

Management of Football Academies in Türkiye: The Player's Perspective

Türkiye'deki Futbol Akademilerinin Yönetimi: Futbolcu Görüşü

¹Gökhan BOZKURT

ORCID No: 0009-0007-8715-0050

²Cláudia DIAS

ORCID No: 0000-0003-0418-0056

²Maria José CARVALHO

ORCID No: 0000-0002-4975-0115

¹Sports Faculty of University of Porto, Porto, Portugal

²CIFI2D, the Centre for Research, Training, Innovation and Intervention in Sport, Portugal

Yazışma Adresi

Corresponding Address:

Gökhan BOZKURT

Sports Faculty of University of Porto,
Porto, Portugal

E-posta: info@gokhanbozkurt.com

Geliş Tarihi (Received): 06.09.2024

Kabul Tarihi (Accepted): 05.03.2025

ABSTRACT

The performance of football academies is contingent upon the collaboration of various internal and external stakeholders. In this context, considering football players as crucial internal stakeholders in club-based football academies, the current research explores, from the viewpoints of elite players, the factors impacting the efficiency of management in Turkish football academies. Using the system theory approach as its theoretical framework, the specific focus was on describing the essential requisites and services within the input, process, feedback, output, and environmental aspects of the football academy management system. Subsequently, the study aimed to propose practical solutions to enhance various facets of the football academy management in Türkiye. Fifteen male participants, aged between 19 and 36 years old, were selected among active professional players competing in the top division of Türkiye (Süper Lig) who had also represented the Turkish National Teams in at least one official game above the U18 level during their careers. The data was obtained through semi-structured interviews and analysed using qualitative content analysis. According to the results, the effective selection of talented players, high-quality coaching, parents' education, providing more competitive game experience, and resolving transition challenges to senior teams were critical for the success of football academies. The findings also highlighted key suggestions for the improvement of the overall performance of academies in Türkiye.

Keywords: *Academy player, Elite footballer, Football academy management, Football management*

Öz

Futbol akademilerinin yönetsel başarısı çeşitli iç ve dış paydaşların iş birliğine bağlıdır. Bu bağlamda, akademilerde eğitim görmüş futbolcular, futbol akademilerinin en önemli iç paydaşlarından biridir. Mevcut araştırma, akademilerde eğitim almış, aktif profesyonel futbolcuların bakış açısından, Türkiye'deki futbol akademilerinin yönetim verimliliğini etkileyen faktörleri araştırmaktadır. Yönetimde Sistem Yaklaşımı'nı benimseyen araştırma, futbol akademilerinde girdi, süreç, geri bildirim, çıktı ve çevre faktörlerini dikkate alarak daha etkili bir futbol yönetimi için temel gereklilikleri ve hizmetleri tanımlamakta, yönetim sürecini geliştirmek için pratik çözümler önermeyi amaçlamaktadır. Araştırma için yapılandırılmış mülakat tekniği kullanılmıştır ve katılımcılar 19 ile 36 yaşları arasında, Türkiye'nin en üst liginde (Süper Lig) oynayan ve kariyerleri boyunca U18 seviyesi üzerinde en az bir resmi maçta Türk Milli Takımlarını temsil etmiş erkek oyuncular arasından seçilmiştir. Veriler nitel içerik analizi kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Araştırma, futbol akademilerinin başarısı için kritik öneme sahip olan bazı faktörleri ortaya koymuştur. Bu faktörler arasında yetenekli oyuncuların zamanında ve etkili bir şekilde seçilmesi, antrenör kalitesinin artırılması, daha rekabetçi bir oyun ve lig deneyiminin sağlanması, sporcu ebeveynlerinin eğitimi ve A-takımlara geçiş süreçlerinin etkin bir şekilde yönetilmesi yer almaktadır. Araştırma, ayrıca Türkiye'deki futbol akademilerin yönetim etkinliğini yükseltmek için bir takım somut öneriler sunmaktadır.

Keywords: *Akademi oyuncusu, Elit futbolcu, Futbol akademisi yönetimi, Futbol yönetimi*

INTRODUCTION

Football academies are primarily designed to nurture and develop elite football players who can compete at a senior level for professional football clubs (Gulbin and Weissensteiner, 2013; Nesti and Sulley, 2015). In this regard, players emerge as crucial internal stakeholders in the football industry. Because in today's sport, great players are more valuable than ever (Colvin, 2008) and exceptional performance and results are tied to outstanding players. For this reason, players are the most valuable resources and assets of football clubs, as clubs are relying on these individuals to achieve particular objectives and stay competitive in the league and in the football business (Yiapanas et al., 2024). Because of this, clubs are focused heavily on recruiting or developing the best players to maximize their chances of success (Hoye et al., 2012). Along these lines, a study by Kuper and Szymanski (2009) showed that the quality of players is the greatest determinant of success in a football clubs. Several scholars have examined players' direct influence on the management process (Collins et al., 2019) while other studies delved into the significance of players as stakeholders within football management process, addressing their relationship with clubs and other key actors (Hassan and Hamil, 2011; Yiapanas et al., 2024). Therefore, if clubs share value and align interests with their key internal stakeholders, it may increase the likelihood of creating win-win situations (Freeman, 2017). Recognizing that insights of the key stakeholder perceptions can significantly impact the overall efficiency of management practices in the organization (Chelladurai, 2014; Freeman, 2010), the systems theory approach was chosen to gain a thorough understanding of the unique perspectives and preferences of professional elite players who were once part of the football academy system. The systems theory approach was considered appropriate for understanding this phenomenon, as there are no privately owned or independently accredited football academies in Türkiye. Consequently, all academies function entirely under the control of football clubs, making it essential to analyze them within the broader club structure rather than in isolation. Thereby their ability to achieve better results is shaped by the overall structure and functioning of these clubs. Moreover, most football clubs in Türkiye are organized as associations, with board members elected by their voluntary members, meaning that the clubs' effectiveness is also influenced by the capabilities of those elected officials. Therefore, recognizing the relationships and interactions between the parts of the system is vitally important to comprehend the behavior and the output quality of the system (Samur, 2018; Şenaras and Sezen, 2017). In the systems approach to management, the whole is a sum of its parts (Von Bertalanffy, 2015), meaning that the interaction between components of the system affects the productivity of the system (Mele et al., 2010) Accordingly, analyzing football academies in isolation would not be meaningful; instead, it is more practical to examine academy management within the broader football club system.

