

Constraints on coaching development in Chinese Football—A scoping review

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Abstract: *This dissertation embarks on a journey to investigate the historical evolution of coach education in Europe and provides an encompassing overview of coach development programs. Furthermore, it delves into the historical and contemporary inadequacies in coach education in China, placing a particular emphasis on the enhancement of reflective and critical skills within coach education programs. A scoping review approach systematically consolidates an array of suggestions and ideas. It sheds light on potential strategies to enhance the overall state of Chinese football coaching and development. In summary, this dissertation strives to elucidate the multifaceted challenges facing Chinese soccer and presents a comprehensive analysis of the historical context, current shortcomings, and innovative strategies necessary to cultivate a thriving soccer culture in China.*

Keywords: *Football Coach; Coach Development; China Football; Coach Education; Soccer Culture*

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

After World War II, Helberga, the visionary head of the coaching team of the German Football Association, championed a groundbreaking slogan: "Start with 100 good coaches and then let each coach lead 100 coaches." The tangible outcome of this revolutionary approach became evident when Germany triumphed at the 1954 World Cup in Switzerland. This historic success was an exemplar of the potent role that a multitude of high-caliber coaches can play in catapulting a nation to soccer supremacy. In Japan, inspired by the German blueprint, a pioneering initiative emerged in 1994, aiming to produce 9,000 C-level coaches within five years. The resounding success of this program was evident when the Japanese national team achieved a momentous feat by reaching the World Cup final round for the first time. The sustained effectiveness of this approach has resulted in Japan consistently maintaining its status as a formidable team on the global soccer stage. These recent examples, substantiated by contemporary research (Smith et al., 2021) [12], underscore the pivotal role that a multitude of high-quality coaches can play in elevating a nation's soccer proficiency and illuminates the importance of well-structured coaching development programs in nurturing latent talent.

With the development of sports in China, people's attention to sports has become more comprehensive. The localization of Chinese football coaches has become a key strategy in the development of Chinese football, as the country aims to become a world-class footballing nation. In addition to the rise of the athletes' strengths, the establishment of a strong team of sports coaches has been the cornerstone for the discovery and cultivation of athletic talents. Including advanced training techniques and scientific support.

1.2 Aims and Objectives of the Study

1.2.1 Aims

Analyze the Localization of Chinese Football Coaches

The review tries to dissect the endeavors and methodologies executed by China in confining football coaches as a critical piece of their arrangement to turn into a top-notch footballing country. This incorporates understanding the difficulties and triumphs related to this technique and its effect on the exhibition of the Chinese public group.

Enhance China's International Understanding of Soccer Development

The review aims to give a similar investigation of the development of Chinese coaches and their European partners. It looks to encourage a more profound worldwide comprehension of soccer improvement, especially about progressing from an "obscure" status to a "known" one. This relative investigation will offer experiences in regions where China can work on its coaching and development programs.

1.2.2 Objectives of the Study

Assess the Impact of Coaching on Sports Success:

The primary goal is to basically survey the effect of instructing on sports accomplishment by looking at how thoroughly prepared mentors add to the improvement of competitors and the general nature of the game.

Identify Best Practices in Coaching Development

The subsequent goal is to distinguish best practices in training improvement by examining training models and procedures in Western nations. This includes understanding the instructive projects and certificate drives that have been effective in creating great mentors.

2. Literature review

Football coaching has a long history in Europe, dating back to the 19th century. However, it was not until the 1960s and 1970s that formal coaching education programs were established in Europe. These programs were designed to provide coaches with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively develop their athletes. Since then, coaching education in Europe has undergone significant changes, with an increasing focus on practical, experiential learning, and a move away from traditional lecture-based approaches (Jones & Turner, 2016) [5]. The Role of Coach Education in Soccer Coaching Development: Coach Education has played a crucial role in the development of soccer coaching in Europe. Research has consistently shown that coaches with higher levels of education and training are more effective in their coaching role (Partington & Cushion, 2013) [10].

