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# THE DEVELOPMENT OF MALAYSIA FOOTBALL COACHING EDUCATION QUALITY FRAMEWORK



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UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN IDRIS

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THESIS TO QUALIFY FOR DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY



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FACULTY OF SPORTS SCIENCE & COACHING  
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## ABSTRACT

Sports coaching education and development has consistently been a topic of discussion on a global scale. Coaching education is considered essential to sustaining and improving the quality of sports coaching. Developing a sports education quality framework will serve as a guide to ensure consistency, relevance, and effectiveness in coaching and enable coaches to optimize athlete development and performance. The purpose of the study aims to develop the Malaysia Football Coaching Education Quality Framework. This study uses the qualitative method—Evolved Grounded Theory (EGT). Five football coaches from the National Sports School, the State Sports School, the District Training Center, and Tunas Academy across the country (n=5) made up the executing group, and five football stakeholders (n=5) made up the management group. The data was gathered through semi-structured in-depth interviews, observations, and written documents over the course of four months in order to create the Malaysia Football Coaching Education Quality Framework. We transcribed and analyzed the data verbatim using Atlas.ti software, employing open coding, axial coding, and selective coding processes. The findings revealed that three themes emerged within the context of the Malaysia Football Coaching Education Quality Framework. 1) competency-based coaching education; 2) sources of knowledge; and 3) accredited football coaches. The framework was focus on athlete's-centered coaching. Therefore, the findings will help the national football stakeholders develop the Malaysia Football Coaching Education Quality Framework. Through the framework, the stakeholders and governing bodies can cooperate to upgrade the existing program and improve the quality of football coaching education in Malaysia. In fact, quality football coaches can help produce quality footballers in Malaysia. Additionally, the Malaysian Football Coaching Education Quality Framework can serve as a guideline to enhance coaching education quality, optimize the coaching process, validate the coaching curriculum, and offer the good career path for football coaches in Malaysia.





## PEMBANGUNAN KERANGKA KERJA KUALITI PENDIDIKAN KEJURULATIHAN BOLA SEPAK MALAYSIA

### ABSTRAK

Pendidikan dan pembangunan kejurulatihan sukan secara konsisten telah menjadi topik perbincangan di peringkat global. Pendidikan kejurulatihan dianggap penting untuk mengekalkan dan meningkatkan kualiti kejurulatihan sukan. Membangunkan kerangka kerja kualiti pendidikan sukan akan menjadi panduan untuk memastikan konsistensi, hubung kait dan keberkesanan dalam kejurulatihan serta membolehkan jurulatih mengoptimumkan pembangunan dan prestasi atlet. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk membangunkan Kerangka Kerja Kualiti Pendidikan Kejurulatihan Bola Sepak Malaysia. Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah kualitatif—Evolved Grounded Theory (EGT). Lima jurulatih bola sepak dari Sekolah Sukan Malaysia, Sekolah Sukan Negeri, Pusat Latihan Daerah dan Akademi Tunas di seluruh negara (n=5) mewakili kumpulan pelaksana, manakala lima pemegang taruh bola sepak (n=5) mewakili kumpulan pengurusan. Data tersebut dikumpul melalui temu bual secara separa berstruktur, pemerhatian, dan dokumen bertulis sepanjang empat bulan untuk mewujudkan Kerangka Kerja Kualiti Pendidikan Kejurulatihan Bola Sepak Malaysia. Penyelidik menyalin dan menganalisa data secara verbatim menggunakan perisian Atlas.ti, melalui pengekodan terbuka, pengekodan paksi dan proses pengekodan terpilih. Hasil analisa mendapati tiga tema telah muncul dalam konteks Kerangka Kerja Kualiti Pendidikan Kejurulatihan Bola Sepak Malaysia. 1) pendidikan bimbingan berasaskan kompetensi; 2) sumber ilmu; dan 3) jurulatih bola sepak bertauliah. Kerangka yang dibina tertumpu kepada kejurulatihan berpusatkan atlet. Oleh itu, penemuan ini akan membantu pihak berkepentingan bola sepak negara membangunkan Kerangka Kerja Kualiti Pendidikan Kejurulatihan Bola Sepak Malaysia. Melalui kerangka kerja tersebut, pihak berkepentingan dan badan pengelola boleh bekerjasama untuk menaik taraf program sedia ada dan meningkatkan kualiti pendidikan kejurulatihan bola sepak di Malaysia. Malah, jurulatih bola sepak yang berkualiti dapat membantu melahirkan pemain bola sepak yang berkualiti di Malaysia. Selain itu, Kerangka Kerja Kualiti Pendidikan Kejurulatihan Bola Sepak Malaysia boleh menjadi garis panduan untuk meningkatkan kualiti pendidikan kejurulatihan, mengoptimumkan proses kejurulatihan, menambahbaik kurikulum kejurulatihan dan menawarkan laluan kerjaya yang baik untuk jurulatih bola sepak di Malaysia.



