

The Development of Coaching Knowledge among Malaysian Accredited Football Coaches

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to provide an in-depth understanding of some of the ways in which Malaysian football coach has constructed, and continues to construct, their professional knowledge. In this study, the defining development of knowledge among “A”, “B” and “C” licenced football coaches in Malaysia (N = 12) were examined from the perspective of identifying their sources of knowledge. In-depth semi-structured interviews were used to explore how participants accumulate their knowledge. Probe questions were also used to explore ideographic themes and issues relevant to each interviewee. The data was initially analysed through creating electronic written transcripts of the participant’s answer during the interviews. Following the principle of Strauss & Corbin’s, (1990) EGT, data construction, data deconstruction and data reconstruction stages were systematically conducted. Results showed sources of knowledge category emerged as a central overarching category. Based on the analysis, the following seven sub-categories emerged that make up the Source of Knowledge category; i) coaching courses and formal education courses, ii) foreign and international experience iii) video and game observation iv) learning from mentors and others v) trial and error/ squad sessions vi) past playing experience and vii) coaches networking. Subsequent investigations are recommended to identify how this knowledge is integrated into the coaching process and applied in the development of football coaching skills.

Keywords: Qualitative, Professional Knowledge, Development Of Knowledge, Source Of Knowledge,

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Football is considered as the number one sport in Malaysia based on television audiences, compared to other sporting events viewed (Hamid & Kendall, 2008; Karim, 2016; Karim & Nadzalan, 2017; Pundyk, 2004). For a team to be success, several factors do play major roles. One of it is the coach. In 2013, Malaysia has 11 “Professional Diploma” coaches, approximately 700 “B” license coaches, 318 “Advanced” coaches (equivalent to “B” license), approximately 4,000 “C” license coaches, approximately 1,000 “Preliminary” coaches (equivalent to “C” license) (Karim, 2016).

It is important for a coach to have great knowledge in order to ensure they can cope with any challenges that come either from the clubs management, players or fans (Clemente, Martins, & Mendes, 2015; McKay, Steffen, Romiti, Finch, & Emery, 2014; Stodter & Cushion, 2017). Previous researchers have suggested that current formal coach education programs do not fully meet the learning needs of coaches (Mesquita, Ribeiro, Santos & Morgan, 2014). Researchers over the last decade have demonstrated that it is experience and the observation of other coaches that remain the primary sources of knowledge for coaches (Cushion & Partington, 2016; Nelson, Cushion, & Potrac, 2013). Despite this, coach education and continuing professional development fail to draw effectively on this experience.

Becoming a football coach can be a fulfilling and rewarding vocation. Despite of that, many challenges and stressors need to be faced by them. Football coaches have to face the demanding hopes from the club managements and fans, excessive workloads that need to be settled especially those involved with the players, conflicting roles and the pressure to win and cope with defeat thus also brought to huge schedules and time commitments (Surujlal & Nguyen, 2011; McNamara, 2001) .

According to Schempp (1993), the degree of success that professionals experienced in meeting societal demands is largely dependent upon the knowledge they generate and accumulate for the tasks and obligations that they undertake. It could be suggested that if we are to further understand coaching as a profession, it is necessary to explore and analyse its knowledge bases (Nelson, Cushion and Potrac (2006). Nelson et al. (2006) also argued that our understanding of coach learning and the acquisition of professional knowledge lacks a clear conceptual base.

The purpose of this present study therefore was to examine actual and preferred sources of coaching knowledge for football coaches at all level in Malaysia.

2.0 METHOD

This research used the Evolved grounded theory (EGT; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) as the steering methodology. All the data was generally collected by 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.

Twelve (12) Malaysian coaches involved in this study. These coaches were accredited from Asian Football Confederation “A”, “B” and “C” licences. With the assistance of Football Association of Malaysia (FAM), these coaches were recruited from the Malaysian Super League, National Youth League and Malaysia School Sports Council Football tournament.

In-depth semi-structured interviews were used to explore how participants organised and understood their coaching experiences was used with a recursive design whereby newly identified themes could be explored in subsequent interviews. Furthermore, probe questions were also used to explore ideographic themes and issues relevant to each interviewee. Initially data analysis involved creating electronic written transcripts of the participant’s answer during

the interviews. Following the principle of Strauss & Corbin's, (1990) EGT, data construction, data deconstruction and data reconstruction stages were systematically conducted.

