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## COACHING COMPETENCY IN MALAYSIAN RUGBY UNION: AN INTRODUCTION ON QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS CASE STUDY INVOLVING MALAYSIAN NATIONAL COACHES

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**Published online:** 26 June 2023

**To cite this article (APA):** Ahmad Idriss, A. F., Kassim, M., & Abdul Razak, A. E. (2023). Coaching competency in Malaysian Rugby Union: An Introduction on qualitative analysis case study involving Malaysian National Coaches. *Jurnal Sains Sukan & Pendidikan Jasmani*, 12(1), 42–50. <https://doi.org/10.37134/jsspj.vol12.1.6.2023>

**To link to this article:** <https://doi.org/10.37134/jsspj.vol12.1.6.2023>

### ABSTRACT

The perceptions of coaching competency in rugby union among Malaysian national coaches are investigated in this study. The goal was to acquire coaching competencies of what Malaysian national coaches believe it takes to be an effective coach according to World Rugby accreditation, rather than evaluating the skill or efficacy of the coaches engaged. In order to understand perspectives of effective coaching in the Malaysian national sport context as well as coaching tactics, this study used a qualitative research approach. A crucial component of the current research was the ability of participants to explain their personal interpretations of the world in which they live during interviews. Six coaches were questioned using the national rugby union coaches from Malaysia. This allowed for thorough explanations of what efficient competency coaches perform as well as the provision of details on how and why they carry out particular tasks. According to recent studies, an effective coach has a particular set of personal traits, talents, and abilities as well as a broad philosophy or direction for the squad. Based on the experiences of Malaysian national coaches, this study revealed essential perspectives and applications of good competency coaching. It also highlights crucial components of a humanistic approach to coaching that emphasizes the overall development of the coaches.

**Keywords:** Coaching Development, Sports Coaching, Knowledge Sources, Development of Expertise

### INTRODUCTION

Coaching is field that is important to all sports due to its big effects on the success or failures of a specific team (Panagiotis, 2020), (Kassim, 2008), (Abd Karim, 2016). This includes the sport of rugby union. Rugby union is a popular extreme sport played on all continents (King et al., 2019). Until 1995, rugby union was an amateur sport, but since then the professional level has grown (Hind et al., 2020). Each team will try to get the highest score by kicking, passing, or carrying the ball so that it can pass the opponent's goal or touch behind the opponent's line (Chiwaridzo et al., 2019) and try. At the professional level, there are major international competitions such as the Six Nations in Europe, the Rugby Championship between New Zealand, Australia, South Africa and Argentina, and the Rugby World Cup (Yeomans et al., 2018). At the 2019 Rugby World Cup, teams from the United States, Canada, Japan, Uruguay, Georgia and Romania participated alongside countries with stronger rugby traditions. A large number of regular rugby participants are amateur athletes, and one of the advantages of team coaching is that rugby teams have a fighting spirit to get a place representing the country (Erikstad et al., 2018). Hence the combination of coaching and the player's belief in the team, which is the main research title of this chapter. Till, Scantlebury (Till et al., 2017) stated that the game of rugby

is one of the rough and tough sports if it is seen through the naked eye because it has a physical collision that can invite pain and injury but is played according to the law of the game as well as high sporting spirit.

“The role of the coach is very important for the overall performance of the team or athlete and how this performance is handled and evaluated can have a significant impact on the overall success of the team” (O’Boyle, 2014). The sports industry plays a role improving in living an active sports lifestyle as well as promoting healthier and more effective nutritional requirements (Sedky et al., 2020). Communities associate their national sports activities with feelings of love for the country and a sense of national identity as well as being proud to display the national flag and play the national anthem at sporting events (Woods & Butler, 2020). This sentiment is related to learning in sports because it has a specific meaning to a society that is tied to important ideas and beliefs in socio-cultural life such as family, religion, education, economics, politics and media (Woods & Butler, 2020).