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFC	Asian Football Confederation
AMD	Mokhtar Dahari Academy
AT	Tunas Academy
CAQDAS	Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software
CEPs	Coach Education Programmes
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
FA	Football Association
FAM	Football Association of Malaysia
FIFA	<i>Fédération Internationale de Football Association</i>
IAHPEDS	International Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Dance and Sports
IPSO	International Professional Scouting Organisation
JDT	Johor Darul Takzim
KBS	Ministry of Youth and Sports
KSSM	New Secondary Standard Curriculum
KSSR	New Primary Standard Curriculum
MOE	Ministry of Education
NFDP	National Football Development Program



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NCAS	National Coaching and Accreditation System
NSC	National Sports Council
NTC	National Training Centre
PLD	District Training Centre
SASCOC	South African Sport Confederation and Olympic Committee
SSM	National Sports School
SSN	State Sports School



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Introduction

Football is considered one of the most popular sports in the world, involving physical, technical, tactical, and psychological aspects (Alves et al., 2017). The Federation of International Football Association (FIFA) has put in place a legal framework and invested significant financial resources in many parts of the world to assist in soccer development and maximize its social and economic benefits (Mwasiaji, Makhamara, & Kiganjo, 2022). In addition, professional football has become one of the significant contributors to the world's business and economic sectors (Qader, Zaidan, Zaidan, Ali, Kamaluddin & Radzi, 2017). According to Pundyk (2014), football has become the number one sport in Malaysia due to its popularity among television audiences compared to other sporting events viewed (Hamid & Kendall, 2008; Karim, 2016; Karim & Nadzalan, 2017). Football Association of Malaysia (FAM) is the governing organization in Malaysia. It is an autonomous organization in charge of developing national football.





The history of football coaching in Malaysia has undergone a remarkable transformation over the decades, mirroring the nation's broader evolution in the sport. Football in Malaysia, formerly known as Malaya, was introduced during the era of British colonialism. During the amateur era (pre-1970s), coaching was largely informal, with most teams depending on former players or educators. Training predominantly concentrated on physical conditioning and fundamental skills, characterized by a lack of tactical sophistication. Between the 1970s and 1980s, Malaysia achieved notable success by qualifying for the Munich Olympics in 1972 and the Moscow Olympics in 1980, although the latter was ultimately boycotted by the nation (Han & Aman, 2017). Local coaches began to ascend in prominence, with Mokhtar Dahari, Soh Chin Aun, and R. Arumugam exemplifying a formidable generation of athletes. Nevertheless, coaching remained predominantly experiential, and structured coach education was



The Football Association of Malaysia (FAM) commenced the engagement of foreign coaches for the national team with the objective of elevating standards. Notable figures such as Karl Weigand (Germany), who was appointed twice and instrumental in Malaysia's qualification for the 1980 Olympics, along with Claude Le Roy, Allan Harris, Bertalan Biscsei, Nelo Vingada, Kim Pan-gon, and Peter Cklamovski, contributed significantly to this endeavor. During the 2000s and 2010s, FAM collaborated with the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) to cultivate local coaching pathways. The introduction of the AFC Coaching License programs (C, B, A, Pro License) became a prerequisite for the coaching of professional clubs. K. Rajagopal led Malaysia to triumph in the 2010 AFF Suzuki Cup, marking the nation's most notable achievement since the 1980s. Ong Kim Swee concentrated on youth development through the *Harimau Muda* program.





In the 2020s, the emphasis has shifted towards tactical systems, sports science, and data analytic. Contemporary coaching methodologies prioritize grassroots development through the National Football Development Program (NFDP) (Ramalu, Karim & Elumalai, 2022) and the incorporation of sports psychology, nutrition, and GPS performance tracking. Coaches such as Kim Pan-gon have implemented structured, high-intensity strategies, bolstered by a cadre of professional support staff. There is a burgeoning inclination to facilitate the exposure and certification of Malaysian coaches on an international scale.

Salimin, Zaini and Sangkaew (2022) mentioned that football is a phenomenon in today's world, including Malaysia. Football has a long history in Malaysia, dating back to the advent of the British (Han & Aman, 2020). The Malaysia Cup, established in 1921, stands as one of Asia's most venerable football tournaments. Originally designated as the HMS Malaya Cup, in honor of a contribution from a British Royal Navy vessel, it was subsequently rebranded as the Malaysia Cup in 1967. The tournament predominantly showcased Malaysian state teams, military contingents, and foreign participants such as Singapore and Brunei. The inclusion of club teams commenced in 2000 (Albatat, Abi & Razali, 2020).

A Malaysian football league competition, representing the state football associations, was first inaugurated in 1979. Initially, this league was conceived primarily as a qualifying event for the culminating knockout stages of the Malaysia Cup, wherein teams engaged in a single-round league prior to advancing to the knockout phase. The top four teams at the conclusion of the league would contend in two semi-finals, with the victors progressing to the finals. In 1981, the quarter-final





stage was introduced, allowing eight teams to qualify from the preliminary round (Emmanuel, 2011).

However, it was not until 1982 that a league trophy was instituted to acknowledge the victors of the preliminary stage as league champions. Since that time, the Malaysia Cup has been conducted following the completion of the league each year, with only the most accomplished teams in the league earning qualification (Albattat et al., 2020). In 1989, the league underwent a transformation into a new format known as the Malaysian Semi-Pro Football League (MSPFL), approaching full professional status. Initially, the only teams permitted to participate in the league included the state FA's representatives, teams representing the Armed Forces and the Police, as well as teams from the neighboring nations of Singapore and Brunei. Nonetheless the Football Association of Singapore (FAS) withdrew from the Malaysian League following the 1994 season due to a dispute with the FAM (Lim, 2024).