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, conceptualised, and tentative themes discussed. The data was later 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).

3.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As part of continuous professional development, football coaches in Malaysia strategically plan to participate in the FAM formal accreditation coaching courses, tertiary education programmes and other formal sources of education. There was also appreciation for the importance of informal sources of knowledge to enhance their skills, knowledge and competencies. Coaches emphasised 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 skilful and knowledgeable coaches who are competent in solving problems and making decisions.

There are seven sub-categories that make up the Source of Knowledge category, namely, a) Coaching courses and formal education courses, b) Foreign and international experience c) Video and game observation d) Learning from mentors and others e) Trial and error/ squad sessions f) Past playing experience and g) Coaches Networking. The sub categories are described in the following sub sections, however, where these themes were also present in this study only abbreviated descriptions are provided.

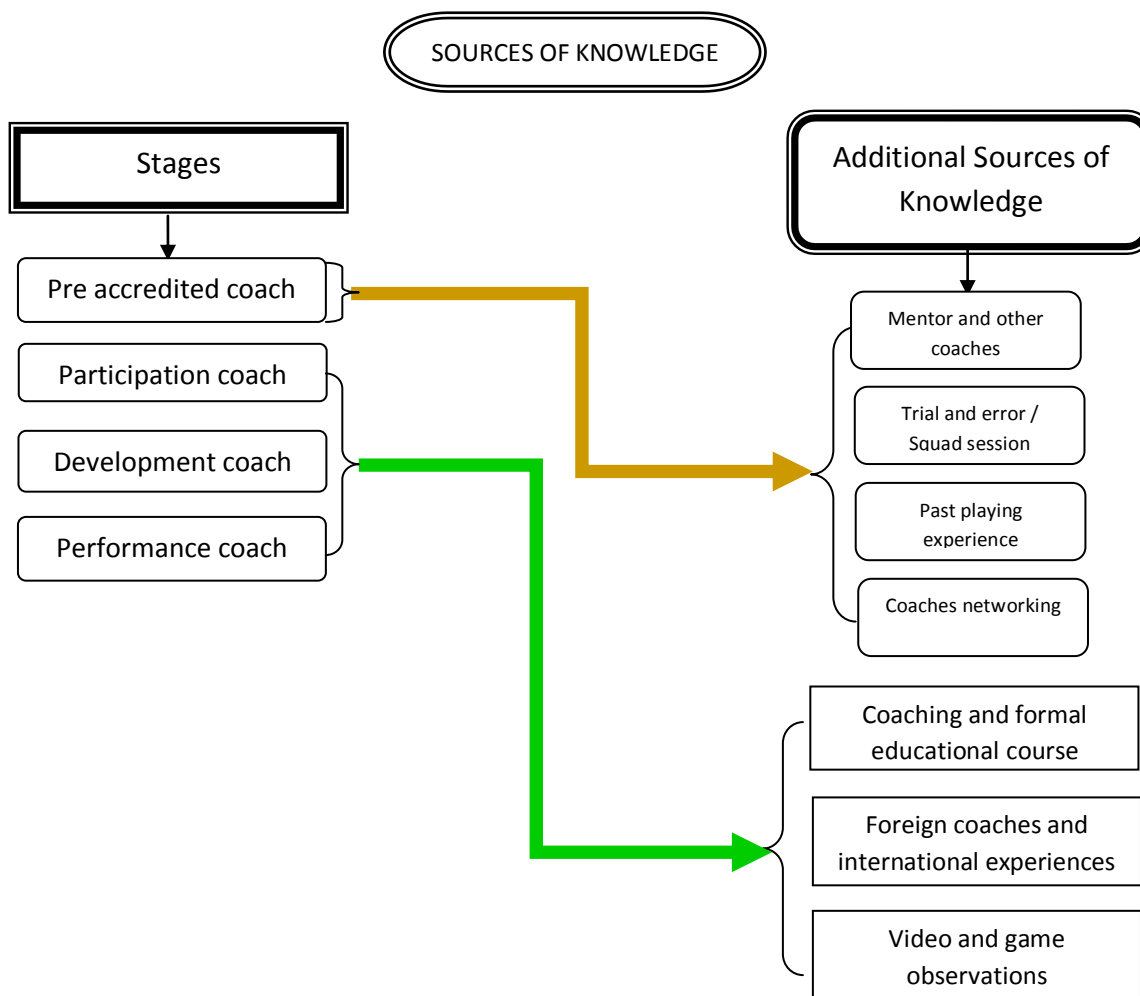


Figure 1. Sources of knowledge for Malaysian football coaches

3.1 Coaching Courses and Formal Education Course

Formal education courses were mentioned as one of the most important sources of knowledge by this group of Malaysian coaches. Almost every coach stated their appreciation in some way for formal football coaching accreditation courses as well as tertiary education courses. One of the “A” license coaches mentioned, “When I studied to obtain the AFC “A” and the UEFA “A” licenses this opened my mind much more as I realised that at this stage the grassroots and youth coaching area is a specialty”.

All coaches in this study had experienced coach education courses organised by FAM and although they were currently coaching, all four coaches (A1, A2, A3 and A4) were concurrently involved in the delivery of coach education. Coach A2 reflected on his last course, which was conducted by foreign instructors, as contributing to his coaching career, saying that the course was of “absolute importance as it was conducted and recommended by an accredited body. The course has to be hands on and not only theoretical, and should not be based on age alone but experience should also be taken into account to attend the course”.

Unlike some countries the provision of recognised training in Malaysia extends beyond the courses that FAM deliver themselves. A number of coaches in the present study had, therefore, undertaken a coach education course at University or a teacher training college. Coach A2 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". In addition, coach A2 referred to the introduction of questioning and feedback that was an essential part of his training that he credits for improvements in his coaching.

When questioned about the importance of their coach education courses, there was a wide range of opinions. Coach A2 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 A3 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 coaches were attuned to the importance of ongoing training or professional development. For example, coach B4 was of the opinion that the coaching course was very important and that even people gaining an "A" license level qualification should continuously update their knowledge and thinking, "The coaching course is very important and for me. I think that even though I got a license ... I need to go for my refresher courses".