The development of football coaching in China has come a long way in recent years. The CFA has implemented several programs to improve the standard of football coaching in the country. These programs include the introduction of coaching qualifications, the hiring of foreign coaches to train local coaches, and the establishment of the Chinese National Football Coaching Education Center (Wang & Liu, 2019) [13]. The aim is to produce well-rounded coaches who have a deep understanding of football and can apply their knowledge to the game. The CFA has also established coaching academies across the country to produce a new generation of local coaches who can take the game to the next level (Hao & Su, 2019) [3]. The localization of football coaching in China has faced several challenges, including the lack of experienced local coaches and limited training opportunities (Li & Huang, 2019) [6].

3. Methods

3.1 Study Design

In this research, a scoping review system was decisively utilized to fastidiously guide and offer an extensive outline of the current collection of literature focused on the development of soccer coaches in both China and Europe. A scoping review is a strategic methodology eminent for its capacity to work with an exhaustive comprehension of the accessible evidence, uncover huge gaps within the ongoing literature, and dig into the many-sided connections between different factors in the picked field of study. This strategy is an important device for momentum research, given its overall objectives and extensive points, which require an all-encompassing investigation of the immense and diverse examination scene. By embracing the standards of a scoping review, the review guarantees that no relevant roads of examination are neglected, empowering a fastidious assessment of the appropriate information base.

3.2 Population and Data Sources

This scoping review focused its examination on a complete range of distributed literature, filling in as the populace under scrutiny. This broad collection of writing introduced an abundance of unique information relating to the space of coaching development within the domain of soccer. The inclusivity of information was not limited to a specific kind; it included a different reach, containing subjective,

quantitative, and blended information. To guarantee a careful and strong assessment, different trustworthy sources were bridled to gather this literature. These sources traversed across scholastic diaries, academic expositions, proposals, and important data separated from three conspicuous and legitimate information bases: EBSCO, PubMed, and Google Scholar. The review's frame of reference reached out up to August 2023, exemplifying the most contemporary experiences accessible up to that date. This transiently broad methodology was conscious, as it expected to catch the latest turns of events and patterns in the picked field.

3.3 Data Collection

The search strategy adhered to the PRISMA guidelines (Liberati et al., 2009) [7]

3.4 Search Strategy

The search strategy was fastidiously planned, incorporating the combination of key terms relevant to coaching development and soccer coaching, with an unmistakable accentuation on imperatives and difficulties. This essential methodology is planned to reveal a far-reaching and balanced comprehension of the topic. To get to an expansive range of significant writing, three conspicuous electronic data sets, specifically EBSCO, PubMed, and Google Scholar, were deliberately scoured. This purposeful investigation was directed with a double goal: to guarantee straightforwardness and to relieve expected predispositions.

3.5 Exclusion/Inclusion Criteria

A total of 15,980 articles were retrieved from the three databases after removing duplicates. To assess relevance and accuracy, the first 100 results of each search were reviewed and assessed based on the following inclusion criteria:

- Temporal Relevance: Data and articles published between 2013 and 2023 were considered, with a preference for more recent sources to ensure up-to-date information.
- Full Academic Articles: Only full-text formal academic articles that had undergone peer review were included.
- Language: Articles had to be in English or Chinese to be included.
- Exclusion criteria encompassed articles that did not meet these criteria, including non-full, non-peer-reviewed, and non-English articles.

3.6 Data Screening and Selection

In the ensuing phase of the study, a fastidious screening process was embraced, wherein the authors surveyed a sum of 189 papers, enveloping papers, surveys, and book sections removed from the reference list. This manual appraisal included an intensive assessment of each source's pertinence and dependability to the exploration within reach. Through this thorough examination, 65 articles were avoided, essentially because of their restricted importance to basic features, for example, the advancement of Chinese football coaches, football coach training, football education, or football development. Furthermore, 11 articles confronted prohibition in light of different quality-related issues, sample size deficiencies, or strategic restrictions that could think twice about the uprightness of the examination discoveries. A further six articles were prohibited from the survey since their exploration scope reached out past the geographical areas of China, Europe, or Africa, which didn't line up with the review's particular concentration. This thorough and particular course of consideration and rejection finished in the consideration of a last arrangement of 11 articles that adjust to the rigid standards laid out for this scoping review. These picked articles were carefully organized to guarantee their arrangement with the concentrate's plainly characterized goals and exploration questions, consequently ensuring the trustworthiness and importance of the selected literature for the research.

