

# Popularity of football



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

## **Dissertation**

### **Introduction**

The popularity of football and the impact it has on many people can globally can be justified by the fact that more than 1.1 billion people viewed the FIFA World Cup in Germany in 2006 (FIFA, 2006). Therefore, with the demand for entertaining football as high as ever, researchers and coaches have attempted to develop a strategy to produce and develop talent, however such processes takes eight to twelve years of training (Grant, 1999). Yet, as football is a business integrated sport, stakeholders often stress in yielding immediate returns from expensive investments. Thus, the KFA (Korean Football Association) still tend to allocate the majority of resources and funding to elite football set ups resulting in K-league football teams to hire proven foreign athletes rather than nurturing and developing local talented athletes (KFA, 2009). This may possibly be due to the benefits as Holger Preuss (2000) suggested that successful football teams are more likely to attract lucrative foreign investments through sponsorship and media rights. Evidently, many of the world's leading and most famous football teams including Barcelona and Manchester United possess numerous world class athletes originally based from different countries and cultures.

Subsequently, the characteristics and formation of football teams are very similar to that of multi-national organisations. In this ever so competitive sport, failure to manage cultural diversity in football teams may upset and provoke stakeholders such as the chairman and board of directors to take action in most scenarios the manager being replaced. Moreover, the management of cultural diversity is concurrent in the media yet minimal

scientific research is present regarding the effects on football teams.

Therefore, the purpose and aim of this study is to further research and understand the methods of managing cultural diversity in football teams with the aid of Pohang Steelers Football Club.

### **Literature Review**

Business organisations are changing at a phenomenal pace because of globalisation, outsourcing, telecommuting and deregulation with employees including football coaches seeking alternative approaches to working (Daft, 2002). Furthermore, with ethnic conflicts and issues constantly arising in today's society, it is inevitable that various demands must be met in order to maximise productivity and synergy (Cascio, 1995). Furthermore, Elashmawi & Harris (1993) stated management currently is increasingly multicultural and Daft (2002) also supported this claim and added that synergy is present when a culturally diversified team understand the individuals' roles, create norms and produce effective communication structures and utilise individuals' strengths to enable the team to achieve set targets.

Consequently, communicating effectively as a football coach is a very complicated process (Watt, 1996). Moreover, athletes during sporting operations on the field use verbal and non-verbal communication in a variety of ways that are both culturally and individually motivated (Kippenberger, 2000). This suggests that that the use of language, hence the use of verbal language within a multicultural football team could be the biggest barrier to enable cohesion through effective communication (Elashmawi & Harris, 1993). Therefore, this suggests that the coach must acknowledge that to effectively manage multicultural football teams, it is essential to understand

that different behaviours and communication styles must be present (Husting, 1995). Effective communication strategies

This is extremely evident during matches and training and a crucial component to successfully managing the team is the style of leadership of the coach (Watt, 1996). This could be due to the fact that within sports coaching the central responsibility of the coach is to enhance performance (Lyle, 2002). However, in sports coaching there are no correct or incorrect approaches and attributes that coaches are favoured to possess yet Watt (1996) suggested that a common leadership approach is the transformational style. Such style showcases leadership attributes including integrity, honesty and commitment through development of a vision, inspiring and selling the vision with motivation and over viewing the vision (Hodgetts & Luthans, 2003).

Studies suggest that younger athletes may produce natural ability and talent at a tender age and follow the youth system of some big clubs (Owen, 2005). This suggests that the developmental stage and correct guidance is the key to transitions that players have to experience. Failure to do so can result in the stagnation of the development of technical attributes (Nicolaou, 2008). Furthermore, it can also lead to the loss of interest for the athlete as football may no longer be perceived as 'fun', since younger athletes mostly play without competition but due to the early introduction of playing to win the emphasis is too great on performance (Reed, 2007) as the two FA's introduce competition from a young age. Therefore, further investigations should be conducted in countries with solid football set ups to be used as a benchmark for both The KFA and The FA to compare, contrast and further

<https://assignbuster.com/popularity-of-football/>

enhance the understanding of necessary changes allowing ratifications to occur. Holland is a country with only a 50 year history since the formation of the professional league. Despite of the lack of resources Holland has produced a very successful team constantly challenging for the highest honors. This directly corresponds to the fact that amongst the 2500 clubs within Holland, 95% have a fully functional youth academy. (Helsen, Hodges, van Winckel & Starkes, 2000). With the successful system present in Holland which contrasts drastically with the fragile structure in England and Korea.

