

Investigation of Coaching Experience Periods of UEFA European Football
Champion National Team Head Coaches

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to investigate how long it takes for the national team head coaches to win the UEFA European Football Championship between 1960-2021 to turn into competence and ultimately superior success. The model of the research was determined as "Basic Qualitative Research". The data collection technique was determined as "Document Analysis". The universe of the research consists of the national teams that won the UEFA European Football Championship finals between 1960-2021. The sample of the research consisted of the coaches of the national teams that showed the success of reaching the summit in the UEFA European Football Championship finals. Written documents related to the UEFA European Football Championship finals were used in the data analysis of the research. The general experience periods of the national team coaches who were successful in the UEFA European Football Championship finals were determined on the basis of the date they started their coaching profession, and it was determined that they were active within the general working period. Coaching times were calculated and compared and analyzed. With this study, it was examined what kind of experience the elite national team coaches had before they reached their career peak. After an average experience period, it was seen that the general coaching experience and active working time of the coaches who started to work in the national teams were high.

Keywords: National Team, Football, Coaching, Experience

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**UEFA Avrupa Futbol Şampiyonu Milli Takım Teknik
Direktörlerinin Antrenör Deneyim Sürelerinin
İncelenmesi**

Öz

Bu araştırmanın amacı, 1960-2021 yılları arasında UEFA Avrupa Futbol Şampiyonası'nı kazanan milli takım baş antrenör deneyimlerinin, yetkinliğe ve nihayetinde üstün başarıya ne kadar sürede dönüştüğünün araştırılmasıdır. Araştırmanın modeli "Temel Nitel Araştırma" olarak belirlenmiştir. Veri toplama tekniği "Doküman Analizi" olarak belirlenmiştir. Araştırmanın evrenini 1960-2021 yılları arasında UEFA Avrupa Futbol Şampiyonası finallerinde şampiyon olan milli takımlar oluşturmaktadır. Araştırmanın örneklemini ise UEFA Avrupa Futbol Şampiyonası finallerinde zirveye ulaşma başarısını gösteren milli takımların teknik direktörleri oluşturmuştur. Araştırmanın veri analizinde UEFA Avrupa Futbol Şampiyonası finallerine ilişkin yazılı belgeler kullanılmıştır. UEFA Avrupa Futbol Şampiyonası finallerinde başarılı olan milli takım antrenörlerinin, antrenörlük mesleğine başladıkları tarih esas alınarak genel deneyim süreleri belirlenerek, genel çalışma süresinin içerisinden aktif olarak antrenörlük süreleri hesaplanarak karşılaştırma yapıp analiz edildi. Bu çalışma ile, elit milli takım teknik direktörlerinin kariyer zirvesine ulaştıkları bir kupa öncesi nasıl bir deneyim süresi geçirdiklerini incelendi. Ortalama bir deneyim süresinin ardından milli takımlarda göreve başlayan koçların, genel deneyimlerinin ve aktif çalışma sürelerinin yüksek olduğu görüldü.

Anahtar kelimeler: Milli Takım, Futbol, Koçluk, Deneyim

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Introduction

Football is one of the hardest games to learn and master. The skills and techniques required to control and move the ball in a 360-degree range of possibilities using nearly every part of the body under regular pressure from opponents is a learning and mastering process that includes a long period of practice and training, and development. The added complexity of the game's decision-making process and the constant challenge of positioning the ball correctly adds to the difficulty of the learning process. However, although the process of learning to play football is considered to be long and gradual, there seems to be a very common perception about the learning process of the coach in the managerial position of the football team. At this point, it will take time for the trainer to reach the targeted gains and start the profession. Some coaches can achieve high achievements at an earlier age, others at a more mature age. Considering the value of time, the age to reach professional peak is also extremely important in terms of setting new goals. Within the scope of the study, the professional career periods of the coaches of the national teams that won the UEFA European Football Championship were examined before the championship.

The experience of the coach is a situation that should be taken into account by sports managers in terms of coach selection and decision making. It is necessary to find sports coaches from different categories and traditions, of different ages, who will shoulder the burden of every goal and every position. Some coaches go to the goal with star players at an early age, others with young athletes at a mature age. The situation may also be the other way around. At this point, when the professional experience of the coach in football is combined with factors such as athlete's career, high-level achievements, infrastructure and assistant coaching process, academic education, it can help to reach the right goal and targets.