The coaching courses can also provide a circuit breaker and a better ones of awareness or 'reality check' for particular coaches. Coach C1 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 seen many coaches doing their coaching, they can add to my knowledge to improve my coaching style".

Football coaches in Malaysia, although sometimes critical of FAM and aspects of their training recognise that formal qualifications are valuable in developing their knowledge and coaching skills. 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. Similar to findings from study 1 and previous research the coaches also develop their own coach networking during the course and this provides an ongoing course of learning as a type of community of practice.

3.2 Foreign and International Experience

Another important finding that was consistent with this study was that these coaches were 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 own coaching environments. Coaches mentioned that the foreign coaches and international experience can 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 from foreign coaches. For example Coach A1 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 A2 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 A2 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 centre and I learned a lot".

Other coaches had visited the other European countries and another {A3} had visited Brazil. Coach A3 reminisced; "I had a chance to go to Brazil to attend a course for 27 coaches. I was very motivated because their boys were very gifted players and most of the training was all technical training without tactical". Coach A4 considered that learning from foreign coaches and gaining international experiences was not only a proactive move but required coaches to update constantly to suit the current needs and demands. He stated; "So in the [small island country] itself, we have a lot of kids and those kids we approached in the school. The schools are very competitive, and there were not many schools, only six main schools, in the [small island country]". Coach B1 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 Manchester United; I learnt a lot of new things especially like coaching methods". Learning from foreign coaches and from international experience appeared to be appreciated by the coaches more than other sources of knowledge in this study, but this could be due to something as simple as maintaining an up-to-date approach in football coaching. Coach B2 thought that, "I've got a chance to stay in Arsenal, England. There, they see the Head Coach like a President. I mean whatever the Head coach wants, they try to fulfil".

Many of the coaches in this study considered that learning from foreign coaches and gaining international experience are very important aspects of coaching. They can learn the good qualities from overseas to be adapted in their own coaching practices. Coach B4 considered this critical aspect needed to be developed and in his case was developed from young as he was saying that, "My role model is Bryan Robson, because of his hard work, hard tackling and discipline and everything. Since I was a small boy, I can play like him because he was playing as a defending midfield". Coach C2 was not the only coach who considered learning from foreign coaches and having international experience as an important part of his sources of knowledge, declaring that, "I'll mention [name of coach in England deleted]".

Overall, foreign coaches and international experience are recognized as an important part of the sources of knowledge for Malaysian football coaches. It is obvious that Malaysian coaches believe and want to see what their counterpart coaches are doing in other parts of the world. They appreciate the different if not better coaching environment generally 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.