Due to the agreement of the ten year or 10, 000 rule between researchers, athletes should train on average three hours daily for ten years (Salemela, 1998). This asserts that long term training and development needs to occur for successful development rather than a ‘peaking by Friday’ approach (Balyi and Hamilton, 1999). Furthermore, (Balyi and Hamilton, 1999) research also stated that sports can be classified as early specialization or late specialization, the former referring to sports that requires sport-specific training such as gymnastics and diving whereas the latter referring to sports that require a generic approach to training such as football and rugby.

The early learning stages of athlete development can be viewed as most fundamental since this is the period where basic skills are nurtured through the act of ‘playing’, such as kicking, striking, catching and running as this leads to the enhancement of cognitive and motor skills (Gentile, 1972). The development of FUNdamentals (Appendix 0. 1) is also the first stage of the Late Specialization Model which emphasizes the importance of the development of physical capacities and fundamental movement skills (Balyi, 2004). Furthermore, Gentile also stated that coaching younger athletes

should not only promote getting the basic idea of movement but also introduce a diversified program which works on both closed and open skills. This is contrary to what Hoare suggested as he claimed that younger players hold a tendency to follow coaches and when success is yielded they move on to the next developmental stage (Hoare, 2000). Therefore, the act of copying adults from younger athletes implies the need for qualified coaches at youth level and may suggest that investment on the standard of coaching could be a vital element of success. On the other hand, (Gentile, 1972) suggested that repetitive practice in a diverse set of environments is important, as younger athletes may show consistency in performing a set skill but understanding the process of how the skill is achieved is different. Hence, understanding the know-how process of skill acquisition and execution are achieved and produced at the latter stages of the LTAD model when players reach ages of 16, where movements and skills are performed automatically known as the autonomous stage (Schmidt, 1987). This autonomous stage directly links to the stage 3- Training to Compete Stage and stage 4- The Training to Win Stage whereby skills nurtured and developed from younger ages are put to test under various competitive environments of a 50: 50 ratio of competition and training. However, the introduction of competition and playing to win at an early age may hinder the development of athletes rather than provide a competitive edge as today's athletes mentality involves winning at all costs (Volkwein, 1995). Therefore, in Korea numerous youth academies train athletes with drills with the intentional outcome of success through attainable goals rather than just winning.

Contrary to the LTAD model which stresses the importance of timing and coaching within the stages of development, literature should be reviewed within the cultural and coaching differences. Countries such as Holland and Spain hire highly experienced and qualified coaches for training sessions and monitoring the development of individual athletes. (Salmela, 1995).

Furthermore, the coaches from Holland are also a force mentionable with some of the best coaches in the world. Not only did Rinus Michels receive the coach of the century award in 1999 by FIFA, in 2006 World Cup there were four Dutch coaches present. Although in England the youth academies do consist of former professional players as coaches at youth level, Korean professional academy coaches are not as qualified with the vast majority of coaches only holding the equivalent of level 1 coaching badges. This results in the coaches targeting training sessions with the view of minimal technical knowledge and drills catered for elite level athletes rather than providing attention to individual young athletes' requirements. This virtually ignores the development of late bloomers or developers as individuals develop both physically and technically at different ages (Kolb, 1984). In addition, failure to cater individual requirements is detrimental as individuals' knowledge of the concept of motor skills and performance vary and higher skilled athletes demonstrate qualities such as maximum certainty, minimal energy expenditure, and minimum movement time which are crucial criteria that showcase the quality of elite athletes (Guthrie, 1972). In addition, (Snow, 2004) also concluded that when younger athletes are allowed to play in the optimal environment that caters the individual's age group, the performance will also match.

