

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Conceptual Model of Football at National Level: A Qualitative Inquiry

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The performance of Malaysian sports today is not at a satisfactory level when compared to the performance of the country's sports in the 70s and 80s, especially football, which is the sports that have seen the most significant decline. **Methods:** This study involved (n=25) respondents consisting of head coaches, trainers, and team managers. The data collection process is done through a qualitative method, which is through a semi-structured interview session. **Results:** The results of this study found that there are several factors such as leadership factors, management support system, coaches' and players' requirements, and the environment affecting four main components which are individual consideration, being influenced by an ideal, motivation, inspiration and intellectual stimulation that have an enormous influence on team and athlete performance. **Conclusion:** In conclusion, this study have two impacts, the external impact (leadership, management support system, coaches' and players' requirements and environment) referred to the development characteristics for coaching staff, sports managers, and players through interview session in future. While an internal impact (individualized consideration, idealized influenced, inspirational motivation and Intellectual stimulation) towards to excellence in team performance.

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INTRODUCTION

Football is one of the biggest phenomena in terms of its attraction to be able to gather hundreds of thousands of spectators regardless of age and gender, to gather in football stadiums around the world every week to watch matches Atan & Kassim.M (1). According to Stroyer et.al., (30), soccer is the most popular sport around the world with high intensity, short-term action and different styles or patterns of play. Therefore, to obtain success in team sports, football players need an optimal combination of criteria from technical, tactical, physical characteristics and mental motivation. According to Stolen et al., (29), one of the reasons why football is considered the most popular sport is because the players

only need a reasonable level in all areas, it does not require extraordinary capacity in this sport.

Deraman (7) said the Malaysian football team was once the king of Southeast Asia and is one of the most respected teams in the Asian continent. The Malaysian team managed to qualify for the Olympic Games in 1972 and 1980 and came third in the 1974 Asian Cup competition, proving that the Malaysian team has played at a high level and was once a feared team in the Asian region. The continuous defeat experienced by the home team involving the Asian Cup, Olympic Games and World Cup caused the country's football performance to be questioned. Currently, the national football team is only able to compete at the Southeast Asian level KBS (17).

Currently, most studies focus on football coaching, for example Malaysian football coaching process model by Ramalu et al. (25) is about the effectiveness of coaching

to help the development of football coaches in state sports schools. In addition, Ismail and Karim (11) also formed an interpersonal support system model to help the teachers at school in ensuring they are capable and qualified coaches. Based on past research from football, the models produced are aimed at teachers who become coaches in their schools. Ramalu et al. (25) used qualitative method in his research, but Ismail et.al., (11) use a quantitative approach

They were literature reviews focusing on leadership, coaching, motivation, management, and performance. Another study that can be recognized was the one that examined the relationship between leadership style on players' motivation in state sports school, such as Nasiruddin et al., (23). In addition, scholars also studied the role of sports management Kepoglu (18). The study included sports facilities, qualifications, and team performance. Finally, another study examined coaching behavior on player performance (Murugeesan and Hasan,(22).

While studies above mainly focus on the physical aspects of sports, it should be noted that some sports produced a model that can be used as a reference to this research. To the best of our knowledge, only two studies have produced a model (Ramalu et al., (25) and Ismail et.al.,(11). Among them, no study concurrently conducts research and finds the factors that affect football achievement at national level.

Therefore, this research aims to analyze the factors that affect football achievement at national level. This research is significant because football is one of the most popular sports in Malaysia, and the achievements in the last five years is not satisfied enough. In addition, this research will form a model consisting of the factors that affect football achievement and can be used as a reference from grassroots until to the highest level.

METHODS

Study design and participants

This research applied a qualitative method to analyse and identify the factors that affect football achievement at national level. A total of (n=12) respondents participated in this research. The participants consist of 12 coaches from football.

Procedures

Interview session

In this research, interview is the crucial tool for a researcher to obtain the data. The researcher applied semi-structured interview and conducted it individually. These participants were selected based on their involvement for the national team based on purposive sampling (Idriss et al., (9). However, guidelines and basics of conducting interviews in order and draft

interview questions are also provided as guidelines. The results of the recorded interview with the coaching staff of the study were transcribed into text so that the researcher could make a translation of the data from the interview and obtain confirmation from the coaching staff of the findings of the study or the results of the interview. The researcher can watch as individuals act and speak, thus collecting data firsthand Kassim.M (14). This interview session is conducted according to the time and place agreed by the respondents. The duration of the interview conducted is from one to three hours with the frequency of meetings being one to two times. The period for this interview session is for 7 months, which starts from March until October 2022. I continued with the interview sessions until I felt I had enough data to answer the research questions.

