarding developing their coaching skills. Most of these coaches had been introduced to sport at an early age by a close family member, usually a parent, and all coaches in this study had positive memories of their early sports involvement, such as being able to identify at least one individual who was highly influential in their participation. For

example, a school football coach or a physical education teacher was often cited. Furthermore, coaches' sources of knowledge are numerous and varied. For most coaches, a key person had helped them progress significantly in their coaching career and is described as a role model, advisor or a guide whose moral and professional authority they respected. That means that the mentoring of the participants could have been benefited for coaches if it was somehow a formal or required part of their training. Because at present it looks like the coaches benefitted by receiving mentoring, but not in a formal course program. By formalizing mentoring programs, the mentor appointed by the NGB will be trained appropriately to improve the quality of the mentoring program. For example, Nash and Sproule (2009) conducted a study on avenues to enhance coaching knowledge and found that expert coaches acquired knowledge through a range of methods, including attending coaching clinics and seminars, reading books, networking, observing other coaches, and mentoring. Nash and Sproule stressed that the ability to contextualize knowledge and information to suit the individual and situation and having mentors at the initial stages of coaching careers were also vital. They found that expert coaches also considered their informal networks to be of immense benefit. In the developmental pathway, mentoring and observing other coaches was also perceived to be important. Mentor coaches were reported to have provided an initial level of knowledge and stimulation for future learning (Irwin, Hanton & Kerwin, 2005). Robilliard (2003) questioned why and how individuals 'improved their lot' in life and reported that commonly it is because they have a role model, friend, adviser, or mentor. Mentoring can provide a huge personal satisfaction to the mentor, who can point an aspiring coach in the right direction. According to Bloomfield (2003), an

effective mentor coach will have some valuable insights and experiences of a particular sport and also personal qualities that will aid the coach they are mentoring. These qualities include a sharing attitude, and a willingness to discuss ideas and philosophies, trustworthiness, loyalty, current technical and tactical knowledge of the sport, relationship building skills, and the capacity to focus on the coaching process, rather than the athletes or results.

According to Layton (2002), mentors must determine what philosophy each has and what goals are identified. It is critical that the mentor observes the coach in practice, focusing on the coaching process, group management, experiential learning by athletes, questioning, and listening. The feedback provided by a mentor can be delivered formally or informally (Layton, 2002). Based on what Layton has suggested, a vast positive impact will be gained by the new coaches if a mentorship program is formalized by the FGB (i.e., AFC, FFA, and FAM). For senior coaches, a mentorship program could be a forum for them to contribute back to the coaching community by being a mentor to the younger and novice coaches. Layton pointed out that if more experienced coaches become involved in mentoring there will be numerous benefits, such as, indirectly improve the performance of the athletes by building a mentor-mentee relationship with coaches who does not possess the same level of knowledge. Pyke (2013) mentioned that the Australian Sports Commission has advocated that if experienced coaches want to improve their sport and leave a legacy, they should become a mentor coach. Mentoring is a very effective addition to the methods coaches can use to continue their on-going professional development. Mentors can play a variety of roles including; developing a coach's knowledge and skills, building the confidence of the coach, being a resource to

either share knowledge or direct coaches to other sources of information, challenging and questioning the coach's current practices, assessing coaching competencies, and providing introductions to other people who can help (Australian Sports Commission, 1994). Furthermore, the ASC provides resources through the National Sports Information Centre to aid sports and individual mentor coaches in raising the standard of coaching.

Coaches in the present studies perceived informal mentoring to be of value. Although informal mentoring is beneficial, formal mentoring might provide additional benefits, and because mentoring has been perceived to be of value, further research is needed to examine what type of mentoring is most effective to inform whether FGBs should consider including more training and provision of mentoring programs and related options for coaches.

Football Governing Bodies (FGB) in Australia and Malaysia can prioritize and formalize mentoring to support young coaches', by hiring senior coaches who have had many years of accumulated coaching experience with local and international experience as a formal mentor. By formalizing the mentoring program, Football Governing Bodies (FGB) can provide young coaches with additional support, guidance, and mentorship, by matching them with a successful appointed or volunteer mentor, who is a long-term positive role model. Researchers have demonstrated that mentoring programs can empower young coaches to reach their full potential, make positive changes in their behavior and build self-worth and trust in their relationships at work, e.g., Avolio, 1999; Poon, 2006). Qualified mentors need to be carefully recruited, screened, and trained be uniquely match them to young coaches.