The inaugural season of the MSPFL featured nine teams in the First Division and eight teams in the Second Division. The Malaysian Police joined Division II in 1990. Matches were conducted on a home-and-away basis over a span of approximately four months, typically from late April or early May until late August or early September. Under the newly established format, only the top six teams in Division I and the champions and runners-up of Division II would qualify for the Malaysia Cup. The Malaysia Cup was contested in a quarter-final stage, scheduled for November, subsequent to the conclusion of the league (Han & Aman, 2018).





In 1990, the FAM introduced a new national knockout competition known as the Malaysia FA Cup, with Perak emerging as the inaugural champion of this tournament. In 1992, the FAM established another amateur league for local clubs, the *Liga Nasional*. This league was managed by an external entity, Super Club Sdn. Bhd. Some of the clubs that participated included Hong Chin, Muar FA, PKNK Kedah, DBKL, PKNS, BSN, LPN, BBMB, Proton, PPC, and PKENJ. Unfortunately, this league was short-lived, operating for only one season before it was disbanded. Several clubs subsequently evolved and integrated into the main league, such as PKENJ, which transformed into Johor FC. In 1993, the competition's format was revised to incorporate a two-group league, followed by the traditional knockout structure. The introduction of promotion to the professional Malaysian League commenced in 1997, with Johor FC and NS Chempaka FC being the inaugural teams to achieve promotion that year (Ok,



Liga Perdana was established in 1994 to succeed the Liga Semi-Pro, thereby becoming Malaysia's inaugural fully professional football league and the premier football competition in the nation at that time. During this period, the league was interchangeably referred to as the Malaysian League or M-League. In 1998, Liga Perdana was bifurcated into two divisions, namely Liga Perdana 1 and Liga Perdana 2. Throughout this era, both divisions were collectively designated as the Malaysian League.

In the 1998 season, Liga Perdana 1 comprised 12 teams, whereas Liga Perdana 2 featured 8 teams. Ten teams that had previously qualified for the Malaysia Cup and participated in the 1997 Liga Perdana were automatically granted entry into that





season's Liga Perdana 1. The remaining two positions were filled through a playoff involving the five lowest-ranked teams from the 1997 Liga Perdana and the Malaysian Olympic football team, Olympic 2000. The four lowest teams from this playoff were subsequently placed into Liga Perdana 2, alongside the Police, the Malaysian Armed Forces, Negeri Sembilan Chempaka F.C., and Johor FC. At this juncture, the league still encompassed semi-professional teams, with each club permitted to register 25 players; of these, 12 had to be professionals for Liga Perdana 1, while a minimum of six professional players was required in Liga Perdana 2.

Both leagues persisted until 2003, when the FAM resolved to privatize the league, commencing with the 2004 season when the Malaysia Super League was inaugurated. Teams from Liga Perdana 1 and Liga Perdana 2 underwent a qualification stage and playoffs to secure promotion to the newly established Malaysia Super League. Those teams that did not advance through the qualifications were relegated to the new second-tier league, the Malaysia Premier League. (Albattat et al., 2020)

Starting in 2016, the Malaysian Football League (MFL) assumed control over all top-tier professional football competitions. Under this new administration, all clubs participating in the Malaysian league experienced their inaugural season as private entities in 2021. The FAM has been advocating for its member clubs to transition towards privatization as part of a strategic initiative to diminish their dependence on state funding.

Significant alterations were implemented in the Malaysia FAM Cup in 2008, whereby the knockout stages were abolished and a double round-robin format was





instituted. Consequently, the tournament was re-branded as the Malaysia FAM League. In 2018, a new subsidiary was established, known as the Amateur Football League (AFL), which was entrusted with the administration of the third division and lower tiers from 2019 onward. The AFL officially announced the inception of the Malaysia M3 League and the Malaysia M4 League as the third and fourth divisions within the Malaysian football league system, designated as amateur league competitions.

In October 2018, the FAM launched the FAM Roadmap F:30 with plans to become the top five best countries in Asia before 2030. The roadmap is broken down into three main goals. The first phase (2019-2022) will focus on establishing a solid basis in governance, competition, human capital development, and infrastructure. The second phase (2023-2026) will take the project to the Asian level. The third phase (2027-2030) seeks to build a national squad that meets international standards (FAM, 2018). One of the objectives of Roadmap F: 30 is to focus on coaching development, including grassroots levels. The most significant accomplishments of Phase 1 were Malaysia's qualification for the 2023 Asian Cup and their triumph in the 2022 U-19 AFF Championship. Phase 1 successfully established robust institutional and competitive foundations, achieving approximately 40% of its overarching objectives and securing significant victories at both youth and senior levels. Nevertheless, certain deficiencies persist—particularly in U-23 performance. This experience has informed a more incisive Phase 2 strategy, aimed at fostering sustained growth in Asia from 2023 to 2026. The goal of the second phase of the F:30 is to make *Harimau Malaya* one of the top five in Asia in three years' time (Aznan, 2023, para. 3).