Various facets of sports coaching development and expertise have been studied by sports science researchers during the past 20 years (Evans & Light, 2008). According to Kassim (Kassim, 2008) and Karim (Abd Karim, 2016), various challenges must be faced by the coaching staff when guiding a team. They also added that every coach has to balance the tight schedule and work commitment, as well as the pressure to face on competition, especially to win a match or accept defeat. It is remarkable that the majority of coaches report how difficult and demanding coaching should be in order to increase team performance, given the variety of competences expected of sports coaches (Evans & Light, 2008). The report then summarises significant research trends related to coaches’ roles, expertise, and effectiveness.

The research was then organised in accordance with coach development specifications, including the following specialisations: coach education, career development, coaching advancement, and coach development level. This was done since sports are anticipated to develop a variety of competences. Killion, Bryan, and Clifton (Killion et al., 2020) suggested a sports coach’s “irregular lifestyle” includes travel, being away from family and friends, unpredictable times, limited time for oneself; and lack of job security. Killion, Bryan (Killion et al., 2020) said that coaches must also fulfil a variety of tasks, including those of educator, motivator, counsellor, advisor, trainee, manager, and administrator. Coaches who are more knowledgeable and more fluent in key challenges who are likely to be calmer in facing challenges as they grow should be better able to respond proactively in the course of their development (Carter & Bloom, 2009). Therefore, coach performance improvement research should be an important source of knowledge to ensure coaches always accept the tasks acquired as well as maintain their own effectiveness and be responsible for team coaching (Sucipto et al., 2017).

The ability to impart knowledge and experience in order to develop and improve the talent is a crucial component of the coaching role. According to Renshaw, Davids (Renshaw et al., 2019), many coaches make their practical training around rules and laws. They are expected to provide and maintain discipline among athletes, especially acting as role models (Lopez de Subijana et al., 2021). Additionally, coaches have a duty to ensure the health and safety of their athletes throughout practises and competitions (Collins & Collins, 2013). According to Renshaw et al. (2019), coaches must choose how to synthesise and apply their information from a variety of sources. Additionally, in order to handle the humanistic, challenging, and dynamic character of athlete development tasks, sports coaching necessitates intellectual and technical labour involving higher order thinking skills (Panagiotis, 2020).

Malaysia national body responsible for the advancement of the national sport of rugby is Malaysian Rugby (MR) (Nazarudin et al., 2014). Holistic approach to the training and preparation in terms of technical, tactical, physiological, and psychological to achieve the success in rugby union (Tee et al., 2018).. In 2020, the implementation of a new concept of coaching program in collaboration with the National Coaching Academy (NCA) under the supervision of the National Sports Institute (NSI) is seen as the best way to develop the understanding and skills of Malaysia's national rugby coaching (Abdul Razak, 2022). This decentralized program is considered ideal for the development of national coaches, as athlete support can be obtained more easily and at the same time provide wider expansion coverage and more opportunities to identify potential rugby players (Bompa, 1999).

Based on the introduction and statement of the study, the objective goals of this study are as follows, identify an understanding of the types of existing competency levels of coaching the Malaysian national rugby team. Secondly identify issues, challenges and constraints faced as well as competencies

in field for bearing the burden of national coaching duties and lastly identify a coaching process approach with applied competencies that has become a common practice of the coaches of the Malaysian national rugby team. Research Questions for this study is the competency of the coaches of the Malaysian national rugby team under pressure excessive and can interfere with coaching performance? Secondly is what are the issues, challenges and constraints faced as well as competencies in the field for bearing the burden of duty as the national coach of Malaysia? Lastly what is the common practice of the coaches of the Malaysian national rugby team level of competency for the team coaching process approach?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Research design***