Previous research shows that there are challenges and difficulties encountered by elite football development in Türkiye (Sunay and Kaya, 2018) and the setbacks are evident in player development (Akkoyun, 2014; Çevik and Onağ, 2019) in Turkish academies. Moreover, there is a noticeable shortage of academy-raised players participating in the highest league of Turkish football system (Şenel and Saygın, 2021; Topkaya, 2015). Additional research also indicated that one of the reasons of the failure of Turkish football is linked due to insufficiency and inadequacy of football academies, as this is widely acknowledged by football executives within the sector (Taştan, 2021). Research also showed that among European football leagues, Türkiye ranks the last out of 31 countries in terms of club-trained players from the academies (Poli et al., 2016). Moreover, the Turkish national football teams, at both senior and youth levels, have not achieved significant success in international competitions over the past two decades. Previous research and practical experiences in the field indicate that there is something that is not working in the Turkish football development system. This brings us to the main question: How are the great performers in Turkish football made? The future of the game depends on how well this issue is addressed (Nesti and Sulley, 2015). In this context, the management of football

academies could be more effective if the needs, aspirations, interests, and preferences of players, as key stakeholders in the football system, are properly addressed. In return, these stakeholders would contribute to fulfilling the clubs' objectives (Mendizabal et al., 2020). Therefore, the research aimed to identify the essential requirements and services within the input (main components that enters into academy system such as resources and talent selection), process (daily operations, management quality and services), feedback (evaluative information, communication and motivation), output (player development and expected achievements), and environmental (any external influencers on the system) dimensions of the football academies in Türkiye, from the perspectives of elite football players.

The literature indicates that, in relation to player, talent development programs primarily focus on the selection of the talent into the system. Various assessment tests, such as TIPS (Technique, Intelligence, Personality and Speed), TABS (Technique, Attitude, Balance, Speed), SUPS (Speed, Understanding of game, Personality and Skill) are commonly employed for player evaluation (Brown, 2001; Reilly et al., 2003; Stratton et al., 2004). Additionally, a multidisciplinary approach is observed in talent identification processes (Kokstajn et al., 2019; Veale et al., 2008; Vandendriessche et al., 2011). Beyond football skills and anthropometric attributes, high level success in elite sport is also determined by psychological factors (Beswick, 2016; Moran and Toner, 2017). Literature findings also suggest that football players with more conceptual and cognitive (de Joode et al., 2021; Ehmann et al., 2022; Machado et al., 2023) and social skills (Holt and Dunn, 2004), also known as soft skills, as well as psychomotor ability, are more likely to achieve success in the long-term football career (Nesti and Sulley, 2015). This emphasizes the understanding that player development is a multi-dimensional construct (Coutinho et al., 2016; Côté et al., 2012). Thus, football player development cannot rely solely on the innate football talents in the football academies. Apart from the development of talent, the transition of the academy players into senior teams constitutes an important doorstep in the overall development process. The literature suggests that the athletes should accumulate a minimum of 10,000 hours of practice to reach an international elite level of performance (Ericsson et al., 1996; Levitin, 2006; Williams and Hodge, 2005). If we scale this guideline to football players, assuming an average daily practice duration of 3 hours over a 10-season football academy education period, the 10.000 hours rule is not easily met within the time spent in football academies. Research also indicates that most of the academies associated with top European football clubs fall considerably short of the 10,000 hours rule (Nesti and Sulley, 2015). Moreover, in team sports, such as football, athletes typically achieve peak performance in their mid-to-late twenties (Côté et al., 2012; Haugaasen et al., 2014; Moran and Toner, 2017). Research specific to football players indicates that footballers generally reach their highest elite levels after around 13 years of formal and informal football education and practice (Helsen et al., 2000). This duration exceeds the time typically spent in a football academy. All this background information underscores the significance of the time players spend at professional level with the A team, emphasizing its importance for the holistic and systematic development of academy-raised players. Closely related to the transition period, another important relevant concept to player development revolves around challenging competition experiences during the late development years (Houlihan and Green, 2008; Stotlar and Wonders, 2006). Engaging in competitive play is an important component of the development process (Côté et al., 2013; Kaplan, 2016). Increased practice and competition experience at elite level are recognized as facilitators for the development of elite technical skills and natural game intelligence (Böhlke and Robinson, 2009; Côté et al., 2013). Scholars underline that likelihoods of success in sport development will be boosted by the presence of a performance supporting environment (Barker et al., 2014; Cruickshank, 2019). The literature supports the notion that top football academies in the world ensure their players can engage in competitions, leagues and tournaments to acquire real match experiences, fostering game understanding and practicing skills in challenging situations (Gulbin et al., 2013; Nesti and Sulley, 2015).