The coach's advancing age or length of professional experience can be beneficial for players. Trainer experience has been reported by many authors as one of the predictors of trainers' perception of effectiveness (Rangeon et al., 2011; Jones et al., 2003; Gilbert and Trudel, 2001; Feltz et al., 1999).

Researching the origins of coaching experiences is important to understanding how and when coaching knowledge can be translated into success and results.

The global expansion of coaching science in recent years has created a clear need to provide a systematic description of coach development. Many authors have conducted research on the origins of the knowledge and success gained by elite coaches in order to determine the effect of training and practice skills and experiences of elite coaches on success (Gould et al., 1987., Gould et al., 1990; Salmela, 1995).

According to Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, professional development of coaches will occur when they regularly participate in social interactions and field-related activities that become more complex over time (Bronfenbrenner, 1979-1999). Therefore, in order to better understand the development and success of football coaches, it would be useful to examine the processes and situations that focus on developmental pathways and activities.

Given the importance of knowledge and naturally experience in the success of trainers, it is important to understand how this translates into competence (Gilbert and Trudel, 2001).

This research was conducted to examine the experience periods during which this competence turned into success. As a result of the UEFA European Football Championship finals, followed by millions of people around the world, it is important to examine the success of a champion team and the coaches who manage these teams, and to investigate the experience and career development processes of successful coaches. As a sports manager, getting to know the coaches who have achieved high success under such a great interest and expectation will set a model for the career development of sports managers and football coaches.

Material and Method

Due to its subject, in this research, the parameters including the professional experience period as a coach before the national team duties for the coaches who were successful in the international football championships organized by UEFA, one of the top management institutions of world football, were analyzed and interpreted in depth.

Model of the Research

The model of the research was determined as "Basic Qualitative Research" and the data collection technique in the research was determined as "Document Analysis". Document analysis is one of the qualitative research designs in which written materials (books, magazines, newspapers, documents with e-content) are examined (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013).

Universe and Sample

The universe of the research has been determined as the coaches of the champion teams as a result of the UEFA European Football Championship Finals from the past to the present. The sample has been determined as the coaches of the national teams that have won the UEFA European Football Championship from the past to the present. The sampling method of the research was determined as density sampling. The density sample used in a qualitative research should include the best or most information-rich examples of the phenomenon under investigation, rather than extreme or unusual situations (Morgan and Morgan, 2008). The phenomena studied in heuristic studies need not be

extraordinary, pathological, or contradictory. Instead, it is essential that they contain intense information and have samples that can reach different and new information over time (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). The heuristic approach aims to discover and make sense of the nature of the studied event or phenomenon through self-experiences and the researcher's subjective explanations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). It enables the researcher to clearly express and make sense of the creative thinking that exists in them.

Data Collection Tools

In the research, written documents that will contribute to the research of the national teams and their coaches that were champions as a result of the UEFA European Football Championship Finals held between 1960-2021 were used. Within the scope of the study, written and visual documents that are accessible to everyone around the world, including internet news, archives, biographies and portals and official sources of the national teams that won the championship as a result of the UEFA European Football Championship Finals, were examined.

The Analyses of the Data

The analysis of the data in the research was made according to the Miles-Huberman model as a descriptive analysis. In this context, qualitative data analysis is mainly carried out in three steps: (i) Data reduction; selecting, examining, simplifying, summarizing and transforming the data obtained at the end of the research; (ii) data display; creating an organized version of the data collected to produce results; (iii) inference/verification; to reveal causal relationships, patterns, possible structures between events and objects, and to test the results in terms of validity (Miles and Huberman, 2016).

Ethics of Research

It is aimed to reach the result by answering the questions to be discussed in the research in a way that sticks to the principles of qualitative research methods. The relevant article is based on the doctoral project named "Experience and Career Development Processes of Champion National Team Coaches in FIFA and UEFA Football Organizations" mentioned in the ethics committee report of Marmara University Institute of Health Sciences dated 13.07.2020 and numbered 62. It was written as a separate research.

Results

Football is undoubtedly the most popular sport for the vast majority of the world's population. As a game and an international sporting event, football has many positive effects on the countries participating in the UEFA European Football Championship Finals, the teams representing the countries there, and the players and coaches who make up these teams. Let's examine the success of

a champion team as a result of the UEFA European Football Championship finals and the coaches who manage these teams, let's see the experience period of the coaches who can achieve success under the great interest and expectation of the UEFA European Football Championship as technical managers before the championship.