However, Brazil obtain some of the most technically gifted players in the world and this was due to the lack of structure at a young age but more so on the free play aspect without instruction. Such unstructured play can encourage creativity and confidence whilst (Balyi, 2003) suggested that such play with minimal instructions could possibly be difficult to grasp. Thus, an incorporation of structured and non-structured activities could return positive results in the younger athletes' development. Yet, the current English and Korean clubs show less stress on such activities and provide a stronger emphasis on constant guidance from a younger age. Moreover, the Korean counterparts training at U-17 level is more rigorous in terms of quantity of training sessions a week than professionals. (KFA, 2001)

### **Conclusion**

The creation of the ' Five Stage Model of Late Specialization in Sports' was originally directed at producing high performance Alpine Skiers over a eight year cycle and hence a direct use of such development model could possibly be unsuitable for football which questions its validity with the use in a football environment. Furthermore, a scientific interrogation of the model is virtually impossible as it refers to minimal science and includes no research data. This shows that in spite of such model being widely across sports governing bodies as guidelines and powered the way forward for big projects within sports development, it lacks creditability in a scientific point of view.

However, with such wide acceptance of the model and for the purpose of this research, a conclusion can be drawn that with Balyi's change of the model in 2001 to suit different sports, and the modification made by The FA and KFA the respective models do not identically copy but partial overlapping



features do occur. Balyi's model although aimed at long term athlete development has a final stage known as the Retirement/ Retraining stage but this feature is a transition and not that of the athlete development to produce elite athletes. Hence, there could be questions raised whether it is a performance development model or retention of players for participation.

A final conclusion of any data collected is impossible due to time constraints, as a third year student with only a given time period to collect data it was impossible to review all literature available on youth-set up of different countries and LTAD models. Hence, research and review could be biased. Furthermore, due to the development of athletes taking ten years and 10,000 rule, it is only possible to criticize the LTAD development model through extensive scientific experiments that are impossible due to time and budget restraints. Further investigations should be conducted to put-to-practice the LTAD model not just in Alpine Skiers but other relevant sports to discover the relevance and validity of such model in the respective sports. Therefore, without such tests The FA and KFA's LTAD model could be a unreliable source to base youth development schemes on.

## **Methodology**

### Research Question

Comparative study of two premier league football club's in different countries analyzing the youth development process including LTAD structure/system and why one is more successful in developing young athletes.

**Hypothesis**

Due to the success and popularity of the English Premier League, the English youth developmental process will be better in producing more elite athletes measured in a percentage base (Number of athletes entering system and exiting as elite).

**Introduction**

A specially designed interview will be prepared during the course of this project regarding the current situation of the youth-setup and the links to the LTAD development model from Balyi. This interview will be conducted primarily on the phone as subjects are in Korea and in England that are working at elite football which results in a tight schedule. The interview key points will be recorded on paper and necessary translation will take place regarding the Korean interviewees whereas the English Interviewees will be straight forward.

This qualitative data gathered through an interview will provide an expert insight to the developmental process of young athletes within football in both countries and whether the LTAD model actually works within football. Moreover, with the collected data it will be possible to evaluate both countries systems and eventually answer the reasons why one system is more successful in producing elite athletes. In addition, a comparison between Korea, England, Holland and Spain will be made as the current system regarding talent development in the last two countries is viewed as the world's best. This would provide a better scenario for further improvements that could be made for The FA and KFA and could use such data as a benchmark towards further initiatives and projects.

**Method**

This research design will be in the form of a case study that investigates through the use of a interview or test procedures. Data successfully collected will be through open questions and certain data will be in the form of interval data as even with figures and data such as percentage base comparison. Such methods will be an attempt to determine which country has a better system in developing talent.

The use of primary data collection will provide a unique set of data currently unavailable in literature and sources which allows a different perspective to provide new evidence to relate to the hypothesis and research question. To tackle the question an interview will be conducted through international calls to Korea with the use of specifically designed questions to retrieve relevant information. The information will then be recorded by text and used for data analysis. On the other hand, the interview with the interviewees in England will be conducted in an actual interview format face-to-face due to the proximity of the interviewees in relation to the researcher. The complete interview should take 25-30 minutes per person for completion, however there are possibilities that it may take longer as there are two elite level coaches who will be interviewed and further knowledge and data can be retrieved.