Conversely, coach B3 mentioned the categorisation of coaching context according to the age group and stated that; "I started when I was 16 as a coach and I did a couple of years coaching in junior football". Coach A3, expressed his views about the importance of unstructured situations in this early stage of his development. He stated that the best way to learn football is in unstructured situation saying that; "my philosophy is, the less I say, the less I appear, the best the session will be". Coach A3 also explained about the happiness that he wants players to feel in this stage, "when they are happier, they are a lot more creative, they are fresher, it is players centred". Coach A3 also stressed the point of happiness and enjoyment in training; "in my planned cycle, the tenth session is reserved for providing the equipment to the players and that's all.

3.3 *Video and Game Observation*

Most of the coaches in this study suggested that video and game observation can be a source of personal knowledge to improve their effectiveness as a coach. Video and Game Observation are considered an essential source of knowledge and a skill in coaching, and there are many useful techniques and guidelines that can be obtained by watching a game either as a video or the real match. Usually coaches view learning by watching the game as a component of their practice, that the knowledge they gain by watching the game can be imparted to their players. It can be valuable for coaches to utilize the knowledge gained from watching a match to develop their own practice. This group of coaches all embraced importance of watching the matches and the majority of them felt that they were "Learning from the best coach, as they described the game is the best coach in fact". Coach A1 described his method of gaining knowledge by watching the game as follows: "Experience is the best teacher and I have learnt from everything that does not fall under the formal category that will be accredited as informal such as.....reading from magazines, journals, listening to a friend tell about a coaching session, seminars, conferences, and watching a coaching session".

Coach B3 had a similar experience, saying what he did came from when he was playing with the club which had its own methods, whereas he has his own system and skills saying that, "I gained my experience through observing and I can rationalise after seeing it. That's where I get my experience and I am able to share it with my players now". Coach B4 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 C1 recollected that other than learning from his coaches, he also learnt 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 in Malaysia. The football coaches in Malaysia who were involved in this study have 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 most of the football coaches in Malaysia who were involved in this study, learning by video and game observation is critical when contemplating by 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 could encourage coaches to exchange ideas with one another and pursue professional development goals.

3.4 Learning from Mentor and Other Coaches

All coaches in this study were of mixed opinion as to how important learning from mentor coaches and others was in their coaching career. Many admitted that they had considered learning from mentor coaches and others as something they did in their coaching career or that it was important in coaching. Coach A1 summed up this viewpoint, saying that, "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". After questioning, some of these coaches deliberated over their use of learning from mentor coaches and others within their coaching. Coach A2 thought that "I still remember that my coach at that time was my teacher, [well known teacher in Malaysia]. He himself was a teacher and his training was quiet under his guidance, and it was alright, a lot of running and game strategy".

When questioned, Coach A3 had a person he mentioned as a mentor 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 A3 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 really had a passion for football".

Although much of the content that the coaches plan in their sessions comprises of the knowledge they have gained from the coaching course they attended, in the initial part of their career most of the coaches use the experience they received from their mentor and as well as others in the coaching world. Some of the coaches mentioned their experience learned from a mentor was beneficial when considering their decision making in their career as a coach. Coach A4 gave an example of this by mentioning that, "I was coached by a former national player, a qualified coach, and [FIFA instructors]. He will come and fetch us, and I really enjoyed being trained by him with better knowledge, because he really shared what he has learnt". Coach A4 mentioned that his initial information about the technical aspects and the system of play was introduced to him by his first coach. His understanding of those aspects of football were explained in more depth as coach A4 revealed that, "What I learnt 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 instructors]. He gave me a very big scope of the system of play". Coach B1 added more detail, using his own experience as an example, indicating that, "My coach who influenced me at that time was one of the gentlemen, [Kuala Lumpur coach], and his coaching was more on discipline, punctuality, time, training, whatever they show us we must perform".

This entire group of coaches considered that they reflected on the influence of mentor coaches and others in their coaching although the depth to which they practiced the influence in their training sessions varied as evidenced by coach B1, who claimed he has been influenced, saying that, "Initially I do 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". Coach B2 gave an almost identical answer, saying that his father was the one who encouraged him lot and showed him the pathways to coaching. However he also had a coach who inspired him saying that "[one of the most outstanding coaches in Malaysia] also gave me a lot of ideas and guided me along the way to become a player and a coach". Following up with both of these coaches, when another coach with a "B" license was asked how he felt the influence of a mentor and others affected his coaching, he responded affirmatively, but again looking at it from a different viewpoint, he has been trained under a quite a number of coaches and all of them seem to have had an influence on his coaching career thus far. Coach B4 thought that "The best coaches for me were [one of the most outstanding coach in Malaysia] I learnt a lot from them".