A natural approach is used in qualitative research to comprehend a phenomenon in a particular setting. This means that qualitative research, which uses traditional manual methods like pen and paper, attempts to comprehend the phenomenon's true condition and the study's context without altering any actual circumstances (Patton, 2002) with the addition of using video recording to facilitate data storage and re-examine given statements. According to Creswell and Creswell (Creswell & Creswell, 2017), the qualitative approach differs from the quantitative approach because qualitative research does not use any producer who provides research findings based on statistics and qualitative calculations are seen as more appropriate in understanding a phenomenon in depth. According to Jackson (Jackson, 2020), the primary goal of qualitative research is to assist researchers in recovering and comprehending from ambiguous, unfair, and unreasonable conditions related to societal structures that impede the growth and progress of sports coaching internationally. In this study, a qualitative research technique called a case study was employed. A case study is described as a research method that requires careful design of each stage and is based on firm justification and technical research knowledge (Yin, 2018). A case study is defined as researching a fact where boundaries of context and fact are not precisely definite in the context of real life.

### ***Data collection tool***

Lebar (Lebar, 2014) stated that qualitative data is obtained by means of observation, data recording, video recording and interviews that are considered appropriate to obtain complete data. In this study the researcher will focus on the interview method and data collection. Fatta (Fatta, 2020) agrees that the interviews conducted are semi-structured in depth and conducted individually. However, guidelines and basics of conducting interviews in order and draft interview questions are also provided as guidelines. The recorded results of the interviews with the study participants were transcribed into text so that the researchers could interpret the data resulting from the interviews. Researchers use purposeful sampling strategies because they want to get rich and abundant information about the research conducted because of access, interaction as well as being able to build trusting relationships with national rugby coaches (Mehall, 2021). The findings of this study can provide credibility and the quality of the data can be ensured because the researchers are also active with the Malaysian national rugby team (Jaimes et al., 2020)

Semi-Structured Interviews according to Creswell and Creswell (Creswell & Creswell, 2017) combine the flexibility features of unstructured and open-ended interviews with questions provided as well as research-appropriate questions according to the needs of the researcher. The questions in the semi-structured interviews are determined in advance according to the importance of the research but the answers to these questions are open and can be developed at the discretion of the researcher and research participants. Lebar (Lebar, 2014) states that semi-structured interviews are the best way to explore and explain factors and subfactors.

### **Research process**

Researchers are very flexible and can change according to the context and reality of a coaching process as what found by Hermawan (Hermawan, 2019) because this method provides a systematic element to data analysis. In addition, it is a description or reconstruction of the symbolic meaning of social interaction of the study subject (Braun, 2006) and provides an opportunity to understand sociocultural data to understand the potential of an issue more broadly (Sugiarti, 2018). This forms an understanding of the cultural behavior of a group of people to know the values, motivations, beliefs, perspectives and how it develops to provide core skills to conduct many more qualitative analyzes (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Nowell et al., 2017).

### **Analysis of Data**

Talib (Lebar, 2014) stated that the data obtained were analyzed using ATLAS.ti (version 22) to better understand subjective data in the form of interviews, field notes, voice recordings, videos, photos, documents to interpret opinions, perceptions and agreements. At the field data collection stage, the researcher analyzes the documents to understand the concept of team training. Comparison and linking of categories that arise through data analysis. This approach is aimed at comparison of data arising through simultaneous data collection and analysis and theoretical sampling of various coaching groups to maximize similarities and differences of information (Lebar, 2014). Tie, Birks (Tie et al., 2019) stated that the theory built by this methodology is a substantive theory that has specific characteristics as well as practical in real world situations. It also contains categories, characteristics and hypotheses constructed through the data collected.