3.7 Data Analysis

The conspicuous disparity between the substantial allocation of resources towards the advancement of coaching practices in Europe and the formidable obstacles encountered in China was readily apparent. Notwithstanding the augmented allocation of financial resources from both governmental and private

entities within the Chinese context, a conspicuous disparity persists in the advancement of soccer vis-à-vis the preeminent sports juggernauts on a global scale (Si & Wei, 2012) [11]. The strategic emphasis on the localization of Chinese football coaches has emerged as a pivotal approach, with the overarching objective of cultivating erudite coaches who possess a profound comprehension of the indigenous football culture. Especially in incorporation of reflective practice, an integral element within the realm of Continuous Professional Development (CPD), has been duly recognized as a pivotal determinant that enhances the efficacy of coaching endeavors and augments the overall performance of athletes.

To expound upon the profound importance of a comprehensive coaching development program, we have resorted to employing contemporary instances as illustrative references. The resounding triumph of Germany in the illustrious 1954 World Cup, coupled with Japan's remarkable feat of advancing to the final round of the esteemed global tournament in 1994, unequivocally underscored the profound and far-reaching consequences that ensue from judiciously allocating resources towards the cultivation and enhancement of coaching prowess (Yang & Van Gorp, 2021) [17]. The aforementioned instances were validated through current research, underscoring the crucial significance that a diverse array of skilled coaches can assume in augmenting a country's aptitude in the realm of soccer. The literature review further underscored the imperative of conducting a comparative analysis between the realms of China and Europe, intending to augment China's global comprehension of the advancement of soccer. The criteria for inclusion were centered on temporal pertinence, comprehensive scholarly articles, and linguistic proficiency in either English or Chinese. A grand sum of 15,980 articles was procured, and after meticulous scrutiny, a mere 15 articles were deemed suitable for inclusion in the ultimate analysis.

4. Results

4.1 Current State of Coaching Education in Europe

The study found that coaching education programs in Europe are diverse in terms of structure, content, and duration. These programs are offered by universities, private institutions, and professional coaching bodies. Notably, the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) and the International Coach Federation (ICF) have played a significant role in shaping coaching education in the region by promoting standards and accreditation. For instance, in the United Kingdom, coaching education programs have experienced substantial growth, with universities offering undergraduate and postgraduate degrees specializing in coaching (Yaeger et al., 2020) [16]. One prominent example is the MSc in Coaching and Behavior Change at Henley Business School, which emphasizes both practical skills and coaching science. In Germany, the University of Witten/Herdecke offers a coaching psychology program that aligns coaching education closely with coaching science.

4.2 Current State of Coaching Education in China

In China, coaching education has rapidly evolved in response to a growing demand for professional coaching services. Coaching programs are primarily offered by universities, coaching associations, and private institutions. Similar to Europe, the quality and alignment of coaching education programs with coaching science vary. For example, the Shanghai Jiao Tong University offers a Master of Science in Coaching Psychology program that combines coaching techniques with a strong emphasis on psychological principles (Wang & Zhou, 2023) [14]. In contrast, some short-term coaching courses may focus predominantly on skill development without substantial scientific grounding.

4.3 Alignment of Coaching Education with Coaching Science in Europe and China

The alignment of coaching education with coaching science is a critical issue in both Europe and China. Coaching programs in Europe, particularly those aligned with the EMCC and ICF, tend to incorporate coaching science into their curricula (Whybrow et al., 2022) [15]. However, the degree of integration varies, with some programs offering a more comprehensive grounding in the scientific principles of coaching. In China, the alignment with coaching science is a relatively recent development, and many programs are still in the process of incorporating scientific foundations. Nevertheless, there is a growing awareness of the importance of aligning coaching education with coaching science in China to enhance the effectiveness of coaching interventions.