Coach C1 displayed similar thinking, saying of his experience of being influenced by a mentor in his coaching career, "Nowadays, the KLFA Coaching Director is my mentor and he is helping me in my coaching course and he is very helpful to my coaching career". The approach taken by other coaches in this group was similar even though they have different backgrounds as an initial coach with coach C2 explaining that he was influenced by his mentor as he reflected that, "Most of the coaches I have passed through, were simple, hardworking and disciplined. Their approach to football, I can say influenced me because most of the time they turned out to be kind or gentle in life, humble".

Learning from mentor coaches and others appears to be one of the most important sources of knowledge for football coaches in Malaysia. There is consensus in this issue even though it means different things to different coaches, by means of different approaches and differing viewpoints as to what to take from the experience from the mentor and different times and methods of influence. Some coaches 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. In general most of the coaches in Malaysia who were involved in this study revealed that one way or another, the influence of the mentor played a role in their coaching career up to date.

3.5 *Trial and Error / Squad Session*

Coaches in this study reported that apart from other ways, they also learnt from their own squad sessions. This happened at the time when they were still playing and coaching at the same time, for example coach A3; “I was still playing for the club and for the state team but I have to teach in the afternoon and also coach my school team”. Some coaches learn from their own squad sessions and they had learnt by trial and error.

Coach A2, mentioned that at some point he learnt 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 learnt something different from the club and youth level before, also by learning through the squad sessions and a trial an error process;. One of the other example he has learnt from the squad is the level performance of other football team; “Very difficult for us to go to the final because I think the teams like Thailand and Indonesia were slightly better. Until now, we find difficult to beat Thailand and Indonesia, so we have to get something done”.

Coach A4 related the learning from squad session with the competency of young and new coaches. For coach A4, coaches who have a lack of experience, is the one who learnt a lot from their own squad session and trial and error. According to coach A4, the young and new coaches sometimes can be stuck during the training sessions because maybe their lack of experience means that they run out of ideas. Whereas, unlike himself, who has a huge amount of experience, after years of coaching, will never running out of ideas. He would not be stuck as he has learnt from his squad sessions and trial and error over a very long period of time. According to coach A4, 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 learnt from my years of conducting my squad sessions”.

One of the “B” licence (B4) coaches said that his sources of knowledge were multiple. He can learn from watching the game or others carrying out their training sessions. He can learn by talking to others, and for coach B4, sharing ideas with others is necessary for the learning process. It is important to learn by trial and error in the squad sessions as he stated; “Watching in the session is also important to help us to improve. I also correct the mistakes of our players.

Telling them, just because you are placed in the middle does not mean you should only be in the middle”.

3.6 Past Playing Experience

The determinant of the effectiveness and importance of coach education provision in the coaches’ coaching practice was very obvious. Many coach education courses emphasise certain aspects of practice, for example, planning during their delivery. However a group of coaches when questioned had other views concerning their sources of knowledge, some taking past playing experience into consideration while conducting their coaching sessions. Coach A2 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 A1 had a similar approach as he said he relied on his ability to analyse 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 A3 had the same approach, relying 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. Perhaps those who had not had experience as a player would not have the ability to put together experience and knowledge. He stated that he planned; “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”.

Some of these coaches admitted that what influenced them was partly the hard work they had to put in as players and they were taking this experience into their coaching career. Coach B1 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 B2 took this approach even further, disclosing within his coaching environment in his own team, he had control over the content of his sessions as there were times when he used his experience as a defender, sometimes he need to adapt it because he has to train not only as a defender but also for the other players in other positions in the team. He declared that, “I am a defender which is different from a striker, so when I am learning to become a coach I need to learn more about the striker in order to coach a whole team”. Coach B4 disclosed that as a player, he was very much disciplined and very dedicated. Therefore he also nurtures his players with the same qualities that he had, stating that, “I have the feeling that I can make my players to become better players using my experience as a guide. I can say that I can be a good role model for the players”.