METHOD

Participants: For the sampling approach, we employed purposive sampling method to engage participants whose perspectives or experiences aligned with the study question (Patton, 2015). In this context, as a criterion sampling, participants were exclusively selected from active elite male players in the top professional division (Süper Lig) within a senior team during the data collection period. To define active players, participants were required to have played in at least one official match in senior team during the seasons in which the data was collected. Additionally, inclusion criteria specified that players must have been capped for the Turkish National Football Team at least once above U18 teams. In this regard, the participants were intended to represent successful examples of the Turkish academy system. In addition, we leveraged snowball sampling alongside criterion sampling, allowing us to draw upon the referrals of the selected participants or persons with access to potential participants that met the defined criteria. The final number of the sample was determined as 15 participants by the saturation technique (Moser and Korstjens, 2018).

Interview Design: Data were collected through semi-structured, in-depth interviews with open-ended questions (Veal and Darcy, 2014). The interview guide used as a framework was specifically developed for this study, encompassing questions related to four main themes: (a) desired services of the academy (b) player related issues; (c) management related issues in Turkish football environment, (d) club's responsibility in the process. Before the actual data collection, the primary researcher conducted a pilot interview with a football player. Based on feedback from this pilot interview, minor amendments and updates were incorporated to the interview guide. The interview structure was devised to extract authentic reflections, individual sentiments, and narratives from the participants. All the players were asked the same questions in the same way, but the order of questioning was free to vary within the natural flow of the conversation. To establish a comfortable and relaxed environment, an introductory conversation was conducted to break the ice and create a welcoming atmosphere. The instruction text was delivered in a detailed format to ensure the participants understood the nature of the interview. For instance, phrases such as "This is not an exam and there is not a single right answer, the only right answer is your own opinion and experience" were included to emphasize the openness of the discussion. Towards the end of the interview, participants were given the opportunity to add or clarify anything that they felt was necessary but not covered on the topics discussed in the questions.

Data Collection: After applying criterion sampling, the initial list of potential interview candidates was identified. Given that the primary researcher is an active football agent with an extensive network and over 10 years of experience in the football sector, all potential participants were first contacted via phone calls to explain the purpose and nature of the study in detail. Furthermore, through snowball sampling, access was granted to additional participants who met the defined criteria. For those who agreed to participate, convenient interview times and locations were scheduled based on their availability. All the interviews, with two exceptions, were conducted in person taking place at the participants' respective clubs. Two players didn't want to meet inside the club's premises, meetings were arranged accordingly. The interviews were conducted in the participant's native language by the primary researcher to create a comfortable and safe environment for the respondents. The research consent form was presented, and all participants provided their approval. Participants were assured that their identities and answers would remain confidential. Upon granting their consent, the interviews were recorded using a digital audio recording device. Participants were given the opportunity to withdraw from the research or choose not to answer specific questions if they felt uncomfortable, although no participants chose to exercise this option. All participants actively engaged in the interviews and provided responses to all the questions, demonstrating effective collaboration. The duration of the interviews ranged from a minimum of 40 minutes to slightly

over 1 hour. Ethical Committee approval was obtained with a number CEFADE 16_2024 from University of Porto and conducted in accordance with the Helsinki Declaration.

Data Analysis: The interviews were first transcribed verbatim in their native language and then translated into English to let the other researchers contribute to the analysis. Content analysis was performed to explore the content of the transcribed data. For meaningful results, it is generally advised that content analysis should have around 15-20 interviews (Moser and Korstjens, 2018) and the research readily met this requirement. In the review process of each participant's transcript, the meaningful units (words and sentences that conveyed similar meanings) were identified and labelled with codes (Graneheim and Lundman, 2004). A tagging system was employed within the data analysis process (P for player) and each tag was numbered according to participant (P1 for player 1), so that the other researchers could easily find the codes in the participants' transcribed and code-coloured interview. The existing literature served as a basis to define predefined categories (such as facilities), while new emerging categories (such as federation's or state's responsibility) were also identified and included in the analysis, following the principles of both deductive and inductive coding, respectively (Patton, 2015; Schreier, 2014). The final codes and categories were interpreted based on the knowledge and experience of the researchers and compared for differences and similarities. This collaborative approach is done to increase the trustworthiness in the code checks and to minimize interpretive bias (Patton, 2002).

RESULTS

The answers of the respondents concerning the essential requisites and services within the input, process, feedback, output, and environmental aspects of a football academy system in Türkiye are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

Domains That Affect the Management of the Football Academies

Input Domain	Process Domain
Talent selection/Scouting	Management quality
Coaches	Governance quality
Staff	Service quality
Facilities	
Feedback Domain	Output Domain
Communication and motivation	Elite player
Environment Domain	
Influential others + Football governing body + Sports policy of the country	

Input Domain: The players indicated talent as a crucial component of a successful academy management, therefore, there is a need for a solid plan for the selection of young players in the academies. Nine elite players were selected into their academies only by one test game during a trial week, whereas six elite players acknowledged that they were not even selected through a formal process; instead, they just received invitations to join the clubs' youth teams by acquaintances and continued playing until reaching professional levels. Players especially voiced discontentment regarding the delayed starting age for organized football in Türkiye. When inquired about the age at which they initially joined organized football training, responses ranged from varied from 7 to 16 years old among all the players. Most of the participants were introduced to their first football trainings after the age of 12. Those players who were born abroad in Europe and later relocated to Türkiye constituted the earliest starters at 7 years old (n = 2).

