

Formulating a Development Path Model for Under-17 Football Players in Indonesia and Malaysia: A Step Towards Excellence

Formulación de un modelo de trayectoria de desarrollo para futbolistas sub-17 en Indonesia y Malaysia: un paso hacia la excelencia

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Abstract. The current research aims to develop a Path Model for Under-17 Football Players in Indonesia and Malaysia. A qualitative approach toward Grounded theory was used to formulate the research. A total of 25 coaches, 15 from Malaysia and ten from Indonesia, participated in the current research, which was determined through a purposive sampling method. The criteria of the participants were having a coaching license and having a minimum of 5 years of coaching experience. The participants were interviewed to formulate the model for the Under-17 Football Players in Indonesia and Malaysia. The data collected was analyzed with qualitative research software, namely N-Vivo 14. In this study's approach to the evolved grounded theory, open encoding techniques, axial encodings, and selective encodes are used for data analysis. The result indicated that the model proposed in the current research consists of three aspects. The first aspect was the issue and challenges for the athlete's development, which consisted of several factors: the coach's competencies, physical, technique, tactical, and psychological condition. The second aspect was the individual psychological trait consisting of several psychological conditions such as cognitive, affective, attitude, personality, and spirituality. The third aspect was the environment. The psychological condition consists of several aspects, such as the policy supporting the athlete's development, the support from the family, and the support from the coach.

Keywords: football development, development path, u17 football players, Indonesia, Malaysia

Resumen. La investigación actual tiene como objetivo desarrollar un modelo para el desarrollo del fútbol base en Indonesia y Malasia. Para formular la investigación, se utilizó un enfoque cualitativo hacia la teoría fundamentada. Participaron un total de 25 entrenadores, 15 de Malasia y 10 de Indonesia, que se determinaron mediante un método de muestreo intencionado. Los criterios de los participantes fueron tener licencia de entrenador y tener un mínimo de 5 años de experiencia como entrenador. Los participantes fueron entrevistados para formular el modelo para el desarrollo del fútbol base en Indonesia y Malasia. Los datos recopilados se analizaron con un software de investigación cualitativa, concretamente N-Vivo 14. En el enfoque de la teoría fundamentada evolucionada, en este estudio se utilizan técnicas de codificación abierta, codificaciones axiales y codificaciones selectivas para el análisis de datos. Los resultados indicaron que el modelo propuesto en la presente investigación consta de tres aspectos. El primer aspecto, la cuestión y los desafíos para el desarrollo del atleta, que consisten en varios factores, como el conocimiento, las competencias del entrenador, la condición física, técnica, táctica y psicológica del atleta. El segundo aspecto fue el rasgo psicológico individual, que consta de varias condiciones psicológicas, como la cognitiva, la afectiva, la actitud, la personalidad y la espiritualidad. Y el tercer aspecto fue la condición psicológica del entorno, que consta de varios aspectos, como la política que apoya el desarrollo del atleta, el apoyo de la familia y el apoyo del entrenador.

Palabras clave: desarrollo futbolístico, camino de desarrollo, jugadores de fútbol sub17, Indonesia, Malaysia

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Introduction

According to Games (2022), Southeast Asia is often overlooked in football due to its lack of competitiveness compared to Europe, South Korea, Japan, and Australia. It is evident through the difficulty of the ASEAN countries, especially Malaysia and Indonesia, to join the World Cup. According to (Akindes, 2013), it is stated that for a long time, Asian nations' qualification for the FIFA World Cup remained tough. Indonesia last participated in the World Cup in 1938, when it was still named Dutch East Indies. Malaysia joined the World Cup; their most considerable participation in the football world tournament was in the Olympiad 1972. This should be a concern since the enthusiasm and participation of the Indonesian and Malaysian society in football is enormous. Ironically, football is widely popular in Indonesia, with many different organizations participating (Aswan et al., 2023), but the achievement in the world football contest remains unsatstill and needs to

be improved. The continued absence of Indonesia from international football competitions contributes to the idea that Indonesia occupies only a negligible status in football (Akbar et al., 2024; Fuller, 2015). This might be happened since research related to football in Indonesia and Malaysia is sparse. Fuller (2015), stated that football's widespread permeation into Indonesian national life needs to be reflected in country research.