Coaches are crucial to the development of expert athletes and the continuation of athletes' participation in sports. Their influence extends beyond mere skill development, encompassing the holistic growth of athletes as individuals. A coach's ability to instill motivation and cultivate self-esteem is paramount to an athlete's success (Marinho, Sousa, Ferraz, & Neiva, 2024). The coach-athlete relationship is a unique partnership centered around promoting inclusivity that is mutually empowering (Davis, Jowet & Tafvelin, 2019). Coaches are more than just instructors; they serve as mentors, guides, and confidants, shaping athletes' character and instilling values that extend beyond the playing field. Effective communication, motivational techniques, and ethical modeling are essential attributes of successful coaches, allowing them to connect with athletes on a deeper level and inspire them to reach their full potential.



Due to the complexity and fluidity of coaching, coaches must acquire a vast array of knowledge and skills to acclimate to the given environmental conditions (Ji, Xu, Cheng, Sun & Zhang, 2021). A growing body of research focuses on enhancing comprehension of how coaches develop their craft and acquire coaching skills. Generally, coaches are expected to produce outstanding results at the professional level and play a central role in fostering "social capital" and healthy living at the grassroots and community levels (Nathan et al., 2010). According to Lara- Bercial, North, Hämäläinen, Oltmanns, Minkhorst, and Petrovic (2017), coaches, today also play a more significant role not just in elite sports but in all of society. Nathan et al., (2010) also claimed the coach is vital at the community level because sports can be a mechanism to promote social cohesion, encourage strong community bonds, and access positive mentors. Consequently, coaches are considered the most important person in





determining the quality and success of athletes' sports experiences (Kamis, Ahmad Radzi, & Mohd Kassim, 2021).

Numerous studies affirm that coaches gain knowledge and information from formal professional clinics, seminars, and workshops. Although coaches have their own sources of knowledge, formal, non-formal, and informal sources influence coaching in general. To ensure that athletes can face any challenges posed by the club's management, players, or supporters, a coach must have superior knowledge of planning effective coaching and coaching process development (Clemente, Martins & Mendes, 2015).

Football coaching education in Malaysia is getting more attention after the government took the initiative to create a NFDP. This long-term program launched in 2013 with the vision of NFDP to consistently produce world-class footballers. The vision is to create a systematic and comprehensive football development ecosystem towards enhancing and improving the quantity and quality of national footballers. The mission of NFDP is to qualify for the U-17 FIFA World Cup 2019 in Peru. There are two phases in NFDP, Phase 1 (2014-2020) and Phase 2 (2021-2030). NFDP were managed by collaboration between the Ministry of Youth and Sports (KBS), MOE, National Sports Council (NSC) and FAM. Nevertheless, the NFDP's aspiration to secure a place in the 2019 FIFA U-17 World Cup culminated in disappointment during the 2018 AFC U-16 Championship, where Malaysia finished at the bottom of the grouping stage, thereby automatically failing to qualify for the World Cup.





One of the strategic thrusts of NFDP is to improve coaching standards, which is to develop a more progressive, structured and quality coaching system. Moktar Dahari Academy (AMD), National Sports School, State Sports School, District Training Center, and Tunas Academy are the football training center under the roof of NFDP. Tunas Academy is the training center for the age group seven to 12 years old. According to KBS (2014) report, the school is the birthplace of grassroots football players in Malaysia. Thus, NFDP has appointed more teachers to become coaches in this program (Ismail, Karim & Ghazali, 2020). In 2014, approximately 2,472 coaches were appointed under this initiative, and the number rose to 3,303 coaches by 2024 (KBS, 2024).

The coaching profession has received much attention in Malaysia, with reports highlighting problems related to unqualified coaches or those who do not have sufficient technical or strategic information (Rahaman, Karim, Nadzalan & Akbar, 2024; Khairulhalimi & Karim, 2020). In this regard, both these problems could be solved along with restoring football coaching standards by developing a country-comprehensive coaching education quality framework.

## 1.2 Research Background

The focus of coach education courses should be to provide opportunities for coaches to construct knowledge, not just receive it (Karim, 2016). 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, Armour and Jones (2003) as well as Gilbert and Trudel (2005), whereby knowledge is constructed by interacting with the situation in which one confronts a problem.

Formal courses furnish a systematic acquisition of knowledge and theoretical frameworks, while peer interactions impart practical insights and real-world experiences. This confluence fosters experiential learning, wherein knowledge is constructed through lived experiences (Ríos-Ramírez, 2023). The evolution within formal education exemplifies a synthesis of experiential and academic knowledge, positioning courses as a scaffold rather than the exclusive reservoir of expertise.

Coach education qualifications are part of a qualification framework. It is based on learning outcomes. The sports framework is based on occupational and professional profiles developed with branch organizations, employers, and sports sector employees (Resende, Sequera & Sarmiento, 2016). Resende et al. (2016) assert that the implementation of the learning outcome approach transcends mere description of the qualification frameworks established. It encompasses methodologies for assessment, curricular design, validation mechanisms, and the autonomy to forge individualized pathways (Cassidy, Potrac, & Rynne, 2023). The comparative analysis of qualification frameworks for coaching education in Malaysia and various other nations unveils both congruities and divergences within their structural compositions:



## i. Malaysia

**National Coaching Policy:** Malaysia operates under a structured national coaching policy that aims to develop coaches at various levels, from grassroots to elite sports.