## **RESULTS**

The findings provide a detailed account of Fulmer's significant learning experiences, which is consistent with qualitative research in general and case study approaches in particular (Stake, 1995). Given Stake's (Stake, 1995) claim that a case should be unique, the findings may be viewed as a "modified realist tale" (Sparkes, 2002) as a result of the numerous quotes that are presented in this part. The data are presented chronologically and overlay Fulmer's meaningful learning experiences throughout two groups of development (assistant coach and head coach). The number of coaches selected for this study was displayed in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Malaysian Rugby Coach Sample Study

<b>Rugby Team</b>	<b>Number of Coaches</b>
7's Men's Team	2
7's Women's Team	2
15's Team	2
Total	6

### **Group 1: An Assistant Coach**

As an assistant coach in Malaysia, they gained a variety of experiences that taught them how to build team cohesiveness, the skills of individual athletes, and the framework for a long-term, successful programme. when a position as coaches for the Malaysian national team was offered. They were pushed into situations where they had to learn by doing, and they were successful as a result. For the national coach, it was amazing because suddenly they were not only the coach but also the person who helped establish the idea of training and developing the Malaysian rugby environment. Malaysian rugby had a lot less of everything—facilities, money, staff, and tradition.

Coaches were able to clarify their career goals thanks to a series of educational events. As soon as they were aware of the objective, they started learning as much as they could to achieve it. As

assistant coaches, they had discovered early on that reaching a goal was attainable, and they now put that knowledge into practice. The importance for community involvement, recruiting, and interpersonal interaction was acknowledged by the coaches. They went to the coaches of winning teams to pick their brains. They claimed to be a tough coach who expected a lot of his athletes, but they also claimed to care deeply for them. To become a positive, compassionate, demanding, and committed assistant coach, coaches set out to draw from all of their learning experiences.

### **Group 2: Head Coach**

Coaches were able to clarify their career goals thanks to a series of educational events. As soon as they were aware of the objective, they started learning as much as they could to achieve it. As assistant coaches, they had discovered early on that reaching a goal was attainable, and they now put that knowledge into practice. The importance for community involvement, recruiting, and interpersonal interaction was acknowledged by the coaches. They went to the coaches of winning teams to pick their brains. They claimed to be a tough coach who expected a lot of his athletes, but they also claimed to care deeply for them. To become a positive, compassionate, demanding, and committed assistant coach, coaches set out to draw from all of their learning experiences. Young athletes should show some respect for older, more seasoned coaches, but head coaches must stay up to date with popular culture in order to relate to young people. A coach will be able to connect with their students a little bit better and convey their message if they have a basic knowledge of their favorite music, books, or movies. The head coach must understand how to relate to athletes by learning about their interests.

## **DISCUSSION**

Described as "a chain of developmental outcomes and activities that occur in response to personal and contextual requirements over a period of time" (Côté, 2006), the Malaysian national coach environment. Researchers have previously identified three stages (Salmela, 1996), five stages (Erickson et al., 2007), and six stages (Salmela et al., 1994; Schinke et al., 1995) in the development of coaches. Four stages are suggested by the emerging themes in sports coaching development. Young (Young, 2013) found that high-performing coaches typically have the following characteristics: (i) little formal education, though more successful coaches have more education than lower-performing peers; (ii) extensive hours as an assistant before becoming a head coach; (iii) receive mentoring and, as they gain experience, give mentoring; and (iv) have significant experience as a coach. All national coaches started informal coach education began as a youth athlete, where they formed beliefs about the value of sport and the role of the coach. As an athlete, all national coaches also learned values such as coaches being supportive and committed to athletes both on and off the field, inspiring a hard work ethic, and personally finding ways to achieve goals

The majority of the study on the development of coaches has focused on the coaches' involvement in sport as athletes and their first-hand coaching experiences (Mallett & Côté, 2006; Callary et al., 2011; Erickson et al., 2007). Even while studies on sports coaching indicate that family is likely to have a substantial direct and indirect influence on their growth as coaches (Côté et al., 2003), the scholarly literature has not yet thoroughly analysed this topic. According to Callary (Callary et al., 2011), coaches' experiences with their families throughout their primary socialisation do have a significant impact on their coaching practises. For instance, parents frequently enrol their kids in sports and encourage their participation, which aids in the development of a passion of sports in people. With this fundamental appreciation for sport, people may learn more and grow to love teaching (Callary et al., 2011). Support and involvement from family and youth/high school coaches were crucial to the development of Malaysia's national coaches, which is in line with the findings of (Nash & Sproule, 2009). In fact, this assisted them in creating a set of values that directed their own job choices. The beneficial influence of their father has been acknowledged by other performance coaches. Helping coaches recognise how their family, coaches, and sport-related events affected their attitudes and values is a direct consequence of coach education. By doing this, coaches may be better equipped to exhibit morals and conduct that adhere to guidelines for coaching, such as those established by Malaysia's