**Data Analysis**

Upon successful collection of results, an analysis of data will be conducted to enable the evaluation of the youth development set up in Korea and England. Individual interviewees' opinions will be analyzed in regards to whether personal experiences within football suggest that the current

systems in the respective countries need altering. However, due to some of the questions being in the form of open questions there could be an element of personal opinion which could lead to bias. However, the validity of the personal perspective is crucial as two elite level coaches in the highest level of football shows credibility in opinion. Due to the use of interview as the main qualitative technique, the interviewees' emotions and motives of their opinions can be understood to the evidence provided. Furthermore, the questions could be asked in detail to specifically cater the research question, enabling access to information only applicable to the study with accurate and precise responses.

The main emphasis on the analysis of data collected will be to acknowledge the utilization of Balyi's LTAD model for athlete development and whether it is suitable for use within football in developing talent. Also, questions regarding percentages and figures will be asked in order to perform a percentage base comparison between the two countries. However, due to the differences in variables including amount of player entering the system and exiting will be different in the two countries. Such qualitative technique could be crucial in contrasting the overall success rate of which system produces more elite athletes successfully.

### **Subjects**

The interviewees' that will be utilized for this interview will be four people working in elite football with two from Pohang Steelers Football Club and two from Fulham Football Club. These participants will be conveniently selected due to the difficulties in gaining access to further elite coaches for

interviews. Each subject will have had at least 10 years work experience in professional top level football for validity measures.

### **Ethical Procedure**

All research conducted should be through an ethical background understanding not only the researchers rights but also the rights and safety of subjects. Prior to the arrangement a consent form will be sent to the interviewees to agree upon as an ethical procedure. This procedure is set forth in order to agree on the purpose of this interview, its use and relevance to this project. The interviewees are all pre-selected which can be considered as convenience sampling as elite coaches and subjects with validity are extremely difficult to gain access to, yet due to former work experiences such subjects were available. However, all subjects will be treated fairly and equally with the same set of questions to ensure a fair investigation.

As there will be interaction between different people there is a strong responsibility to ensure that the researcher's relationship should be of professional manner and that all questions and answers are kept confidential. This is because various interviewees may have conflicting viewpoints and beliefs in regards to the club's or national governing body's vision and philosophy and that failure to keep such information confidential could lead to current job commitment problems. Thus, the individual names of the interviewees will be undisclosed and will not be mentioned within this project. Careful consideration will take place when conducting the interview as ethically this interview should be conducted without bias yet the viewpoints of the interviewees will be biased as the answers will be catered towards not only facts but also personal opinions. Moreover, the relationship

present will be unique in the sense that having worked together previously, there could be a closer relationship than if an interview was conducted with strangers. However, the beneficence outweighs the risks as data gathered would provide a thorough insight on the current systems from professionals that are currently working under the systems.

### **Results**

Results will be presented in the format of a summary in text with bullet points highlight key data collected. This is the only method possible from such use of interview technique as data will be mostly opinions and analysis of the current development model. The limitation of such method is that the data collected will not be clear and easy for reference for the readers of this study yet it will be the only method for data presentation.

### **Possible Risk**

There are a few risks involved with this study relating to the process of gathering data from subjects as interview questions will be done on the phone which does not provide body language or other hidden motives for analysis. Furthermore, the subjects will include two former elite level athletes turned coaches with two sports development officers that allows minimal viewpoints and opinions which could result in bias. However, due to the use of identical quantity of subjects and position at the football clubs, the data will still be relevant for a direct comparison between the viewpoints and current system of youth development at the two countries. Furthermore, data including person opinions from the subjects will be kept confidential as conflicts may arise between the philosophy and set of beliefs provided by the FA which maybe different to that of individuals opinions.

**Interview questions**

1. Describe the current state of the youth-set up in your country.
2. The FAs have utilized the LTAD model as the main source of data to base most initiatives on, however there is no scientific proof in the LTAD model set forth by Balyi, what is your view on this?
3. Therefore, based on your answer to question 2 do you think it is right for the FAs to use the LTAD model when it is not proven in football?
4. What changes must be made to ensure the development of younger athletes?
5. Which stage is the most important in the LTAD model? And why?
6. What is the percentage of athletes that exit the LTAD system successfully as professional athletes?
7. What percentages of young athletes enter the LTAD system?
8. Is the LTAD system catered for individual development or merely a model to relate to when setting out new initiatives?
9. How do you judge the success of the youth set-up? Is it by how many athletes become professionals?
10. What are the most important elements in developing young athletes?
11. How do you think the FA used the LTAD model in the set up of the whole system?