Elite players involved in this study believed that coaching quality had a strong impact on the quality of player development programs, therefore it's a prerequisite for enhancing the overall performance of football academies in

Türkiye. Most crucial aspects of academy coaching were considered as effective communication with young players, pedagogical knowledge and approach in trainings, being expert on youth football and age-groups and psychological and emotional approach towards the children. Additionally, players emphasized the importance of coaches being skillful at providing constructive feedback, which was regarded as a key feature for player's skill development. In addition to academy coaching, players emphasized that initial experience with the senior (A) team's coach also played a role for the final development phase of academy graduates. Corroborating this finding, seven elite players confessed that the best support they received in becoming professional footballers mainly came from their initial head-coaches at the professional level. Players asserted that the overall quality of the academy staff also significantly influenced the general development environment of the players. Players specifically acknowledged a lack of professionalism among the staff in Turkish football academies. Players emphasized that working in the academies must be a full-time, specialized, professional job, irrespective of the position. Additionally, players highlighted the low job security, leading to high employee turnover in the academies every season, and this hinders the professionalism. Apart from expert coaches, the most anticipated academy staff were identified as expert sport psychologist, specialized fitness coaches tailored to age-specific groups, in-house doctors, full-time expert physiotherapists, and expert nutritionists to contribute to the proper physical development of young players in the academy.

Besides human resources, participants underlined that proper physical resources available to football academy were critical component of successful player development process. In addition, players believed that the facilities and equipment were the leverage to enhance the effectiveness of trainings given in the academies. Players even added that proper facilities and physical conditions of the academy constitute a strategic competitive advantage for the academy players to outstrip the other players. Nevertheless, in practice, most of the players acknowledged experiencing a scarcity of pitches during their developmental years. Players also specified the necessity of a proper gym allocated to young players in academies, to promote physical development, and highlighted that academies would benefit from using new technologies and innovative applications for enhanced training and development. Nine players expressed the view that having academy facilities on the same site as the senior team was advantageous. Among them, seven players specified that the benefits of a same-site facility were more significant for certain age groups and might not be necessary for very early age groups. For example, one participant (P13) summarized this perspective with the following statement: "Relatively older teams, such as U18 or U19, can have regular interaction with the senior team if they train at the same facility. This is good. This enhances communication, eases the challenges of the transition period, facilitates adaptation, and increases group acceptance in the event of progression to the senior team." On the other hand, five players remained neutral and did not express a preference, while one player opposed the idea. This player (P10) believed that access to senior-level opportunities should be earned and deserved rather than granted. He said; "academy players should not be too close to the senior team facility, they must perceive it as an achievement to strive for, requiring dedicated effort and hard work rather than effortless accessibility. They must understand that only those who truly deserve it can become part of it." The full list of advantages of the same-site provision are outlined in Table 2.

Table 2

Advantages and Disadvantages of Shared-Facility Sites in A Club

Advantages of the same-site facility	Disadvantages of the same-site facility
Young players take role-models from seniors (P3, P4, P6)	Must be deserved with hard work (P10)
Improves communication between players (P3, P5, P6, P13)	
Improves cooperation between the academy and A team (P5, P9, P13)	
Facilitates transition of the players to A team (P3, P5, P8, P13)	
Young players can compare themselves with seniors (P12)	
Helps for effective goal-settings (P4)	
It's an adaptation to professionalism (P3, P6, P11, P13)	