National Sports Council (NSC).

The development of coaches has been shown to include mentoring as well (Bloom et al., 1998; Cushion, 2006). Finding a mentor who shares the same values as one's own is crucial, according to all national coaches. The Malaysian national coaches observed one mentor develop a good rapport with the athletes and realised this could go "the positive route." They all discussed how they used the positive actions and values (and eventually rejected the unfavourable ones) as a guide for their future actions as coaches. All national coaches found the mentorship process to be so valuable that he advised new coaches to choose mentors carefully, reflecting Gilbert et al.'s (Gilbert, 2009) assertion that the mentoring process is a crucial experience. While praising the importance of beginning coaches modelling themselves after an experienced coach, they also urged to "be yourself." Other case studies of sport instructors have revealed this seemingly incongruous emotion (Nater & Gillimore; Voight & Carroll, 2006). Although these coaches believe that learning from others is beneficial, we offer the interpretation that learning skills like self-awareness, reflection, and integrity are essential to becoming a successful, authentic coach because one cannot reduce the complexities of coaching to simple mimicry or isomorphism (Lemyre et al., 2007). Coaches' intrapersonal knowledge has been recognised as a crucial component in research defining coaching effectiveness and skill (Côté & Gilbert, 2009).

All Malaysian national coaches have said, in relation to the interview data gathered for the current study, that the coach's initial role is as a "educator, mentor" (Fulmer, 2008). In conjunction with the results of the current study, the researchers contend that personal coaching philosophy (Carless & Douglas, 2011) reveals a tale of an educator-coach operating in the "big-time" national athlete space, a problematic one that has long been the target of harsh criticism (e.g., winning-at-all-costs, detracts from academics, and exploits labour; (Coakley, 2008). According to other theorising on the educational underpinnings of good coaching (Gearity, 2012), holistic coaching (Cassidy, 2013), and coaching programmes (Cassidy et al., 2008), the idea that sports can be utilised as a form of education seems to be in line with this notion. The coaching literature, particularly Gearity's (2012) study on coaching behaviours, is increasingly supporting these coaching traits (i.e., positive, supportive, caring, and following the rules). Coach educators must be aware of how this sociocultural backdrop will affect the next generation of coaches as society continues to change and young sports, along with athlete development, become increasingly professionalised and commercialised.

## **CONCLUSION**

The aim of this study was to examine the connection between six Malaysian national coaches' assessed competency and their perceived sports coaching behaviour. The results of this study show that participants' perceptions of competence were stronger the more rugby coaches' leadership behaviours were valued. Coach educators should support national coaches in developing personal goals and career aspirations that are consistent with World Rugby (WR) and National Sports Council (NSC) standards for philosophy and ethics, teaching and communication, organisation and administration, and evaluation. They should also assist national coaches in reflecting on their sociocultural experiences. It is difficult to determine how much sociocultural elements influence coach learning and coaching practises because these factors might vary greatly based on culture and individual, and they will surely change as society changes, especially in Malaysia. Coaches may become more aware of how society affects their values and actions by reflecting on their experiences. In fact, it might be beneficial for all national coaches to consider how sociocultural influences affect their teaching style. In order to improve their athletes' performance, coaches must also work to expand their knowledge of physical training techniques, proper testing procedures, psychological strategies, injury risk, and rehabilitation technique.

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