According to Cho (2013), despite the rise of "sports studies" as a thriving, differentiated zone of multidisciplinary academia from the mid-1990s, sports concerns in Asia have either been overlooked or inadequately addressed. In this view, it is both convenient and essential to estimate the trajectories, traditions, and current developments of football in Asia, which would give another forum for evaluating the different and dynamic roles of football in Asian countries and their populations. Hence, comprehensive and systematic research regarding football in the countries is necessary. The current research aims to examine and analyze

the development of football models in Indonesia and Malaysia in order to provide an overview of the current football development strategy and approach used. The model intended to overview the development process of football in Indonesia and Malaysia and analyze the critical aspects of development and related factors. It can be essential to provide strategic guidance to managers who wish to improve their organization's performance and competitiveness (Breitbarth & Harris, 2008; Maciel et al., 2022). Analyzing the football development model is vital since the developmental process from youth player to expert in football is so complex and depends on a variety of interacting personal and contextual elements (Haugaasen & Jordet, 2012). Orosz and Mezo (2015) stated that a theoretical framework analysis could contribute to the efficacy of football talent care. This is because general talent theories and models tried to identify one or more critical intrapersonal factors behind talent development (Renzulli, 2005). The internal aspect, as well as the external factors that could influence an athlete's development, is analyzed. It can make the player's training and development process effective. According to Sobko et al. (2018), the effective functioning of the sports reserve system, improving the quality of the training process of young athletes, can be ensured only with a rigorous scientific justification of the system as a whole and its components. Therefore, the analysis of the football development model is necessary.

One aspect that must be the focus on football development was at the U-17 or grassroots level. According to Kelly et al. (2018), the analysis at the grassroots level often simplifies the professional footballer's pathway. It is a fundamental part of insisting on the crucial aspect for the professional footballer and any related aspect of football (Sugiyama et al., 2017). Therefore, the development of the U-17 football team should be supported by sufficient investment and the appropriate model development. Larsen et al. (2013) and Ryom et al. (2020) emphasize the importance of establishing an open and cooperative environment for U-17 football development. In this case, the academies and the stakeholders involved should be able to manage and model the U-17 football development to implement sufficient models. Henriksen et al. (2010) emphasized that in the U-17 football development, many aspects, such as the range of activities conducted, context, and the social relation of the academies, should be considered. However, according to Rossing et al. (2020), researchers have not investigated or searched for situational-specific elements (e.g., coincidences) that may alter the U-17 football development environment. Therefore, the current research analyzes the development path model for under-17 football players in Indonesia and Malaysia.

Materials and Methods

The current research aims to develop a model for Under-17 Football Players in Indonesia and Malaysia. A qualitative approach toward Grounded theory was used to

formulate the research. According to (Mills et al., 2006), Grounded theory is a qualitative research methodology that analyzes and models topics important to specific groups of individuals. It lies in the constructivist approach through interpretive epistemology, which assumes that people create their realities by assigning meaning to events, processes, ideologies, and conditions (Elliott et al., 2019). Constructivist grounded theory emphasizes the researcher's role as an author by reshaping the researcher-participant interaction during the research process (Mills et al., 2006). In this case, the grounded theory was applied among coaches in Malaysia and Indonesia to evolve discussions about the development of U-17 football, which is essential for the coach. The coaches were asked to put forward a discussion about the development of U-17 footballers. Their perspective and understanding grounded on the discussion to formulate the development path model for under-17 football players in Indonesia and Malaysia