Table 1

UEFA European Football Championship Winner National Team Head Coaches Experience Periods

UEFA	Head Coach	National Team	Coaching Experience Periods Before Cup
2021	 Roberto Mancini	 İtalya	2001 to 2021-20 years (19 seasons active)
2016	 Fernando Santos	 Portekiz	1988 to 2016-28 years (27 seasons active)
2012	 Vicente Del Bosque	 İspanya	1984 to 2012-26 years (22 seasons aktive)
2008	 Luis Aragones	 İspanya	1974 to 2008-34 years (27 seasons active)
2004	 Otto Rehhagel	 Yunanistan	1972 to 2004-32 years (32 seasons active)
2000	 Roger Lemerre	 Fransa	1975 to 2000-25 years (12 seasons active)
1996	 Berti Vogts	 Almanya	1979 to 1996-17 years (17 seasons active)
1992	 Richard Møller Nielsen	 Danimarka	1964 to 1992-28 years (27 seasons active)
1988	 Rinus Michels	 Hollanda	1953 to 1988-35 years (27 seasons aktive)
1984	 Michel Hidalgo	 Fransa	1967 to 1984-17 years (17 seasons active)
1980	 Jupp Derwall	 Almanya	1959 to 1980-21 years (16 seasons active)
1976	 Vaclav Jezek	 Çekoslovakya	1963 to 1976-13 years (13 seasons active)
1972	 Helmut Schön	 Almanya	1946 to 1972-26 years (26 season active)
1968	 Ferruccio Valcareggi	 İtalya	1953 to 1968-15 years (14 seasons active)

1964		Jose Villalonga	 İspanya	1954 to 1964-10 years (7 seasons active)
1960		Gavriil Kachalin	 Sovyetler Birliđi	1949 to 1960-11 years (7 seasons active)

When we look at the years of experience of the champion national team coaches in the UEFA European Championship finals as a coach before the European Championship, it can be said that such a task and responsibility was undertaken, followed by success, following a high experience in the table that first caught our eye. Head coaches have been deemed worthy of national team duties with a long working period and work experience and success covering dozens of seasons. This merit achievement was also reflected in the results and crowned with the European Championship.

Average years and seasons of overall experience of national team coaches who have won the UEFA European Football Championship

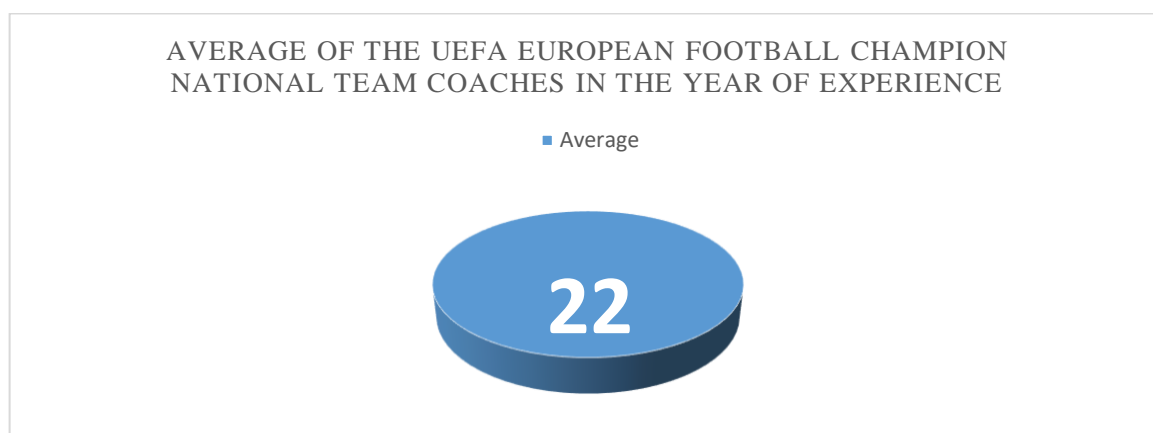


Figure 1. Average time of experience of The UEFA European Football Champion head coaches

As seen in the graph, when we look at the time period covering the period until the national team coaching, which is selected based on the year the champion national team coaches started coaching in the UEFA European Football Championship finals, we see that the average year of experience as a coach before the European Football Championship is 22 years.