4.4 Perceived Impact of Coaching Education on Coaching Practice in Europe and China

In Europe, coaches who have gone through coaching education that consolidates coaching science frequently report huge advantages. They portray upgraded capability, better client results, adherence to moral norms, and a guarantee of continuous expert turn of events. A few examinations have featured the positive effect of coaching education on coaching practice in Europe, showing its capacity to further develop training quality and client results. In China, as coaching education programs progressively coordinate coaching science, coaches are starting to perceive the worth of an experimentally educated approach. A review led be found that coaches had received training that consolidated coaching science standards revealed more significant levels of self-viability and saw better client results. This highlights the significance of adjusting coaching education to coaching science to guarantee that coaches are completely ready to convey successful training intercessions

4.5 Historical Evolution of Coach Education in Europe

The historical progression of coach education in Europe unveils a profound and intricate heritage that traces its roots to the 19th century. During the transformative decades of the 1960s and 1970s, a notable development in the realm of pedagogy was witnessed, namely the emergence of formal coaching education programs (Wang & Zhou 2022) [14]. This pivotal occurrence signified a departure from traditional modes of instruction, as it embraced a more pragmatic and experiential approach to learning. The prioritization of continuous professional development (CPD) and reflective practice has served as a fundamental pillar within the realm of European coach education, thereby augmenting the efficacy of coaches. UEFA, the esteemed regulatory entity overseeing European football, has assumed a paramount role in the establishment of coaching education initiatives, thereby equipping coaches with the indispensable proficiencies and erudition requisite for triumph at the pinnacle of the sport.

4.6 Challenges Faced in China

Despite considerable fiscal allocations from both governmental and private entities, China finds itself contending with formidable obstacles in its endeavor to advance the realm of association football. Note that the implementation of a strategic endeavor to localize Chinese football coaches emerges as a pivotal methodology, to cultivate a cohort of coaches who possess a profound understanding and alignment with the native football culture. Nevertheless, the ongoing presence of enduring impediments, such as the dearth of seasoned indigenous mentors and constrained avenues for skill enhancement, persistently impede the advancement of our endeavors.

4.7 Comparative Analysis and Global Perspectives

The literature review elucidates the imperative nature of conducting a comparative analysis between the regions of China and Europe, with a particular emphasis on accentuating the significance of augmenting China's global comprehension of the advancement of soccer. According to Hussain (2023), the resounding victory of Germany in the illustrious 1954 World Cup and the noteworthy feat of Japan in attaining the final stage of the World Cup in 1994 stand as compelling illustrations of the profound influence that coaches of exceptional caliber can exert in enhancing a nation's aptitude in the realm of soccer. These occurrences substantiate the profound capacity for positive change inherent in meticulously designed coaching development programs, underscoring the crucial influence that exceptional coaches wield in shaping a country's fate within the domain of soccer.

4.8 Recommendations and Implications

The study's presentation of empirical evidence offers a plethora of recommendations and implications that have the potential to significantly augment the efficacy of coaching and development practices within the Chinese milieu. The primary suggestion that takes precedence among these recommendations is the necessity to establish a comprehensive and up-to-date coach education curriculum, which entails the seamless integration of practical and experiential teaching methods. This approach ensures that coaches are not only well-versed in theoretical knowledge but also equipped with practical skills, fostering a holistic and dynamic learning experience. The imperative nature of localizing coaches within the Chinese context serves to highlight the significance of enacting focused endeavors aimed at mitigating the dearth of experienced native coaches. Through the strategic allocation of resources towards the cultivation and refinement of domestic coaching expertise, China has the potential to establish a self-perpetuating

reservoir of coaches intricately intertwined with the native football ethos, thereby enhancing the broader coaching milieu.

5. Discussion

5.1 Coaching Education in Europe

The results revealed that coaching education in Europe has made substantial progress, with a diverse array of programs available. It observes that universities and professional coaching organizations have played a pivotal role in fostering this development, with accreditation bodies such as EMCC and ICF influencing the standards and quality of coaching education. However, the quality and alignment with coaching science remain variable across different programs.

5.1.1 Strengths

Coaching education in Europe has undergone a remarkable transformation in recent years, leading to several notable strengths that have significantly contributed to the growth and professionalization of the coaching field. Europe boasts a rich tapestry of coaching education programs, making it a hub for aspiring coaches seeking to develop their skills and knowledge. The availability of a wide variety of programs allows prospective coaches to tailor their education to their specific needs and career goals. Whether individuals are inclined towards a robust scientific foundation or a more practice-focused approach, there is a coaching program designed to accommodate their preferences.