Data Analysis

Data analysis began by examining transcripts of conversations from voice recorder to produce a tentative coding system from which categories of phenomena were derived. Once the main category criteria are obtained, the researcher searches for trends and differences and inductively begins processing explanations and phenomena. I checked the explanations constantly to get accuracy and understanding and changed to support latest information Braun and Clarke (5). In the pilot study conducted by the researcher, the researcher followed the guidelines shown by Tenenbaum and Eklund (31) and Baker et al., (2). The guidelines included organization and interpretation unstructured qualitative data, and this is called 'generate tags', followed by generating 'label keys' and 'categories'.

First, generating tags began by separating and cutting text from the interview transcripts into details of information that are important to clarifying the research-related issues. The content of each interview stands out and gives meaning; it is isolated as a text that stands out from the material that surrounds it. Each tag was marked with a temporary name that describes the topic of the text segment. Its aim is to make separation of the same data segments from the research context by carrying out tag detailing due to a process called breaking and dividing information Saldana (28). Then, the researcher read the interview transcripts and repeatedly analyzed them, from one line to another line.

Second, creating label keys. Similar tags are regrouped and arranged into specific categories called perspectives Brown (6). The researcher continuously analyzed and changed the data until a consensus of all perceptions are identified. In the context of this study, for example, the tag "Playing at the highest level" is combined back with similar units of meaning into a larger perspective named "Significant experience". Because the perspective are developed from the data, the data findings are changed and improved until they are compatible with the research system formed Lester et.al., (20).

Third, the production of concept categories. This procedure involves the same analytical process as "perspective making" except that there is a comparison for perspectives in this analysis instead of tags, resulting in more detailed categories. Content from each perspective to find "similarity in content" and "uniqueness in content" Saldana (28).

The researcher can provide a dimension for each perspective, which is the specialization and continuity of each detail of the data obtained from the interview results throughout the research Javid et al, (13). Bouncken et al., (4) also emphasized that when all levels of analysis are carried out and categorized at the highest level. Hence, the knowledge and behavior of the coaching line is achieved, the researcher must always be consistent in comparing, differentiating, and analyzing. The data findings of all categories to ensure that the details of the information from the meeting conversations are analyzed accurately. Roberts et al., (26) stated in this study, because the raw data of the interviews based on the questions provided, each interview was transcribed verbatim from an Apple iPhone 12 Pro Max brand mobile phone to be analyzed on the researcher's personal laptop after completing each interview.

The researcher listened to each interview session several times before transcription was carried out. Then, the interview text is separated into several texts that contain information themes that can provide unique information Hussey et.al,(8). After the transcription of each respondent's interview has been analyzed, the researcher reads it repeatedly to understand and master the information from the data so that it is more relevant. Hussey et.al., (8) emphasized that this process helps the researcher to be more sensitive and understand every word of the interview from each respondent, always check the credibility and reliability of the interview process, and finally, facilitate the content analysis phase of the findings research data that has been conducted.

Ethical Clearance

This study was approved by Research Ethics Committee Centre of Research Development and Innovation, UPNM with reference UPNM(TNCPI) 01.05/02 Jilid 7 (15).

RESULTS

In this research, five factors affect the achievement level of football at national level. These factors have been shown through the development of the national football concept model in Figure 1.

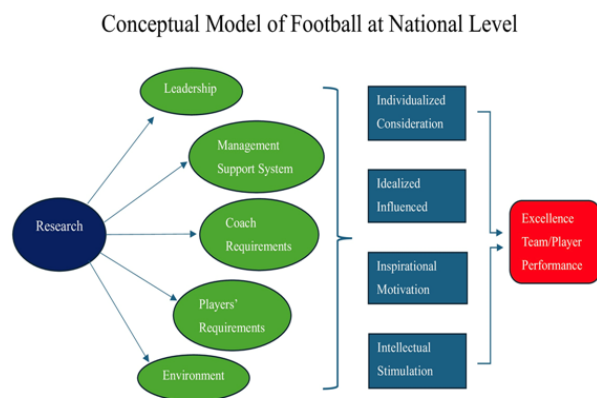


Figure 1 : Conceptual Model of Football at National Level

Based on these findings, there are five factors that affect the achievement level of football at national level. This research believes that leadership played a significant role in increasing the players' performance. Previous studies explained why leadership has a high impact on players' morale. The coach becomes a crucial point in determining the rise or fall of his team. Another study believes a coach that applies democratic leadership style will have discussions with the players about improvements in the future and consider their views Idriss et al.,(10). This will produce a harmonious atmosphere where the relationship between the coach and the players will be closer, and the direction of communication will be meaningful Borghi, (3). In this research, the components that form leadership are depicted in Figure 2.