Coach C2 summarised his approach by mentioning that, “There is a huge difference between playing experience and coaching even though they look similar”. Coach C2 emphasised that ex-players who want to become coaches need to be educated before becoming a coach as

he mentioned, "Experience as player is not similar to coaching. Therefore ex-players need to educate themselves first before becoming a coach". According to coach C4, 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 summarised 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".

The training session is the embodiment of the coach's skill, how they bring all the elements of effective practice together and impart the plan appropriately to the group or team. 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. From the data gathered from all the participants it obviously emerged that past playing experience plays an important part in the sources of knowledge of coaches in Malaysia.

3.7 Books, Magazines, Internet and Coaches Networking

Football coaches in Malaysia appear to have decided that formal qualifications have a huge value in developing their knowledge as coaches. Coaches seem to use the coach education courses as a forum for discussion. 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 in Malaysia developing their own 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 as an act of membership in the football coach association (FCAM) with the coaches seeking to understand 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. How coaches develop their knowledge using coach networking, books and the Internet, has been the characteristics emerged from this present study. Most of the participants displayed differing views on their sources of knowledge experiences. It has been reported to be a key factor in the development of knowledge.

For example, Coach A1 mentioned that his network of coaches expands all over the world by using the Internet as his source of knowledge; "I utilised the internet to get in touched with my connections all over the world. I also utilised the internet to get resources and information from books, magazines, vision and cd. Apart from that I also attended coaching seminars whenever possible which is very enriching". Coach A2 had a similar opinion regarding learning from international networking, as he stated that as an AFC technical director, he can make connection with a technical director of another country, and friendship starts from there, and they exchange information of course through that friendship. He also mentioned that the

ICT gives more help 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”. Coach C3 had even stronger views concerning the influence of coaches networking to aid his knowledge acquisition and development. Coach C3 stated that he also learning by speaking and getting feedback, with the other coaches and sometimes even with the fans. According to coach C3; “I use that information and feedback to help plan the next training session”.

Coach C4 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”. As previously mentioned in this chapter, apart from coach education courses, coaches also depending on networking, books, and magazines, articles in the Internet, and squad session, as part of additional sources of their knowledge. This has emerged to be one of the main characteristics.

The source of knowledge, according to the coaches involved in this research, are one of the most important characteristics that provide benefit to them as coaches in their coaching practice. Understanding how football coaches construct coaching knowledge will enable people responsible for the design of coach education programmes to plan learning outcomes that will enhance the knowledge of coaches and ultimately coaching practice. According to these coaches, their knowledge resources also change over time and circumstances. For example when they were at the beginning stages of their coaching careers, many resources were used from the experience they gained during their playing days. The memories of playing for their mentors and also the knowledge obtained while watching football matches aided their coaching. This is different to the more senior coaches in the industry. I have found that many coaches use their knowledge of formal coaching courses taken and also their experience overseas such that they make a selected international coach as their idol and learn what they can from them.

4.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

A main focus of this study was expressing the breadth and depth of what coaches are required to know based on what they need to do. Coaching knowledge encompasses a broad range of information, 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. But 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 master communication and motivational skills to get their point across to players. The coach needs to be both aware of what knowledge is needed and how to develop these knowledge bases.

Understanding how football coaches construct coaching knowledge will enable people responsible for the design of coach education programmes to plan learning outcomes that will

enhance the knowledge of coaches and ultimately coaching practice. According to these coaches, their knowledge resources also change over time and circumstances. For example when they were at the beginning stages of their coaching careers, many resources were used from the experience they gained during their playing days. The memories of playing for their mentors and also the knowledge obtained while watching football matches aided their coaching. This is different to the more senior coaches in the industry. I have found that many coaches use their knowledge of formal coaching courses taken and also their experience overseas such that they make a selected international coach as their idol and learn what they can from them.

According to coaches interviewed, the ability to motivate players is a desirable trait that not every coach possesses. This somewhat elusive ability to motivate players is nevertheless a “tool of the trade” among successful football coaches. Coaches also expressed the view that even at the highest level desire and ability does 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 above all else seek to help athletes to realise their personal potential by motivating athletes to overcome their weaknesses and build on their strengths. By focusing on the coach as a student, this study has provided valuable insight into the sources of coaching knowledge. The source of knowledge, therefore according to the coaches involved in this research, are one of the most important characteristics that provide benefit to them as coaches in their coaching practice.

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