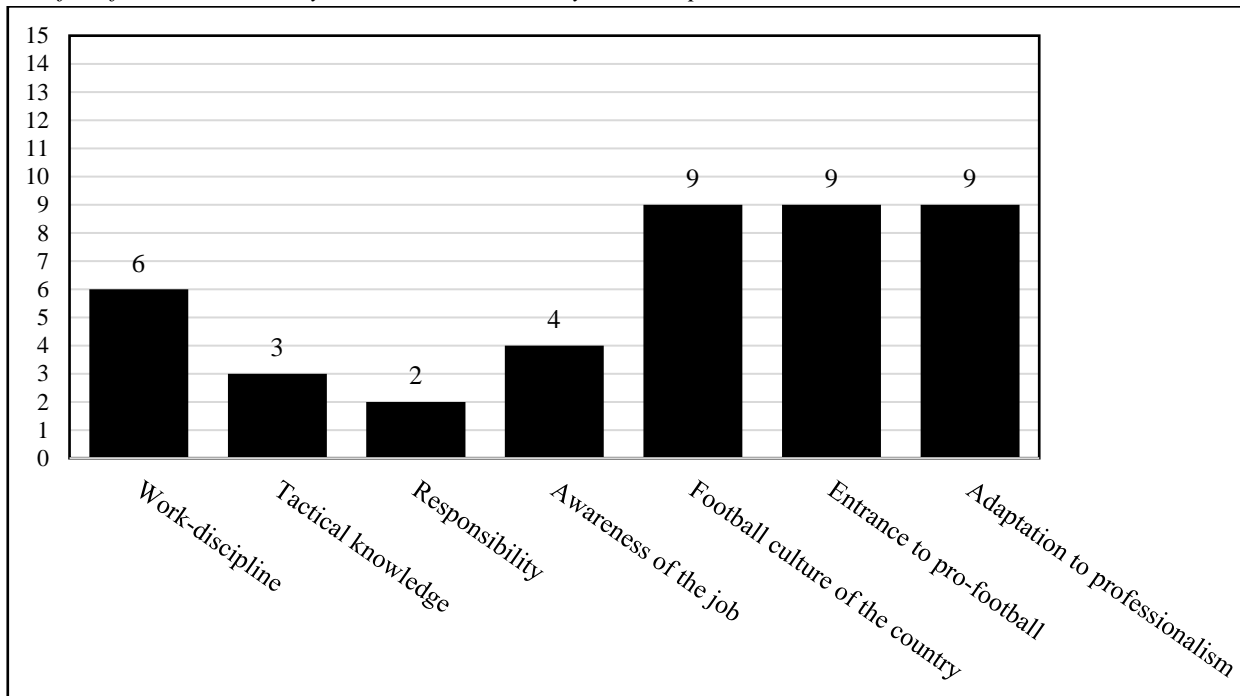
Process Domain: Players observed a deficiency in organizational effectiveness within the clubs, which, in turn, had a direct impact on academy performance. Participants addressed the senior team and club's top executives as the source of problems in academy management, asserting that the incompetence and lack of proficiency of the senior team executives were reflected in the overall performance of the academies. According to elite players, the academy managers should assume some necessary roles inside the academy to enhance the effectiveness of the organizational management. The most anticipated roles of a manager were identified as to remove all obstacles hindering players from developing themselves and providing suitable environment to flourish, to set clear job division and expectations, effective organizing in club structure, effective communication among the A team, club and the academy and effective long-term planning. In relation to the club's corporate management, the predominant concerns included inadequacies in facilities, lack of interest in the work of the academy, lack of investment in the academy, and shortcomings in long-term strategic planning. Additionally, players observed that the board of directors in the clubs changed rapidly, preventing an institutionalized approach towards the youth academy. Relatedly, players ascribed the inefficacy of club management to nepotism and political influences, while some other players pointed to issues of corruption within Turkish clubs. Moreover, football players identified a win-maximizing approach at senior level, impatience on young players and excessive financial resources allocated to senior football team's transfers as the additional factors contributing to the perceived inefficiency of the overall academy management. According to the players, it is the club's approach to the academy which determines of the academy management's future success. In this regard, the players recommended the implementation of training courses by the TFF for the club's board members including presidents on academy football to enhance their football-specific knowledge and cultivate a more supportive mentality within the Turkish football sector. Lastly, one player even proposed that football academies of the clubs could potentially be sold to interested investors or transformed into private entities, thereby fostering improved management under the guidance of professional board members.

In terms of service quality, the provision of accommodation services emerged as a multifaceted facilitator, contributing not only to environmental control but also to the regulation of nutrition and resting times. Furthermore, the accommodation services were perceived as instrumental in fostering better time management for all academy activities. Relatedly, the collective residence for young players was seen as a catalyst for enhancing teamwork and cooperation. However, challenges in this area were also acknowledged, as players indicated insufficient housing in the academies and highlighted the problematic nature of transportation between the accommodation site to schools and back to training grounds as a prevalent issue.

Concerning the services provided to the players, participants advocated for the establishment of a specialized career management department inside the academy or an in-house agency within the control of the academy. According to players, trusted agents could play a useful role in this career planning initiative, addressing off-field issues on behalf of the players. In terms of football development, players conveyed that the training programs in academies generally lacked challenging and formative aspects. Most participants expressed the absence of an individualized training designed for each player. Along the same lines, players underscored the inadequacy of specialized fitness training and highlighted the insufficiency of visual and theoretical instructions in classroom settings within academies. Another aspect stressed by players was the necessity for academies to implement a well-defined curriculum and teaching program tailored to specific age groups. When inquired about the specific contributions of academy years to professional careers, elite players outlined some benefits, as depicted in Figure 1. The predominant contribution was that academies acted as a gateway to professional football, facilitating an effective adaptation to the country's professional football culture.