Participant

The population of the current research was coaches of Under-17 Football Players in Indonesia and Malaysia. In terms of the sample, Sim et al. (2018) stated that in qualitative research, the sample size could not be determined from the beginning of the study. However, in the evolved grounded theory, data is determined by information saturation when the researcher fails to gather new information with the next participant (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In this research, the purposive sampling method was used to determine the number of participants, which means that sampling in this qualitative research is not purely random but purposefully selected by an individual and is intended to answer relevant questions in a research title (Boddy, 2015). Therefore, the criteria of the participants were given as follows: have a minimum of coaching experience of 5 years and a coaching license. Based on the requirements given and the perspective determined, 25 coaches, 15 from Malaysia and ten from Indonesia, participated in the current research. The study found that the coaches who took part in the research had varying levels of licenses, with the lowest being D and grassroots license, and the highest being level A AFC. Their experience in coaching ranged from six years to 40 years. Additionally, participants in the study had achieved the highest level of education, holding a doctorate in sports.

Procedure

In order to make sure the systematic procedure of the research, the research was set based on the procedure given. At the beginning of this research, the researcher obtained the research ethics committee of Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Malaysia with the number UPSI/PPPI/PYK/ETIKA(M)/Jld. 15(50) - 2023-050-0. Next, the researcher takes the concerns of the participants regarding the involvement as entirely voluntary in the research. In this case, the participants were given verbal and written explanations of the research in terms of the

participant's privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality conditions. After all, ethical considerations and concerns were obtained—through research interviews with the participants. A total of 1.643 minutes or 27 hours 34 minutes was spent on the interview, with 65 minutes for each participant. The interview guide was constructed based on the literature and discussion. In generating the interview guideline, the researcher relies on two research studies (Mcnamara, 2010; Holt, 2004) as references. Throughout the interview guideline, the researcher provides specific

information, such as the location of the interview and the possible time that will be spent.

Instrument Test

The instrument used in the current research was examined for face validity and content validity. Regarding content validity, two experts in football, one expert in psychology, and two experts in qualitative research examined the instrument. The Cohen Kappa analysis was used to test the validity result. The result can be seen in Table 3.

Table 1.
Cohen Kappa results

Expert A	Expert B	Expert C	Expert D	Expert E	Kappa Coefficient Min
42-21	40-21	39-21	37-21	42-21	K=
$K_1 = \dots\dots\dots$	$K_2 = \dots\dots\dots$	$K_3 = \dots\dots\dots$	$K_4 = \dots\dots\dots$	$K_5 = \dots\dots\dots$	$K_1 + K_2 + K_3 + K_4 + K_5$
42-21	42-21	42-21	42-21	42-21	5
0.952	0.904	0.857	0.761	1.000	0.894

Data Analysis

In the current grounded theory research, the data was analyzed by progressive coding, which analyzed the data descriptively to become the conceptual framework of the Under-17 Football Academy model. This conception process consists of several steps: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. The analysis was helped by a qualitative research software analysis, namely N-VIVO. This qualitative software analysis helps the researcher in coding the interview result.

In this study's approach to the evolved grounded theory, open encoding techniques, axial encodings, and selective encodes are used for data analysis. First, researchers perform open encoding, identifying and labeling data in detail, emerging labels grouped into more significant categories that can help researchers see patterns and relationships between these concepts. Then, using a continuous matching process, these categories are narrowed down to the central theme or known by the chosen encodings. Data collection takes place according to

the theoretical sampling principle, where initial data is analyzed and followed by other data that has been collected. Researchers constantly compare new and existing data, looking for patterns, similarities, differences, or relationships between codes or concepts.

Results

The current research aims to develop a path model for under-17 football players in Indonesia and Malaysia. The grounded theory approach is used to formulate the model by accumulating the perspective from the coaches. The model is based on data obtained from interviews with 25 football coaches in Indonesia and Malaysia and supported by observations and field notes of researchers throughout the study. The emerging model is the development model of U-17 footballers in Indonesia and Malaysia. To validate the model five experts were asked to validate the model as suggested by (Creswell, 2007); the result of the validation model can be seen in Table 5.

