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## **Designing Model of Career Path Development for National Football Development Program (NFDP): Directions, Issues, Challenges and Sources of Knowledge that Influence and Develop Coaching Expertise Level**

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### **Abstract**

The main purpose of this study is to propose a model formed towards the development of career paths of coaches involved in the National Football Development Program (NFDP) in Malaysia by identifying the development paths, directions, issues, challenges and knowledge sources that influence / form the level of expertise among the coaches. This is a qualitative study that used a developed design concept. Using a purposive sampling method, a total of five participants (coaches) from the NFDP were interviewed to determine the current and existing development direction. The findings showed that there are 9 issues and challenges outlined by the NFDP coaches and two forms of knowledge they have acquired throughout the PPBN program. Based on the issues and challenges faced by NFDP coaches and knowing what source of references used by the coaches, the direction of career development by NFDP coaches can eventually be formed from the data obtained. It is recommended that NFDP management can use the results of this study as a guideline and it is hope that the model proposed to improve the career path of the coaches can help in providing impact to the national football development through NFDP.

**Keywords:** Football, Coach, Development Coach, Career Path Development, Source of Knowledge

### **Introduction**

Football is the number one sport in the world (Giulianotti, 2012) as well as in Malaysia (Karim, 2016). In Malaysia, football is managed by the Malaysian Football Association (FAM). There are various football structures in Malaysia ranging from grassroots to international level. At the grassroots level, football is managed by collaboration between the Football Association of Malaysia (FAM), the Ministry of Youth and Sports (KBS), the National Sports Council (MSN) and the Ministry of Education Malaysia (KPM) by producing a plan known as the National Football

Development Program (NFDP). NFDP is a long-term plan where the first phase has started from 2014 to 2020. The NFDP mission is to create a systematic and comprehensive soccer development ecosystem towards increasing players' quantity and quality for the formation of great national football team (Ministry of Youth and Sports Malaysia, 2013). There are five strategic thrusts in NFDP program; i) forming style, ii) improving quality and building self-esteem with national football DNA, iii) identifying and forming national football heroes, iv) providing standards that meet all standards, and v) improving coaching development and strengthen the structure of the competition at various levels.

According to the Ministry of Youth and Sports, (2013) there are two phases in NFDP, Phase 1 (2014-2020) and Phase 2 (2021-2030). Phase 1 (2014-2020) is an early phase which will focus on; introduce national football DNA, intensify participation and competition for players from ages seven to 17, restructure administration and management of development programs, enhance coordination between stakeholders, empower coaching programs and provide adequate basic amenities at all levels. Phase 2 (2021-2030) will focus on; implementing audits and assessments in Phase 1 (2014-2020), equipping football development ecosystems, streamlining the facilities of training centres that have been added to Phase 1 (2014- 2020), forming and educating more coaches at community, primary and secondary levels, enabling more partnerships with the private sector in strengthening the development of academies under the NFDP, opening opportunities and promoting players as well as coaches created under the program to professional markets, enhance the sustainability of the NFDP to be a regional model and draw up the research and development (R&D) of sports especially football through collaboration with institutions of higher learning .

Referring to the fourth core of the NFDP that is to enhance the development of coaching, Phase 1 (2014-2020) which is to strengthen the coaching program, and Phase 2 (2021-2030) which is to form and educate more coaches at the level community, primary and secondary school, this program plan also emphasizes the most important individual in football sport, the coach. There are various issues highlighted in this regard. Among them are the coaches involved not receiving proper accreditation, lack of good technical knowledge, coaching license issues and coaching skills among the coaches themselves. Even so, is the goal set by the NFDP can be achieved if they do not cope or know what is the issue faced by each coach involved under this program?

There are some key challenges faced by coaches in Malaysia, among them includes education curriculum for coaches, uncertainty in coaching direction, limited opportunities among coaches and guarantees of work as coaches (Karim & Nadzalan, 2017a; Karim & Nadzalan, 2017b). If the NFDP does not identify the issues faced by their coaches and know what coaching knowledge sources are able to improve their coaching skills, then the goals of the program will not be achieved and players trained will not achieve the standard set. When this happens, the money and time spend will become a waste and the country will definitely face a negative impact especially on developing a great national football team.