**Certification Levels:** The framework typically includes multiple levels of certification (e.g., Level 1, Level 2, Level 3) that correspond to increasing competencies and responsibilities. Each level has specific requirements regarding training hours, practical assessments, and theoretical knowledge.

**Focus on Sports Science:** Malaysian coaching courses often emphasize sports science, including psychology, nutrition, and biomechanics, reflecting a holistic approach to coaching.

**Collaboration with National Sports Council:** The National Sports Council of Malaysia plays a significant role in overseeing the coaching education framework, ensuring alignment with national sports development goals.

**Continuous Professional Development:** There are requirements for ongoing education and professional development to maintain coaching qualifications, encouraging lifelong learning.

ii. Other Countries (e.g., USA, UK, Australia)

**Diverse Frameworks:** Many countries have multiple governing bodies for different sports, leading to varied qualification frameworks. For example, the USA has organizations like the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) and the American Coaching Academy, each with its own standards.

**Certification Levels:** Similar to Malaysia, many countries offer tiered certification levels, but the criteria and structure can vary significantly. For instance, the UK has a coaching framework that includes specific competencies and a focus on safeguarding and inclusion.

**Emphasis on Practical Experience:** In countries like Australia, there is a strong emphasis on practical coaching experience, often requiring a certain number of coaching hours alongside theoretical training.

**Integration of Technology:** Some countries are increasingly integrating technology into coaching education, utilizing online platforms for course delivery and assessment, which may not be as prevalent in Malaysia.

**Focus on Specialization:** In countries like the USA, there tends to be a greater emphasis on specialization in coaching education, allowing coaches to focus on specific sports or areas (e.g., youth coaching, elite performance).



There are numerous invaluable lessons that can be gleaned from international sports frameworks, which can significantly enhance coaching education and sports development across diverse contexts. Establishing standardized qualifications guarantees a uniform level of knowledge and expertise among coaches, thereby elevating the overall quality of coaching and athlete performance (Gök & Aslan, 2023). The integration of sports science—encompassing nutrition, psychology, and biomechanics—within coaching education not only optimizes athletes' performance but also promotes their overall well-being. Moreover, continuous professional development is imperative for coaches to remain abreast of the latest trends and research in the realm of sports.



Although football is increasingly popular in Malaysia (Karim, Razak & Nadzalan, 2018) and has a crucial role in developing players' performance, the support systems available are generally in place for the player but not the coach (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003). According to a recent *Fédération Internationale de Football Association* (FIFA) ranking, Malaysia is 131<sup>st</sup> of 211 countries, although football is the most popular sport in the country. Frequent alterations in coaching personnel can engender fluctuating tactics, thereby bewildering players, while disparities in coaching quality and methodology can profoundly influence player performance and team cohesion. These factors are pivotal contributors to the inconsistency in the national team's performance.

Consequently, building a systematic football coaching education framework and infrastructure to recruit, develop and support football coaches is necessary.





According to Ismail et al. (2020), coaches need more support if the governing bodies and ruling governments are serious about football progress. When compared to European systems, the Malaysian football coaching education system has unique features, mostly because of variations in curriculum, structure, and difficulties encountered. Malaysia is still creating its own quality framework to improve coaching education, but European nations like Germany, Belgium, and the UK have created frameworks with standardized coaching levels and certificates. Gök and Aslan, (2023) mentioned European countries have a more standardized and structured approach to coaching education, with clear levels and certifications recognized internationally. In addition, the coaching process is often aligned with international standards, ensuring effective knowledge transfer and player development. This advancement is essential for raising the standard of football instruction and, in turn, player performance in Malaysia. European systems gain from a rich history of football culture and well-established organisations that foster coaches' growth through reliable and superior educational initiatives.

The fourth core of the NFDPP is to enhance the development of coaching. This program plan also emphasizes an essential individual in football sport called the coach. The goals of FAM F:30 are to increase the number of certified coaching instructors and coaches through the AFC Convention, create local coaching standards through the FAM Coaching Charter, and spur innovation in the coaching industry in Malaysia. There are various issues highlighted in this regard.

Among them are the coaches involved in not receiving proper accreditation, lack of good technical knowledge, coaching allowance, coaching license issues and





coaching skills among the coaches themselves (Kasim, 2014; Karim, Razak & Nadzalan, 2017). Some key challenges are faced by coaches in Malaysia, among them education curriculum for coaches (Kassim, 2014; Karim, 2016; Karim et al., 2017). In addition, MOE (2021) also reported no official guidelines, such as a framework for coaching education in Malaysia, especially at the school level. The lack of a cohesive framework can significantly impede the overall progression of the sport, adversely impacting the identification of talent and the development pathways available. Coaches may find themselves at a disadvantage in delivering constructive feedback without a definitive structure for performance evaluation, thereby stifling the growth of athletes. Hence, the NFDP coaches advocate for a coaching accreditation system (license) that exclusively delineates course content pertinent to coaching at the adolescent level (Karim & Razak, 2018). According to Kassim (2012), coaches cultivate their coaching acumen through an array of readings, seminars, workshops, courses, and coaching programs (European Commission, 2016; Duffy, Hartley, Bales, Crespo, Dick, Vardhan, Normann & Curado, 2011), seamlessly intertwined with their extensive experience in the field of coaching.