Table 2.
Expert Model validation

Process	Expert A	Expert B	Expert C	Expert D	Expert E
	23	24	25	23	22
Data collection	$K_1 = \dots = 0.92$	$K_1 = \dots = 0.96$	$K_1 = \dots = 1$	$K_1 = \dots = 0.92$	$K_1 = \dots = 0.88$
	25	25	25	25	25
Data analysis	20	19	20	18	20
	$K_1 = \dots = 1.00$	$K_1 = \dots = 0.95$	$K_1 = \dots = 1$	$K_1 = \dots = 0.9$	$K_1 = \dots = 1$
	20	20	20	20	20
Result	17	18	17	20	19
	$K_1 = \dots = 0.85$	$K_1 = \dots = 0.9$	$K_1 = \dots = 0.85$	$K_1 = \dots = 1$	$K_1 = \dots = 0.95$
	20	20	20	20	20
	<u>0.92+1.00+0.80</u>	<u>0.96+0.95+0.9</u>	<u>1.00+1.00+0.85</u>	<u>0.92+0.9+1.00</u>	<u>0.88+1.00+0.95</u>
	3	3	3	3	3
Cohen Kappa value	<u>0.90+0.93+0.95+0.94+0.94</u>				
	5 = 0.932				

The evaluation results from these experts showed that the researcher's model construction reached Cohen Kappa measurement levels above 0.932 (very high), as seen in Table 2. This means that the model is robust and manifests

the development path model for under-17 football players in Indonesia and Malaysia; the specific information about the model is displayed in Figure 1.

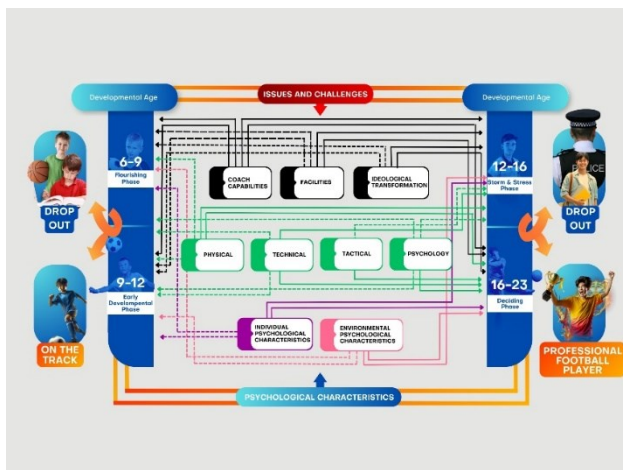


Figure 1. Development Path Model for Under-17 Football Players in Indonesia and Malaysia: A Step Towards Excellence

Figure 1 Overview of the development model of Indonesian and Malaysian football players. The model highlights several important aspects of the development path model for under-17 football players in Indonesia and Malaysia. This study has three main issues related to the player's development path: the ability of coaches, ideological transformation, and facilities. In addition, players will face four main challenges in the development process: physical, technical, tactical, and psychological. The participants in this study consistently stated that the issues and challenges faced were based on what the study participants felt and experienced as coaches. This study also found psychological characteristics that can help players face some issues and challenges in their development process. After conducting a continuous process of data analysis, the researcher found two main categories of psychological characteristics needed by football players under the age of 17 in their development process.

The first factor in the issue was the coach's competencies. The basic competence of a football coach encompasses a series of skills and knowledge that are essential for guiding, managing, and developing the potential of players in the team. An efficient football coach must deeply understand game tactics, strategies, and formation systems. They also need to have the ability to analyze opponents and players, as well as give feedback. Besides that, good team management and leadership skills and knowledge of psychological aspects are needed to understand and maintain players' health and mental state. Furthermore, football players face a couple of issues on their development path. One of them is related to the facilities, which can be physical or social. Physical facilities include field availability, ball quality, and financial problems. The social facility problems can be the unavailability of age-level competitions and school-to-club relations to accommodate them. Another issue is the need for a football revolution in Indonesia and Malaysia. The player development program takes too long to become a political issue, which hampers the development of football in these countries.