Figure 1

Benefits of Football Academy Education on Elite Player Development



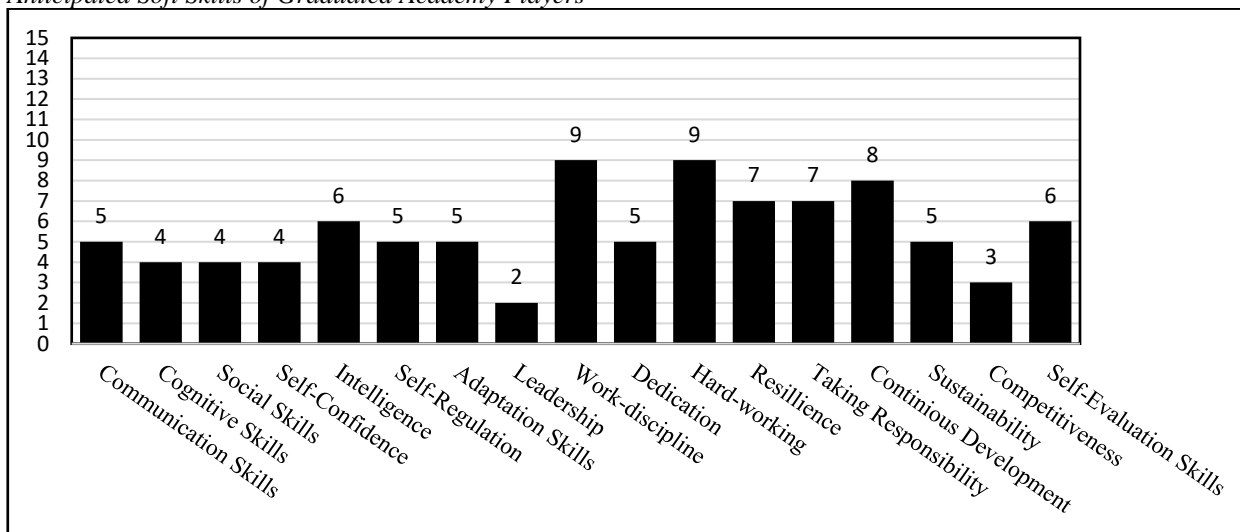
Besides trainings, majority of the players mentioned that playing real matches was a crucial component of the player development process. For those players, the A team (senior team) of the club was an extension of the academy education. For example, one participant (P5) summarized this perspective with the following statement: *“No matter how well we trained and played in the academy, ultimately, what matters is how many games we have played in the senior team. It serves as our showcase—the true evaluation of all the skills acquired during our time in the academy takes place at the senior level.”* Participants specifically acknowledged that engaging in competitive league matches was the most important phase for both the evolution and evaluation of an academy player. In this sense, most of the players proposed that academy players should play more official matches in a competitive league to increase sporting age and underlined the importance of engaging in international tournaments to raise their match experiences. Four players underscored the significance of playing in a suitable team, advising recently-graduated academy players to choose teams based not solely on their reputation but on compatibility and on the potential for individual improvement. In terms of the benefits of

engaging in actual matches, young players cited that it motivated young players to exert greater effort, increased visibility and value of young players in the football market, instilled appropriate attitudes required for professional football, enhanced game intelligence and tactical knowledge, fostered self-confidence and competitiveness on the field, and promoted mental resilience in real-life football situations.

Regarding the progression from academy to senior team, players advocated for an objective decision-making approach during the transition period, emphasizing the utilization of data and measurements. Furthermore, players emphasized the necessity for institutionalized rules and organized planning of the transition process. Players also underscored the necessity of providing mentorship services to young players during this period. One participant (P11) highlighted this necessity, stating: *“There must be an institutional mentoring system to guide young players within the senior team, preparing them for the demands of professional football. A young player should not be left alone to navigate the challenges of the progression period.”* In addition to mentorship, players advocated for the implementation of a well-planned orientation period and adaptation phase for new incoming players in the A team. Furthermore, it was mentioned that young players require continuity to establish themselves as elite players in senior teams; hence, patience and trust were identified as pivotal elements during the transition period. The role of parents and fans during this period was also emphasized. While players highlighted the importance of safeguarding young players from negative parental influence during this phase, it was also noted that fans could potentially exert a negative impact on the transition period if their expectations regarding young players were overly exaggerated. Concerning the psychological development, most participants strongly emphasized the vital importance of mental and psychological preparation in the player development and transition process.

In relation to academy's educational services, participants asserted that football academies bore responsibility not only for on-field football training, but also for off-field education on the subjects potentially related to the footballers' professional life. On the other hand, only seven out of 15 professional elite players admitted that they received such off-field courses during their academy years. This implies that over half of the elite players who participated in our research did not receive any supplemental education for their careers during their time in the academy. To enhance the holistic development of players, participants recommended that extracurricular lessons, such as English language, communication with media, financial education, legal knowledge concerning contracts and regulations, and insights into sponsorship deals, should be integrated into the academy curriculum.

Output Domain: Within the output domain, participants delineated certain attributes and skills anticipated from players nurtured in academies as indicative of a successful outcome. These skills were presented as soft skills and football skills and are illustrated in Figure 2. Regarding soft skills; work discipline, being hard-working, and a commitment to continuous development throughout one's career were identified as pivotal factors that contributed to the formation of a successful football player at the elite level; self-evaluation skills were also deemed particularly valuable, especially in the context of self-development.

Figure 2*Anticipated Soft Skills of Graduated Academy Players*

Regarding football skills, players stressed the importance of young players being physically fit to handle the challenges posed by senior players during a match. Similarly, most of the players pointed out that young players need to have strong endurance and strength to compete effectively for the entire 90 minutes at senior level. Foundational football technique including such skills like ball control, shooting, and dribbling were deemed particularly useful to pursue a successful football career. Additionally tactical and positional knowledge, improvement of speed and game-intelligence were the attributes that elite players expected in a football academy education. On the other hand, players also identified issues commonly observed regarding soft skills among academy-raised players in Türkiye, as lack of work-discipline, lack of professionalism, lack of self-confidence, laziness, lack of resilience and wrong self-conceptions and beliefs at early years. Concerning football skills, the players explained some of the football related problems among young players who come from Turkish academies to the senior teams. These problems are identified as physically underdeveloped players, lack of tactical knowledge, low-endurance levels, lack of strength and power to compete at senior level, lack of positional knowledge and too much improvisational street-like football.