Karim, Razak and Nadzalan (2018) stated that the career paths preferred by NFDP coaches are that they want to focus entirely on the field of coaching at the grassroots level. For example, the coaches should be experts at the grassroots level without having to "go up" and switch to adult-level coaching, such as managing senior teams. Arguably, being an expert does not mean they should be coaches in the first-tier football league.





In summary, this study aims to develop the Malaysia Football Coaching Quality Framework to ensure the quality of the football coaching education system. To improve the quality of football players, we need to upgrade our football coaching education system, especially from the grassroots level.

#### 1.4 Research Objective

Generally, the research objective is to develop Malaysia Football Coaching Education Quality Framework. In addition, the specific objectives of this study are:

- i. To identify the problems, issues, and challenges in developing Malaysia Football Coaching Education Quality Framework.
- ii. To understand the syllabus content of accredited coaching courses, the coaches preferred.
- iii. To examine actual sources of coaching knowledge and priorities for football coaches in Malaysia.
- iv. To develop the Malaysia Football Coaching Education Quality Framework.
- v. To identify the benefits and effectiveness of the Malaysia Football Coaching Education Quality Framework to football coaches in Malaysia, including coaches among the teachers in Sports Schools, District Training Centers, and Tunas Academy.





The main goals of this framework are to create standardized standards, criteria, and evaluation methods for the training and development of football coaches in Malaysia. This framework seeks to guarantee that coaches have the requisite knowledge, abilities, and competences to proficiently train and develop football players, from grassroots to elite levels.

### 1.5 Research Questions

This study seeks to address the following questions:

- i. What are the problems, issues, and challenges of implementing the Malaysia Football Coaching Education Quality Framework?
- ii. What are the actual and preferred sources of coaching knowledge for football coaches in Malaysia?
- iii. Does the syllabus content of accredited coaching courses provided satisfy the coaches involved?
- iv. How to develop the Malaysia Football Coaching Education Quality Framework?
- v. What are the benefits of developing the Malaysia Football Coaching Education Quality Framework for football coaches, including coaches among the teachers in Sports Schools, District Training Center, and Tunas Academy?





## 1.6 Theoretical Framework

Theoretical frameworks are crucial elements of research, offering a systematic perspective for researchers to organize, analyse, and interpret data. They function as the intellectual framework that supports research processes, directing the development of research questions, hypotheses, and the analysis of results. Steward and Klein (2016) states the theoretical frameworks are essential for directing research choices and organising research presentations and publications. They assist in formulating hypotheses, comprehending, and elucidating the links among elements that affect or forecast outcomes. The frameworks offer a thorough elucidation backed by data, enhancing the quality and pertinence of research across diverse disciplines (Adom, Hussein, & Agyem, (2018).



Theoretical frameworks are essential to the research process, affecting the choice of research topics, formulation of research questions, and design methodology. They serve as a framework for research efforts, guaranteeing that the investigation is concentrated and consistent with established information and theories (Van Der Walddt, 2024). The frameworks also direct the methodological approach, data gathering, and analysis, provide a justification for the study.

According to Lederman and Lederman (2015), theoretical frameworks are critical to qualitative methods. It also directs the course of a study and provides the foundation for its credibility (Adom et al., 2018). All research articles and the thesis should have an excellent theoretical framework to justify the importance and significance of the work. It acts as the structure and support for the justification for the study, the problem statement, the purpose, the essence, the research questions, the





reason for the study and the research questions. The theoretical framework serves as a foundation or anchor for the procedures and analysis. It's in line with Grant and Osanloo (2014) stated that the theoretical framework is the 'blueprint' for research, and all aspects of the study are connected to the theoretical framework.

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) emphasized the theoretical framework are developed using the literature's concepts, terminology, definitions, models, and theories as a foundation. The theoretical framework will generate research problems, research questions, data collection, analysis techniques, and how to interpret research findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Lebar, 2017). Thus, a theoretical framework will impact every area of the research. Without a theoretical framework, the study to be carried out has no theoretical foundation and will have a poor level of validity (Chua, 2021).



According to Corbin and Strauss (1998), it is more effective in a grounded theory study if the researcher understands the scoping study's theory, so it is on track. Despite several inconsistencies, researchers are optimistic that the theoretical framework will aid in the construction of a conceptual framework that will lead to answers to the study's aims and problems.