The first aspect of the challenges was the athlete's

physical condition. It is stated to be an essential aspect of player development. It is because football is described as a game that requires a good level of physical fitness (Coutts et al., 2014; Black et al., 2016; Wisbey et al., 2010; Saputra, M et al., 2024) which is characterized by complex physical interactions and makes this ability an essential factor in becoming a football player. This study found that the physical aspect is one of the themes that is also a challenge in the development of football players in Indonesia and Malaysia. Several physical aspects that can be challenging and issues are injuries, sleep time or frequency, and lifestyle, which could influence their physical condition.

The second aspect of challenge was the player technique. Adequate technical skills will help players play the ball quickly and use tactics and strategies on the field (Syafii et al., 2024; Arsil et al., 2024). Technical ability is a unique feature a football player can realize to complete playing a football movement based on the overall human condition. Technical ability in football encompasses a variety of skills and strategies required by a player to succeed in a game found in the current research was the primary technique, such as dribbling and passing, and the advanced technique, such as the ability to face an opponent, the capacity to control the player's position, where he must stand and where he should move with and without the ball, as well as an understanding of the space that helps create chances and optimize making decisions in a football match. The fourth aspect of the issue and challenges was the player's tactical.

Tactical understanding is the next aspect that football players under 17 need to have, which relates to some critical factors that enable them to contribute optimally to the team game. Each player has different characteristics in size, ability, and intelligence. With good tactical skills, he can help the coach adjust the strategy in using existing players to impact the team to meet the team's needs and obtain maximum results (Pamungkas et al., 2023; Orkilanda, 2024). This capability of tactical understanding is usually given during or after the player achieves physical and technical capabilities and can develop from time to time through proper and maximum practice, experience, and training processes. In the current research, several tactics should be considered: the main tactic consisting of Attack, defense, and transition, and the additional tactic consisting of a set piece, high press, and pressure. The fourth aspect of the challenges was the psychological aspect. Throughout their career, players will face various psychological challenges in the future, just as these psychological aspects can affect their performance on the field. The psychological challenges of players in their developmental path come from the players themselves and others like friends, women, culture, and the uncertainty in the football world itself. The study results revealed at least seven categories of psychological challenges for footballers under 17, which are related to relationships, waste of time, the existence of players, the environment, pride syndrome, limiting parental involvement, and avoiding indecision. The researcher has identified two psychological characteristics that can assist football players

in their development path, to overcome the challenges they face. The first theme is individual psychological characteristics, which relate to the specific psychological abilities that players themselves must possess. The supporting categories for this theme are cognitive abilities, affective abilities, behavioural tendencies, personality, and spiritual aspects of the players themselves. The second theme identified in this study is the psychological characteristics of the environment. These characteristics come from outside the players and will help them in their development process, encompassing policy support, relationships, cooperation, and the psychological characteristics of the coach. The researcher believes that these two themes of psychological characteristics are essential for football players to face the challenges of their development process.

Discussion

Regarding individual psychological traits, the athlete should have several psychological conditions: cognitive, affective, attitude, personality, and spirituality. Based on the findings, the mental factor is related to the ability of the player to understand and comprehend instruction, material, and strategy given by the coach. It is essential since the knowledge and strategy in football have emerged quickly. Through their cognitive ability, the athletes could grasp the knowledge and understanding needed to maintain their performance (Urrutia et al., 2023; Williams et al., 2011). The second psychological factor was the athlete's affective factor. This factor is related to inner support, which could maintain the athlete's level of emotion, mood, and motivation, boosting their performance. It is beneficial since the athlete might experience pressure, disappointment, and rejection. The third factor revealed in this research was the player's attitude factor. It relates to the player's attitude toward the coach, trainer, and team. In the current study, when athletes have an attitude, they are obedient to the coach or trainer; they follow the role and any program initiated by the coach. It is stated to be the most crucial factor in maintaining athlete performance. It is essential for the coach to have good communication that directly influences players' behaviors (Deborah et al., 2023; Purnomo et al., 2024).