5.1.2 Weaknesses

One critical shortcoming in the scene of coaching education in Europe is the changeability in program quality and principles. This irregularity can be ascribed to the presence of non-licensed coaching programs, which might miss the mark on the profundity and logical establishment expected to create skillful coaches. License bodies, for example, the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) and the International Coach Federation (ICF), have set thorough guidelines to guarantee that certified programs meet explicit quality benchmarks, including educational plan content, staff capabilities, and moral principles. In any case, various non-licensed coaching programs don't stick to these rigid standards. This changeability presents a test for people looking for tenable coaching education. Imminent coaches might battle to recognize top caliber, certify projects, and lower-quality, non-licensed other options. This absence of normalization in coaching education projects can thwart the advancement of predictable skills among rising coaches.

5.2 Coaching Education in China

In China, coaching education has seen significant growth in response to the rising demand for professional coaching services. The educational landscape is diverse, including programs offered by universities, coaching associations, and private institutions. Alignment with coaching science is still an evolving process.

5.2.1 Strengths

One of the notable strengths in the realm of coaching education in China is the growing interest in coaching science principles. This is a highly promising sign for the field as it signifies an increasing awareness among coaches and coaching educators about the importance of a scientifically informed approach to coaching. The recognition of coaching science principles brings a level of rigor and evidence-based practice to the coaching profession in China. Coaches and coaching students are becoming more attuned to the significance of understanding the psychological and behavioral underpinnings of effective coaching. They recognize that coaching, as a discipline, can benefit from the infusion of scientific principles, which, in turn, can lead to improved outcomes for both coaches and their clients.

The diversity of coaching education programs available in China allows for a tailored approach, ensuring that coaching students can choose a program that aligns closely with their unique career aspirations and interests. This customization is crucial for the personalization of coaching education. It acknowledges that coaching is a multifaceted discipline with various specializations, ranging from executive coaching to life coaching and beyond. Aspiring coaches can select a program that aligns with their desired area of expertise, enabling them to gain in-depth knowledge and practical skills relevant to their chosen field. Customization in coaching education not only enhances the learning experience for students but also paves the way for a more dynamic and specialized coaching profession in China. It

empowers individuals to become experts in their preferred coaching niches, ultimately benefiting their clients by providing highly specialized and effective coaching services.

5.2.2 Weaknesses

Coaching education in China has gained striking headway as of late; in any case, it isn't without its challenges. One of the prominent shortcomings in coaching education in China is the limited integration of coaching science standards into coaching programs. While there is a developing interest in the coaching calls, some coaching education programs will generally focus on reasonable abilities and training strategies, possibly ignoring the fundamental logical underpinnings of compelling coaching. This restricted logical mix can bring about an imbalanced way of dealing with coaching education (Liu et al., 2020) [8]. While useful abilities are without a doubt significant, the coaching profession likewise profits by serious areas of strength for mental and conduct sciences. Without a hearty comprehension of these logical standards, coaches might miss the mark on the profundity of information expected to successfully address the intricacies of the human way of behaving and self-awareness. The limited scientific integration can at last affect the skill and adequacy of coaches in China. Coaches who are not knowledgeable in coaching science might botch valuable chances to utilize proof-based methodologies, blocking their capacity to work with significant change in their clients.

One more critical challenge in coaching education in China is the issue of quality control. Coaching education is still a generally new field in the country, and guaranteeing quality and normalization in coaching education remains a critical test. Dissimilar to additional laid-out districts where license bodies, for example, the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) and the International Coach Federation (ICF), set thorough guidelines for coaching programs, China comes up short on the comparative framework. This shortfall of license bodies in China adds to an absence of normalization in coaching education. Subsequently, there is a wide changeability in program quality, content, and workforce skills. The shortfall of quality control components can cause disarray among imminent coaching students, making it hard for them to distinguish between top-notch and lower-quality projects. Besides, without clear principles and certification, there is restricted confirmation for students that they will get a complete and respectable coaching education.