## 1.7 Conceptual Framework

This study sets out and will answer the research question on the benefits and effectiveness of the development of the Malaysia Football Education Coaching Quality Framework based on a comprehensive analysis of existing research and literature. The following theoretical and conceptual debates will provide national football stakeholders





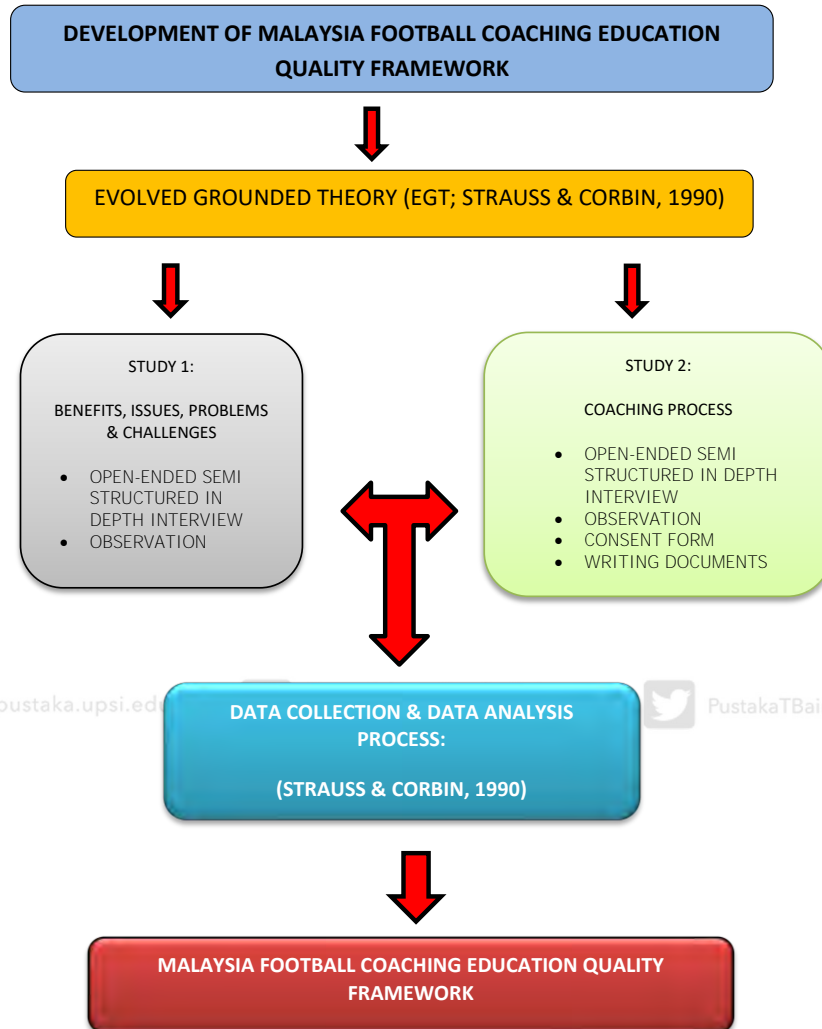
and football coaches, including coaches among teachers. The Malaysia Football Education Coaching Quality Framework aims to improve coaching education quality, coaching process, coaching pathway, and to accredit the coaching courses syllabus. The framework referred Australia's National Coaching and Accreditation System (NCAS) and the European Sport Coaching Framework (ESCF) as guidelines. Lyle and Cushion (2017) and Kubischta (2018) suggested the development of a sports coaching framework. It facilitates adaptability in coaching methodologies, empowering coaches to customize their approaches for individual athletes or distinct contexts. Moreover, it amplifies its relevance and applicability to authentic coaching scenarios.

The study was conducted qualitatively, with interviews and observation as part of the evolved grounded theory (EGT; Strauss and Corbin, 1990) methodology. As a result, this framework (see figure 1.1) illustrates the overall direction of this study in answering the research question, as led by the literature review and research questions. The conceptual framework provides a systematic approach, assisting researchers in delineating their focus and devising appropriate methodologies. Moreover, the conceptual framework enhances clarity, rigor, and relevance, ultimately culminating in more profound findings and contributions to the field.



**Figure 1.1**

*Conceptual framework*





## 1.8 Research Impact

This study is to develop the Malaysia Football Coaching Education Quality Framework. A well-designed framework for coaching education has several advantages and makes a substantial contribution to football's overall growth. All coaching levels are guaranteed to be of the same calibre according to the framework's explicit requirements and skills for coaches. Additionally, it guarantees that trainers have up-to-date skills and information, which supports efficient training methods. By giving coaches the resources they need to recognize and develop talent, the framework enhances player development. The framework encourages coaches to stay current with changing football trends and practices by fostering ongoing professional development. Additionally, it can protect moral behaviour and safety regulations in teaching methods, guaranteeing a safe and encouraging atmosphere for athletes. A high-quality structure enhances Malaysian football's credibility and prestige, making it more appealing on a regional and global scale. A quality framework improves the reputation and credibility of Malaysian football, enhancing its appeal on regional and international platforms.