Coaches interviewed in this present studies in this thesis also highlighted the role that mentors play in fostering their interest as a coach and those who have benefited from mentors in their development, highly recommend the process. However, to date, the FGB in both Australia and Malaysia have not included mentoring as a part of the formal accreditation courses, whereas, in comparison to their counterparts in teacher training colleges, schools, and universities, mentoring is standard practice. Given the wide-ranging benefits gained through a mentoring program and the findings from this study, it is recommended that the NGB of football in Australia and Malaysia should acknowledge the likely value of mentoring by making it a formal component of the football coaching certification program and training.

Include a formalized coach exchange program.

Exchange programs for coaches could be included into the football coaching accreditation system. Being exposed to foreign coaches, either in the home country or by traveling abroad was identified as a highly valuable source of knowledge in the present study. Most of the participants in Australia and Malaysia, who had enjoyed learning experiences overseas agreed that foreign coaches represented a highly credible and respected source of knowledge and information. The reported factors that coaches believe to be influential include; better education systems; more practical experience; and greater numbers of players to work with.

The results of this study indicated that knowledge transfer and exchange (KTE) plays an important role in the development of coaches' competencies. These KTE experiences with contemporaries overseas allowed participants to go beyond the boundaries of their existing knowledge. Coaches reported using their initiative and

resources to travel abroad to observe and engage with other systems of practice. Some coaches in Malaysia pointed out that not all international methods may be practical in the Malaysian context without some form of modification. Specifically, the language barrier can be a problem, and certain coach-respondents were deterred from interacting or using an international foreign language resource. The resultant benefits to coaches from pursuing KTE were invariably beneficial. Regarding broader comparisons, in the current context of the football coaching certification systems in Australia and Malaysia, consideration and inclusion of international KTE appears to be very limited. Ironically in other formal learning pathways, such as higher education, international exchange, and internationalization of curriculum, is strongly encouraged and supported. The benefit from learning from an international coaching perspective was underlined by Cook and Becker (2013), who stated that travel and research grants had helped to obtain the best professional development of career experiences. According to Hansel and Grove (1986), schools for years have encouraged and sponsored travel and exchange programs for students in the belief that such programs provide valuable learning experiences, and international education exchange is reported to be growing (Daly & Barker 2005). According to Clifford (2013), Universities in many parts of the world have been ‘internationalizing the curriculum’ for some decades, the emphasis being on encouraging the mobility of students and collaborative research. For example, Back, Davis, and Olsen (1996) found that more than 5 percent of students from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology studied overseas annually through exchanges, study tours, conferences, visits, clinical placements, or work experience. The importance of a “Coaches Exchange Program” is recognized by the Bureau of

Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) of the U.S. Department of State. The ECA fosters mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries to promote friendly and peaceful relations, and it accomplishes this mission through academic, cultural, sports, and professional exchanges with more than 160 countries. According to the ECA (2013), sports diplomacy has emerged as an integral part of efforts to build ever-strengthening relations between the United States and other nations. If the program conducted by the ECA can benefit the people in more than 160 countries, similar programs can also benefit sport coaches.

From the findings of this studies in the thesis, it can be concluded that a special exchange program option is included and recognized in the coach training pathways. Experienced trainers can become mentors to coaches on probation. All forms of counseling could occur during the period prescribed by their respective NGBs. A similar concept applies where university students are guided by their academic advisors; or where trainee teachers are under the guidance of experienced teachers, while in teacher training colleges. The NGBs in Australia, Malaysia, and Europe, for example, might consider initiating a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to develop the partnership between the two bodies in technical and management areas for this purpose and extend it, not only to the NGB but also to their affiliates. Before such a program becomes a reality, apart from the many logistical considerations, further research is needed to be undertaken to ensure that trainee coaches receive maximum benefit from the foreign experience.

Final Conclusion

The study culminates in the development of the Accredited Football Coach Development Model (AFCDM). The delineated development themes drawn from the research with 24 accredited football coaches is embedded into the ACFDM. There is scope to use this model to guide and enhance the ongoing development of football coaches; particularly in Australia and Malaysia. Whether the development themes identified in the current research hold true for other sports remains to be seen. There may also be wider ramifications for the training of football coaches internationally. From these studies in the thesis, the central role that football coaches play in enhancing football players' performance is evident. Although football National Governing Bodies provide quality training for coaches, there appear to be some ways that training pathways could be improved to meet the specific needs of coaches, depending on what stage of the development pathway they have reached.

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