5.3 Implications and Potential Benefits of Integrating Coaching Science

While coaching education programs embrace coaching science standards, they furnish coaches with more significant information on the human way of behaving and mental cycles. This information stretches out to prove-based coaching strategies, empowering coaches to apply logically approved techniques in their training. This significant comprehension improves the ability of coaches and improves them to address the complex necessities and difficulties of their clients (Azanza et al., 2022) [1]. Capability in coaching reaches out past merely knowing methods; it envelops the capacity to adjust to assorted client needs, grasp the mental variables at play, and apply interventions that are grounded in logical standards. Coaches with areas of strength for an establishment are better prepared to help their clients in exploring complex individual and expert difficulties, eventually working with significant and reasonable change.

Incorporating coaching science standards into coaching education benefits coaches as well as emphatically affects client results. Coaches with areas of strength for an establishment are more capable of assisting their clients with accomplishing their objectives, bringing about superior client fulfillment and more prominent objective achievement. Coaches who comprehend the mental and conduct standards at work in training interventions can fit their way to deal with and suit individual client needs more successfully (Carter, 2023) [2].

5.4 Challenges in Implementing Integration:

These challenges are complex and can shift by region. One of the essential difficulties in coordinating coaching science with coaching education is the advancement of educational plans that effectively mix logical standards with coaching practice. This interaction is many-sided and requires a joint effort among teachers and researchers. Basic coaching education programs figure out some kind of harmony between the functional abilities expected for coaching and the hypothetical underpinnings of coaching science, developing such educational plans can be asset concentrated. It might require the enlistment of staff with skills in both coaching practice and coaching science.

The European continent's notable achievement in cultivating exceptional coaches can be attributed,

without a doubt, to its unwavering focus on practical, experiential learning and the subsequent departure from conventional lecture-based methodologies (Jarmon et al., 2023) [4]. The practice of reflection, which is a defining characteristic of Continuous Professional Development (CPD), has emerged as a crucial factor in augmenting the proficiency of coaching and the performance of athletes.

On the contrary, the predicaments confronting Chinese football, notwithstanding considerable investments, underscore the intricacy of reconciling the disparity between fiscal means and coveted results. The endeavor to localize Chinese football coaches is a strategic undertaking, to cultivate a cadre of coaches who possess a profound comprehension of the intricate fabric of indigenous football culture. Nevertheless, the enduring dearth of seasoned local coaches and the constrained availability of training opportunities present formidable impediments.

The juxtaposition of China and Europe in a comparative analysis serves to underscore the pressing need to rectify significant deficiencies within China's coaching milieu. While Europe prides itself on its illustrious heritage of coaching brilliance, China finds itself grappling with the intricate process of localizing coaching expertise. Gaining a comprehensive comprehension of the intricacies surrounding the evolution of coaching development in both regions is of utmost importance to effectively navigate and strategize for the future. The myriad of obstacles encountered by sports coaches in China, encompassing the dearth of knowledge about the coaching framework, as well as the cultivation and instruction of coaches, accentuate the imperative for thorough and all-encompassing scrutiny.

6. Conclusions

The thesis makes some contributions to existing knowledge by outlining the Chinese sports coaching system and related characteristics, adopting a European perspective for some of the research, helping to understand the weaknesses of the Chinese sports coaching system, and being of value to Chinese soccer in exploring the development of localized, elite soccer coaches; it is suggested that time and space be given to the development of reflection, critical skills, and self-education within the Chinese coaching education program.

Comprehensive Examination of the Chinese Coaching System

Future research should examine in detail the system, including coaching approaches, how talent identifications happen, and the integration of sports science. Through this comprehensive analysis, stakeholders would get a deeper understanding of weak and strong elements in the coaching framework and come up with recommendations for enhancement and innovation.

Development of Elite Soccer Coaches in China

The thesis is that the research has a worth to Chinese soccer in developing country-specific senior soccer coaches. Future research avenues could include longitudinal studies of coaching programs to show how elite soccer coaches emerge in China. For instance, this could entail liaising with coaching institutions, football academies, and professional clubs to collect information about the paths and performances of trained coaches.

Integration of Reflective and Critical Skills in Coaching Education

The incorporation of reflective, critical thinking, and self-learning aspects in Chinese coaching education offers the opportunity for further inquiries. Through a longitudinal study, the efficacy of incorporating these components into coaching curricula could be ascertained about the effects on coaching practices, athlete development, and overall performance. Such research may involve partnerships with coaching education providers and practitioners in implementing and evaluating such improvements.

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