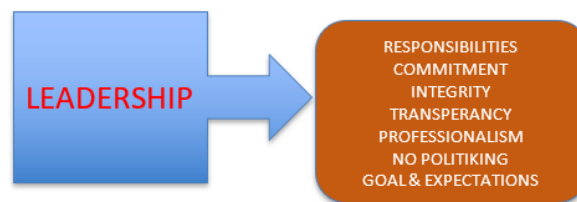


Figure 2 : Leadership

Besides, the management support system plays a vital role in extracting the hidden potential in players or athletes. Previous studies prove that preparation of training facilities in high quality maximise the potential in players or athletes Mokoena & Dhurup (21). Kepoglu (18) also states that to ensure the satisfaction of athletes is guaranteed with sports management, then the sports managers need to have certain approvals to fulfill the

management functions related to the organization they are responsible for so that they will perform well based on their expertise. The components that form the management support system depicted in Figure 3.



Figure 3 : Management Support System

This research finds that coaches have a big influence on players. The coaches successfully demonstrated positive behavior by emphasizing fun that makes the players feel the enjoyment of their training sessions and this showed that the coaches’ behavior becoming one of the crucial things in imparting knowledge to the players Kassim. M. (14). The study also finds that sports science knowledge is an important component for sports coaches to improve player performance. This finding is strengthened by Kubayi (2018) that sports coaches need to develop into the scientific and technological aspects of sports so that the players can be given appropriate help to improve their skills. Kassim. M (14) also finds the elements such as professionalism and knowledge have influence on the other factors such as organisation and significant experience. That finding is similar to this research, states that significant experience is one of the important requirements that every coach should have for themselves. In this research, the components that form coaches’ requirements component is depicted in Figure 4.



Figure 4 : Coach Requirements

Furthermore, for a player, this research finds that discipline is a crucial element to become a great player. One of the coaches states that "I always teach the first thing that needs to be emphasized is discipline. Even if they perform very well, if they don't have discipline, people won't like it. Coming late to training session, giving a negative impression to the coach and the management. For me, discipline must be the number one that they should have as a player". This study believes that fitness level is the main criteria needed by the player to perform at maximum level. According to Kassim et. al. (15), it is important for the youth generation to stay active and excellent in physical fitness for students through physical activity. Although in ages (similar or almost) and physical builds, the individual exercise capacity are different among people Kassim.M & Rustam, (16). For example, in football, there are differences in training sessions according to their own position, to increase their fitness level. In Figure 5, the players requirements component is depicted as mentioned below.



Figure 5 : Players' Requirements

Moving to the last part, this research believes that environment plays an important role for players to ensure that their psychology is in good condition. Previous studies show how important the players got support from their parents, especially for their self-efficacy and self-esteem Rouquette et al., (27). Another study also found that a definitive competitive environment led to improvement of physical performance, or at least consistent maximal performance, compared to a more ambiguous competitive environment Ives (12). The components that form environment components are depicted in Figure 6.



Figure 6 : Environments

DISCUSSION

Five factors (leadership, management support system, coach and athlete/player requirements, and environment) are the external factors that focusing on three individuals, which are players, coaching staff, and sports managements. These factors play a crucial role in the development of character for themselves, to ensure that the individual performance is on the top level. These external factors have impact on these internal factors, which are individualized considerations, idealized influenced, inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation. These internal factors lead to excellence in team performance. Excellence in team performance illustrated in previous figure (refer Figure 7).

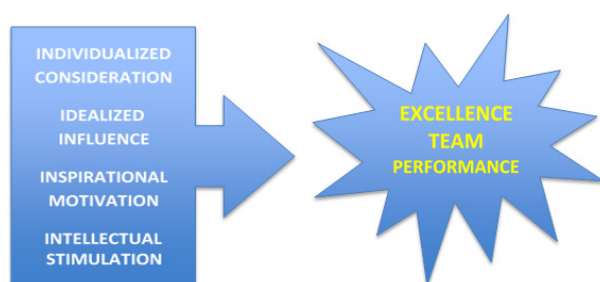


Figure 7 : Excellence in Team Performance

CONCLUSIONS

To conclude this study, these findings have two impacts, the external impact (leadership, management support system, coaches' and players' requirements and environment) referred to the development characteristics for coaching staff, sports managers, and players through interview session in future. While an internal impact (individualized consideration, idealized influenced,

inspirational motivation and Intellectual stimulation) towards to excellence in team performance. Finally, hopefully this research can be used as reference to the coaches, sports managers, and players to improve the performance at all levels especially in Malaysia.

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