Therefore, The Malaysia Football Coaching Education Quality Framework focuses on four critical standards, which relate to leadership, organization and management, children's experiences, and learning opportunities (Saari, Aziz, Rasli, Mustafa & Yassin, 2022). By analyzing these standards, stakeholders can record and interpret perceptions of the need for policies that emphasize professional and career development. The impact of the study is:



- i. It has enhanced the quality of the football and coaching education system. Thus, improving coaching education can enhance the knowledge and competencies of coaches.
- ii. Accredited coaching courses can improve the coaching quality for football coaches, including coaches among teachers.
- iii. Coaches will be allowed to attend coaching courses such as workshops, seminars, advanced coaching courses, and conferences worldwide enabling coaches to gain coaching knowledge. It should also provide access to continuous professional development opportunities to upgrade their skills and knowledge throughout their careers.
- iv. It contributes to the development of clear pathways for athletes to advance from grassroots to elite levels, assuring a systematic and comprehensive talent development process.
- v. Malaysia Football Coaching Education Quality Framework can become the novelty of the study. The coaching framework in Malaysia should also establish a robust monitoring and evaluation system to assess the framework's impact on coaching standards and player development. The monitoring and evaluation system would enable continuous improvement and adaptation to emerging trends and challenges in football coaching.

### 1.8.1 Teachers

Coaches among the teachers will benefit from the study due to the improvement of the coaching education system. Teachers/coaches can enhance knowledge and competency

by attending coaching courses, seminars, exchange programs, or conferences. The coach's career pathway assurance will be brighter than before.

### 1.8.2 Students

- i. Generally, the grassroots level players came from school students such as Sports Schools, District Training Center, and Tunas Academy. According to NFDP data in 2018, approximately 51,125 players will be in the program by 2020. Players will derive substantial advantages from this study by instituting a systematic grassroots initiative and enhancing the curricula within the New Primary Standard Curriculum (KSSR) and the New Secondary Standard Curriculum (KSSM) for the physical education syllabus, which can significantly elevate players' performance. Approximately 4.8 million school students will reap the benefits of these advancements.
- ii. Players at the grassroots level should be given exposure to modern football. The result will show us the effectiveness of the new coaching education system.

### 1.8.3 Ministry of Education (MOE)

Football games have been introduced at the school level under the Ministry of Education (MOE) recognition.

- i. This study may help MOE upgrade coaching education and develop the Malaysia Football Coaching Education Quality Framework, especially the Sports and Culture Division. The design and implementation of the framework necessitate the collaboration of various stakeholders, including the Football Association of Malaysia (FAM), the Ministry of Youth and Sports (KBS), coaching education providers, and experienced coaches. Sports schools play a pivotal role in developing athletes, offering a comprehensive curriculum that combines academic studies with intensive sports training (Mohamad & Karim, 2024). These schools provide promising athletes with specialized training, advanced coaching, and access to state-of-the-art facilities.
- ii. MOE also can establish a coaching support center for teachers that can be expanded nationwide and coordinated at all levels to ensure their effectiveness and success. All coaches will have the same comprehensive access and requirements to launch the coach's role at the grassroots and youth levels.

## 1.9 Limitation of Research

This study was conducted at National Sports School, State Sports Schools, District Training Center, and Tunas Academy in Malaysia as an implementing group participant. The participants of the management group included instructors and officers from AFC, FAM, MOE, KBS and NSC. The scope of the study:

- i. This study limited the football coaches and stakeholders involved in national football.
- ii. Commitment and cooperation of participants via interview sessions, observation, consent forms, and written documents are limited.

Transcribing the Malay language interview into English was one of the study's potential shortcomings. The complete thesis, as well as the framework were written in English. Despite the back-to-back translation procedure that the interview transcription process goes through, as Pacific International Translation (2018) recommended, there are probably implicit and explicit meaning elements that may not be communicated as fully in this method. The coding translated into English may not accurately reflect the meaning provided by the study participant. However, this coding procedure was carried out analytically utilizing an evolving grounded theory approach under the guidance of Strauss and Corbin (1998). The researcher, proficient in both languages and using theoretical sensitivity in shaping the coding of the transcribing interview data, believes that this indicated possibility only affects a very small percentage of findings.

## **1.10 Operational Definition**

### **1.10.1 Development**

A broad and contextually contingent term, it generally pertains to a transformative process of enhancement within a system, individual, or collective, particularly in academic and applied domains such as sports coaching, social sciences, and education



(Schulenkorf, 2016). This process typically aspires to elevate functionality, capability, performance, or overall well-being over time.

### **1.10.2 Football**

Football is one of the most popular sports globally (Merkel, Schmidt & Schreyer, 2016).

It also interests all ages, from elementary school to adult (Ali & Talib, 2013).

### **1.10.3 Coaching Education**

Coaching education is an important program or course to maintain and improve the quality of sports coaching (Mallet, Trudel, Lyle & Rynne, 2009). Cushion et al. (2003) state that coach development is assumed to be an all-encompassing term that refers to the process leading towards enhanced expertise. This learning occurs from accessing a range of opportunities, from informal to formal.

### **1.10.4 Quality Framework**

The quality framework comprises an extensive and comprehensive set of constructs and relationships that form a basis for discourse and research, education, and development (Lyle & Cushion, 2017). The origins of the framework are identified within an academic field of study that was undertheorized, under-resourced, and displayed ill-defined concepts.





## 1.11 Conclusion

The reasons for this study were briefly discussed in this chapter. Presenting a concise overview of football coaching education for improvement was feasible. This study is hoped to develop the Malaysia Football Coaching Education Quality Framework by serving as a guideline for all grassroots coaches nationwide. Coaches need to gain knowledge to improve their coaching quality and understanding.