In this regard, a study should be conducted to determine the issues faced by the coaches under the NFDP program and to know what sources of knowledge provided by the program in providing

their coaches the knowledge to achieve the objectives set by the program. The knowledge on this will help researcher to develop a model that can be suggested for career path development among NFDG coaches.

There are two objectives that researchers want to achieve, namely general objectives and specific objectives. The general objective of this study is to develop a career development model of the coach involved in the National Football Development Plan (PPBN).

The specific objectives in this study are to; i) identify the issues and challenges faced by the NFDG program coaches, ii) identify the sources of knowledge of NFDG coaches to carry out their duties and iii) propose the ideal Career Development Model coveted by NFDG program coaches obtained from the data.

## Methodologies

### Research Design

This is a qualitative study that used the developed design concept. Qualitative methods help in detecting natural solutions to solving problems submitted by people with the interests and interests of a program or policy. In addition, this method is also used to gain a better understanding of a phenomenon that is not yet known (Lebar, 2006; Silverman, 2015).

### Sampling

In this study, researchers have used a purposive sampling method by interviewing five participants (coaches) from the NFDG program to know the direction of each coach's development under the program.

Categories	Total (N)
Tunas Academy	2
District Training Center	2
State Sports School	1
Malaysian Sports School	0
Mokhtar Dahari National Football Academy	0
Total (N)	5

### Instruments

According to Lebar (2006), in qualitative studies, researchers are the main instruments. The qualitative research process starts with the researcher's process of identifying the problems of the study, submitting the research title, selecting the study design, constructing questions for interviews with participants and then selecting the sample / participant's process, organizing an interview with participants, interviewing the participants until analyzing the transcript from the participants. The interviews were unstructured and carried out individually. However, the guidelines and the basics of interviewing are still in order and the draft of interview questions are also provided as a guideline. The results of interviews will be transcribed into texts and then the data can be interpreted.

## Results

The findings revealed that each coach has the issues, challenges and resources they possess while they are in the NFDPA program. Among the issues and challenges faced includes training, coaching, pedagogy, syllabus, remuneration, uniformity of NFDPA and non-NFDPA programs, infrastructure facilities, cooperation from other parties and NFDPA DNA itself. In order to answer the second question, that is what is the source of knowledge gained by the PPBN trainer, we found that coaches obtained knowledge through formal education (coaching, re-education and refreshment course) and informal education (video, meeting with other coaches, daily training sessions, inspiration, lesson plan inventories, past experiences and social media).

Among the issues highlighted by the coaches at NFDPA are the opportunities to attend the course. This is as instructed by A1 coach: "Ok, as we know, not all coaches are given the opportunity to attend the course. So why not NFDPA re-educates the coaches who have never attended any courses like several of us". Apart from that, there are also some challenges faced by NFDPA coaches, namely the involvement of coaches during the course as stated by A2, "One year about two to three times".

The knowledge source for coaches involved with this NFDPA program, among others, is the coaching course. The A3 coach stated that "We have a symposium, after a long time we are back for a refreshment, then re-education seamlessly throughout that year." Another source of knowledge gained by coaches involved with this NFDPA program is past experience. This is as stated by the coach A1, "in fact, the coach that previously was a player has a bright chance. As during their career as a player, they usually had got many knowledge from their coaches and then can use the knowledge to coach their players. This is an advantages compared to the coach that has never been a player, who has limited experience and knowledge. There are also people who say the coach is not necessarily a player, but in football, I prefer the coach to at least was once a player."

## Discussions

The study conducted by Stoszowski and Collins (2016) states that formalized training courses are also one of the instructor's reference sources for new coaching knowledge. In addition to formal training courses, the instructor's preferred method of accepting new coaching knowledge is from informal learning, self-learning situations, and communication between co-operators from a day to day basis during their training session.

This is parallel to Mesquita, Isidro, and Rosado (2010) that coaching courses are among the sources of knowledge that should be used as a basis for improving skills as coaches. This is because, formal learning is the main source of learning and is beneficial to coaches even more than have no background in coaching. There are coaches who point out that coaching courses are extremely important and the structure of the armor can provide knowledge and experience among coaches and helps trainers to interact and share knowledge throughout the course. Documentation during the coaching course is also very important to help coaches in making decisions using theories and applications during practical sessions on the field.