Feedback Domain: In this domain, participants emphasized that the cultural barriers inherent in the country significantly shaped the effectiveness and quality of communication within football clubs. In line with this observation, players indicated that the attitudes and behaviours of existing senior players and coaches in the country impacted the attitudes and behaviours of the next generation of Turkish players. In addition, players underscored the paramount importance of positive encouragement and constructive attitudes from senior players towards younger players. Additionally, players believed that providing premium payments or financial incentives to both academy staff and players was an important means of motivation and dedication, therefore management should consider it in the planning phase. Concerning external communication, most of the players recommended the implementation of a well-defined marketing strategy for the academy by the academy management. This suggestion stemmed from the belief that marketing activities would be beneficial for enhancing the visibility of players in the market. Furthermore, eleven players emphasized the effectiveness of marketing as a means to attract new talented players to the academy and to allure more competent staff to the club. For most of the players, the best marketing activity would be showcasing academy players in the senior team.

Environment Domain: According to the participants in our study, there were notable influencers in the player development process. Parents, close friends, girlfriends/love affairs, other players in the team, agents, fans and media

were regarded as the most influential external influencers on academy player's development. Parental influence was primarily cited in relation to their constant support in a young player's journey to becoming a professional, ensuring that the child has everything needed both materially and emotionally. However, excessive parental involvement was also perceived as having a negative impact. One participant (P1) explained this perspective as follows: *"If the parents of a young boy overindulge him, show excessive attention and care, and involve themselves in every aspect of his life, that boy can never become a good player. He will struggle to develop confidence even in later stages of life as a person."* In terms of parent's influence, therefore, players stressed the imperative necessity of organizing educational sessions for the parents of players within the academies. The impact of girlfriend was primarily cited as a potential source of emotional distress, posing a risk of losing focus on football.

About the football federation, players highlighted significant issues, elucidating the responsibilities they believed the federation should assume to address those problems as illustrated in Table 3. The predominant issues primarily revolved around the absence of an effective controlling function and a well-defined national strategic vision for youth football.

Table 3

Federation's Influence on Football Academy Management

Turkish Football Federation's (TFF) influence on academy management	
Noticed problems	Direct responsibilities
There is nepotism in TFF (P9, P14)	Better Education courses for all academy staff (P3, P9)
Lack of quality coaching education (P9)	Academy TV for knowledge sharing (P10)
Lack of a defined football system/methodology (P5, P7, P9, P11)	Reward Systems as incentives to clubs (P4, P13)
Lack of competitive league system (P5, P7, P9, P11, P13)	B Teams should be created in regular leagues (P13)
Lack of national talent identification system (P9, P12)	More effective controlling function (P9, P11, P14)
TFF neglects the controlling function (P4, P5, P13, P14)	Define long-term national football strategy (P5, P7, P14)
	Set a license system for club's top management and governance (P3, P11)

Table 4

Influence of Sports Policy on Football Academy Management

Country's Sports Policy Role in Academy Management	
Noticed Problems	Direct Responsibilities
Schooling of Elite Athlete (P1, P2, P4, P8, P11, P14, P15)	Solve schooling problem of elite athletes (P2, P14, P8, P15), by schools in clubs (P14), Online/distant options (P8)
Public Universities don't solve problems of football (P8, P9)	Create online data/knowledge sharing platforms (P10)
Lack of investment in grassroots football (P10, P14)	Build more public football fields (P10, P13, P14)
A general national education quality is low (P14)	Make solid sports policy, not populism (P2, P14)
Inactive Society – National Physical Inactivity (P13)	Support more scientific research in football (P9, P10, P11)

The participants also frequently emphasized the significance of the government's role and highlighted sports policy matters relevant to football academy management in the country. These issues primarily revolved around the schooling of elite football players and shortages in the national education system. Additionally, there was a concern about the absence of robust sports policies, emphasizing the need for substantive measures rather than actions driven by political populism. The comprehensive list of government-related problems, along with the proposed actions to be taken by the government concerning football academies is provided in Table 4.

DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to investigate the factors influencing the effectiveness of management of football academies in Türkiye. Utilizing the systems theory to management as its theoretical underpinning, the results focused in five essential domains characteristics of an open system: input, process, feedback, output, and environmental aspects, from the viewpoint of elite football players.

Input Domain: The quality of the incoming player into the academy system becomes of utmost importance for successful academy management. However, the findings of the study indicated that the selection procedures for the academy appeared to be done subjectively by simple, short-term trial week or a few test games, or by the recommendations of acquaintances. Some players were not even selected but simply invited to train with the youth teams by some coaches and they just continued their career until today. It is significant to point out that talent selection is not a one-time event; it should be carried out through a continuous and lengthy process of revision (Kula, 2019), to eliminate those who are not suitable to continue. Apparently, any kind of nepotism and unfairness in player selection must be prevented (Sunay and Kaya, 2018) in Turkish football academies and the detection, identification and selection processes must be defined objectively, in a more organized and informed way (Açıkada and Hazır, 2016; Kula, 2019; Sarmento et al., 2018; Sevimli, 2015). Moreover, a holistic consideration should be given to physical, cognitive and psychological attributes along with technical skill abilities, when making decisions regarding talent identification (Williams et al., 2020). In the present study, some players stated that they were firstly introduced to football by their schoolteachers. This finding offers important insights into talent detection practices for football academies. With 43,455 primary and secondary schools across Türkiye (MEB, 2022), there exists a significant opportunity to leverage all physical education teachers in these schools as natural talent scouts for the nation. This could be achieved through effective coordination between the sports ministry and the federation. Recognizing that the timing of talent identification is as crucial as the identification itself, proper nurturing at the right time is essential for talent to reach its full potential to play at the highest elite level (Müniroğlu and Subak, 2018). Late starting ages for organized football training was one of the concerns in Turkish football therefore schools play an important role in national talent detection.