The fourth factor in this research was player personality, which refers to self-reliance, strong mentality, responsibility, and relentlessness, valuable personality traits in today's competitive football world. For example, self-reliance is the primary ingredient of self-confidence, which is essential for the athlete to move forward from loss and despair (Kolosov et al., 2019; Martínez Lorca et al., 2023). Dominado (2018) found that the loss of self-belief or self-resilience influences the athlete's perception of the emotional aspect. It indirectly reduces the athlete's performance on the field. The fifth factor was the spirituality factor. It is a unique factor founded on football athlete performance. According to Luskin (2004), the role of spirituality in our daily lives is to help us integrate the body, mind, and spirit.

In recent literature, spirituality has been stated to be able to reduce anxiety, experience better quality, and improve mental health (Alfonso-Asencio, 2023; Bonelli & Koenig, 2013). It is precisely beneficial for the athlete, who might experience loss and depression during the game.

The environment psychological condition refers to how the environment supports the player's development. It consists of several aspects, such as the policy supporting the athlete's development, the support from the family, and the support from the coach (Vigário et al., 2020). Regarding policy support, the current research found that through the rules and regulations of the academies, patterns of the student's behavior and activities can be formed, such as their manner, behavior, mentality, as well as their decision-making, competitiveness, and discipline. Policy support, also known as organizational support, values the player's contribution and achievement and is concerned with the player's self-esteem (McLeod et al., 2022; Urrutia et al., 2023). It is essential since it relates to the landscape of how the club or the academies will operate (Bullough et al., 2019; Darajat et al., 2024).

The second factor was family support. The current research found that the family has a role in player development regarding psychological and financial support and in educating and motivating the player. According to Hellstedt (2005), the family is essential for the player; it is where the player develops their skills and coping mechanisms in facing challenges, competition, and training. This is because the family can have three roles in player development: provider, interpreter, and role model (Weiss & Raedeke, 2004). Regarding the provider, the parents should allow the player to explore and experience the sport and invest their money and time (Lauer et al., 2010b). According to Lauer et al. (2010a), parents or families have an integral role in player development, where parents shape the pursuits that kids make early in life and offer the chances and materials required to support their growth.

The third factor was the coach's support. The current research found that despite the role of sport in the player's physical development, the coach also has essential rules for player psychological development in terms of spirit and resistance, self-efficacy, self-belief, mentality, confidence, and trust. Actions to minimize anxiety, stress, mental health, and emotions are helpful as a way to improve performance (Martinez-Lorca et al., 2023). Studies highlight coaches' crucial role in implementing developmentally appropriate programs that center around enhancing personal resources and strengths (Vella et al., 2011). Research supporting this interpretation of the function of coaches has demonstrated that training and assistance for youth sports coaches can increase the chance of positive kid development (Smoll et al., 1993).

The Indonesian Football Association (PSSI) and the Football Association of Malaysia (FAM) can use the results of this study as a reference to make policies for the development of Indonesian and Malaysian youth football players. Youth players are the hope and strength of the country to

obtain excellence in the national football team. Developing youth football players with good physical, technical, and psychological aspects will produce a successful national football team in the future.

Conclusion

The current research aims to develop a model for Under-17 Football Players in Indonesia and Malaysia. The model proposed in the current research consists of several parts, namely the issues and challenges for the athlete development consisting of several factors, namely the coach competencies, athlete physics, technique, and tactical and psychological condition. The individual psychological trait consists of several psychological conditions, such as cognitive, affective, attitude, personality, and spirituality. Moreover, the environment's psychological condition refers to how the environment supports the player's development, consisting of several aspects, such as the policy supporting the athlete's development, the support from the family, and the support from the coach. A development model for Indonesian and Malaysian under-17-year-old football players will complement the weaknesses of the Indonesian and Malaysian football curriculum by providing information about the development path for under-17-year-old football players.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors state that there is no conflict of interest in this research.

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