Aside from that, for reference sources derived from past experience, the findings are parallel to González-Rivera, Campos-Izquierdo, Villalba, and Hall (2017) stating that the experience of the coach as a former athlete is one of the key sources of knowledge of the trainer in Spain. This is because the experience as a player / athlete has previously provided technical, tactical and physical aspects to see whether the players they are training are good or weak and can help them better understand their role as a coach.

### **Coaching Career Path Development Model**

Based on the findings, researchers found that career paths selected by coaches involved in the NFDP program are that they want to focus fully on the field of coaching at adolescents. This is because the coaches are meant to be expert in coaching at adolescent stage, without having to "go up" and switch to adult-level coaching such as managing teams in the Super League of Malaysia or the Premier League. In their opinion, being expert does not mean they should be coaches in the highest league of the Football Association of Malaysia.

In addition, the researchers also agree with the coaches involved that career advancement by NFDP coaches is needed to increase and shift from the seven to nine year categories to categories of 10 to 13 years and then to 14 to 17 years only. The increase in career here is not meant to increase to mature teams such as being a coach at the Malaysian Super League or Premier League level but staying in training at the grassroots level only.

It is recommended to NFDP, the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) and the Football Association of Malaysia (FAM) to create a coaching license category such as A, B and C licenses for adolescent or grassroots coaches. These special coaching licenses are not the same as existing coaching licenses. Currently, the content of the A Coach coaching course is geared towards coaching in managing adult and professional teams such as the Malaysian Super League and so on. However, the content of the course is unsuitable for coaches who want to remain as grassroots coaches in NFDP. The NFDP coaches want a coaching accreditation system (license) that provides specification of course content involving coaching at adolescent level only. This can help them stay in the youth team as well as having the highest coaching license without having to switch to adult and professional teams. Accordingly, an initiative can be taken by the authorities to assist these coaches.