If we look at the active coaching period;

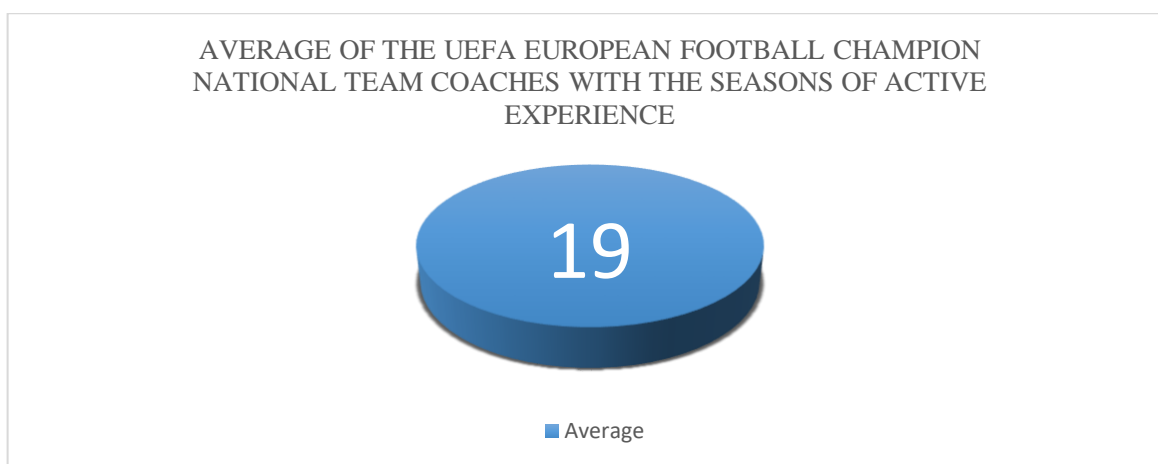


Figure 2. Average seasons of active experience of The UEFA European Football Champion head coaches

As can be seen in the graph, when we look at the time period covering the period of active work until the national team coaching is selected based on the year the champion national team coaches started coaching in the UEFA European Football Championship finals, it is seen that the average year of experience is 19 football seasons.

Discussion

In the championship, which started with great excitement under the name of UEFA European Championship finals in 1960, the excitement continues with 16 national teams and coaches who have won 16 finals every 4 years. In the tournament where only one coach and the national team won the title of the best in Europe, the dream of every football coach, like every football player, is to become a champion. As in every profession, it is difficult to achieve such important professional achievements in football. Although there are many studies that include match and performance analyzes of players in European Championships, a limited number of studies examining the characteristics of champion coaches have guided this study. In the study, it was aimed to measure the general experience and active professional experience of European coaches before the Championship, and at this point, the national team coaches who managed to win the UEFA European Football Championship were examined as the target audience.

When we look at the results of the research, it is understood that the general coaching experience period of the national team coaches who won the UEFA European Championship is 22 years on average before the championship. While the national teams of Germany, France, Italy and Spain stood out as the national teams that managed to win the cup more than once, they also achieved victory with highly experienced coaches in terms of professional experience. The national team coaches who won the tournament the most are of German origin. Of the 16 national team head coaches

who won the championship, 9 of them had almost equal overall and active experience. It is understood from here that; European Champion national team coaches have not been unemployed throughout their careers. In cases of failure in football teams, the employment contract of the coaches is terminated first. The fact that most of the coaches have worked actively during their professional experience shows that they have also had a successful coaching process in the teams they took part in before the national team. For this reason, it can be said that they have been appointed to the positions they deserve, considering the experience process. The added success stands out as the most obvious proof of this.

Conclusion

With the spread of modern football all over the world under the leadership of England in the European continent, it will be understood that the competitive environment is high when the successes of European football and its technically leading position are taken into account. This situation maximizes the competition between coaches. At this point, it is normal for European coaches to have advanced age and high experience. Based on this, two conclusions can be drawn; First of all, the main factor for the success of the coach in European football may be continuity and perseverance in business life, as well as being in the right place and at the right time. At this point, it can be said that sports managers in European football tend to minimize risks by prioritizing merit in terms of making the right decision in the selection of national team trainers. On the other hand, the preference of more mature and experienced coaches, especially in the selection and assignment of national team coaches in European football, can be an important factor in success.

Therefore, processing different parameters such as tenure, coaching results, player careers, assistant and player coaching times of champion national team coaches, whose average experiences is taken, will contribute directly to the research result and contribute to our understanding of the common and different characteristics of champion coaches.

Ethics Committee Permission Information

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During the current research, it was acted within the framework of the "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive".

Contribution rates of researchers

The processes related to the subject, method, findings, analysis, discussion and conclusion part of the research were carried out by the first author. The control and suggestions part was carried out with the contributions of the second author.

Declaration of conflict

The authors do not have a conflict statement regarding the research.

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