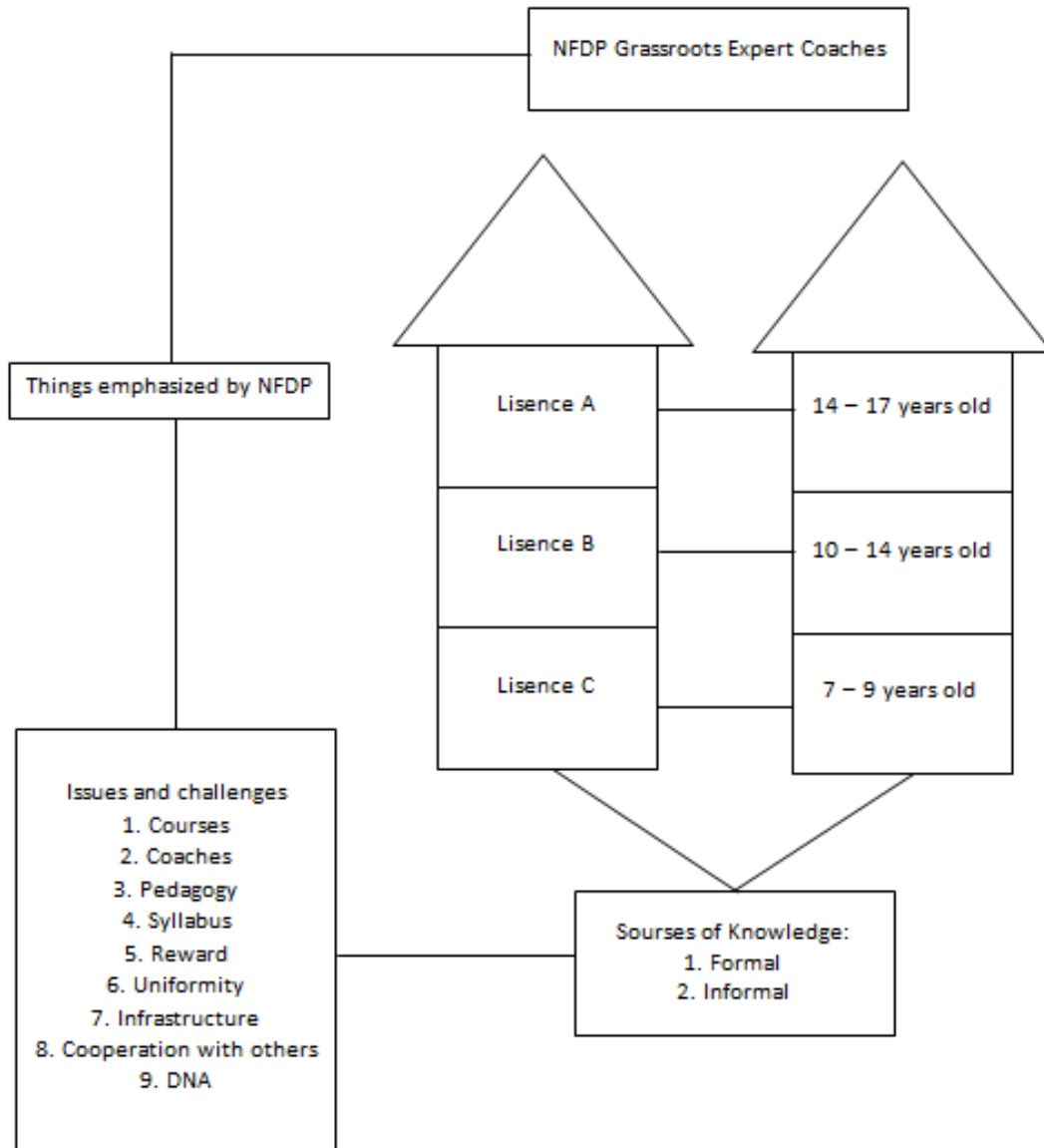


Figure 1. Model of direction of career development path by National Football Development Plan coaching program

Based on Ericsson (2006) and Ericsson (2008), every individual needs 10,000 hours of training to become experts in the field they are involved in. Therefore, if the NFDG coaches want to become an expert in their field of training the grassroots levels, they should be placed in the team for a long period of time without having to switch to a more mature or professional team. In that regard, one motivation and encouragement should be given to them in the form of competence certification which enables them to continuously improve their coaching knowledge.

It is also recommended that all NFDG coaches be given the opportunity to follow the Knowledge Transfer Exchange program at clubs or teams among European, Latin American and Asian countries such as Korea and Japan, as required by the coaches involved with this research. According to Reade, Rodgers, and Spriggs (2008), the coaches usually accept new ideas as a result

of interaction with other coaches, training courses and seminars. With the relationship between NFDP and other teams, NFDP coaches can interact with other coaches and exchange knowledge.

The "emerged" model of the data obtained and analyzed from this study is found in parallel with the Long Term Athlete Development model developed by (Balyi, 2001). There are five stages of the catheter in the Long Term Athlete Development model. Based on the DNA of the NFDP program, victory is not everything for those who train grassroots levels. Hence, it is in line with the third-level of Long Term Athlete Development model, which is the 'training to compete'. 50% of the training session at this stage is for the development of technical, tactical and physical fitness while 50% more are specific exercises for the game. At this stage, players that already good in basic skills will learn how to apply the skills in various competitive situations during training sessions. Special emphasis will be given to optimize the preparation by modelling training and competition. Fitness programs, recovery programs, psychological preparations and technical developments must be individually tailored to a higher level. The emphasis on individual preparation can address every individual's strengths and weaknesses (Balyi, 2001).

### Conclusions

In conclusion, there are some issues and challenges faced by the NFDP program coaches. In addition, they have also identified what sources of knowledge they have acquired throughout the program to cope with training sessions. Based on the issues, challenges and sources of knowledge, the researchers have produced a model of the direction or career paths the trainer pursued under this program.

By identifying and addressing issues and challenges faced by the coaches under this program, this will help to assist coaches in providing the best source of knowledge for coaches. NFDP coaches can use the models proposed by researchers to overcome the problems they face and subsequently undergo the programs they had plan for the development of Malaysian football.

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