In terms of football education, the research indicates that youth coaches with suitable pedagogical and communication skills are essential for successful talent development. However, what is interesting in the findings is that academy coaching must be supported and reinforced by senior coaches who are receptive to integrating academy players into the first team. Therefore, we must also underscore the vital role of A team head coaches in the player development process, especially during transition periods. The quality and quantity of available coaches at the senior team level for young academy-raised players can be determinant for their future success in elite levels (Coyle, 2009). Some players have highlighted that their first head coaches in senior teams played the most crucial role in their journey to becoming elite players. The coach is recognised as a critical factor impacting on the quality of the sporting experience for young players (Jones et al., 2024) and thus, this initial experience of academy-raised players in senior teams under senior coaches may

influence future developmental opportunities. This underscores the significant influence head coaches of senior teams can have in the final development phase of elite players. If academy players are not trusted and given opportunities by senior team head coaches, their football education and development process could automatically and prematurely cease. Recent research also shows that lack of opportunity to gain exposure to first-team football is a barrier to youth player transition (McGuigan et al., 2024). In addition to the coach, other staff working within the academy and in the club also may play a crucial role in the holistic development of players. Players particularly emphasized the significance of supplementary staff next to quality coaching, including expert sports psychologists, nutritionists, specialized fitness coaches, and physiotherapists. If these positions are not filled by expert staff, consequently, Turkish academy players could face challenges in achieving physical development comparable to their European counterparts.

In terms of facilities, academies should offer full-board accommodation to players, by transforming the facilities into a home for young players, an arrangement that would save time for training and coordination of the activities. Especially in Türkiye, since most selected players come from disadvantaged socio-economic areas, academies should provide their players with full-board housing (Şenel and Saygın, 2021). Alternatively, school education could be organized within the academies or through distant online learning. These measures can save energy, time, and money on transportation between school, home, and training grounds. Moreover, providing full-board accommodation would ensure equality among all players, better nutrition, and improved rest control, while also protecting players from external factors. As players further suggested, after a certain age, training facilities should be located on the same site as the senior team. Moving youth players into a new advanced learning environment may be associated with positive performance and motivational outcomes for high potential players (Kelly et al., 2018; Kingston et al., 2018). Therefore, it is recommended that the oldest age group in the academy, typically U19 in the Turkish football system, shares the same site facilities with the senior team. This arrangement is proposed to allow talented younger players to build relationships with professional players, fostering adaptation and suitable handling of challenges at the professional level (Mills et al., 2014).

Process Domain: Overall, players expressed dissatisfaction with the formative aspects of training, highlighting that academies often prioritize the development of youth teams for upcoming matches rather than focusing on the development of players for the long term. To address this, more challenging training sessions (Mills et al., 2014) should incorporate formative elements, to teach new skills. It is crucial to recognize that these young players are, first and foremost, students who come to learn football. Traditional training schemes often lack individualized training tailored to the specific needs of each player. Therefore, individual measurements should be implemented in football academies to assess the unique needs of each player at the beginning of each season, enabling the design of tailor-made extra training for individual development. Furthermore, the lack of visual feedback and theoretical instructions in classrooms was evident in Turkish academies. Specifically, visual feedback can be enhanced by involving players in watching themselves play (Abrahams, 2012). Moreover, theoretical classroom lessons are necessary to enhance declarative tactical knowledge of Turkish players. Additionally, to improve the overall quality of education and achieve the desired standardization, it is necessary to develop nation-wide football curriculum tailored to different age groups.

Providing real-match experiences is an essential service that should be provided by football clubs to their players. Because competitive matches give young athletes a chance to combine their technical, tactical, physical and psychological components to effectively participate in the game (Bonney et al., 2020). In other words, the football education of home-grown players is not confined solely to the academy, but it extends to professional level and continues within the senior (A) team. Therefore, it is imperious to recognize that a football player is not fundamentally distinct as an academy player

or a senior player but just undergoes a transition from youth to senior football. This transition becomes possible when Turkish clubs offer opportunities for their players to compete in senior football teams. To address this, it is recommended that football players who have recently completed their academy education undergo an obligatory internship period. This period could be formally regulated as a rule within the club's policy. Failure to complete this period would mean that the club cannot claim the players were not raised by the academy but rather not utilized by the senior team. Because, according to our research, there is a fine line between raising and developing a player. The academies are primarily responsible for the raising part, but the senior team share joint responsibility for the developing part. Because learning is an ongoing process rather than a series of fixed acquisition events and development has not a finished identity (Armour, 2013). Moreover, engaging in competition, if appropriately managed, is seen as a highly developmental feature (Côté et al., 2013; Foreman et al., 2004; North et al., 2014). Successful international elite soccer players have often accumulated enough practice hours after 13 years (Helsen et al., 2000), which is more than the time spent in a football academy, reinforcing the idea that the A team serves as an extension of academy education. All these indicate that the player development process is a chain, and any negligence in one of its parts can lead to a breakdown in the outcome. We cannot expect young players to become professional footballers while keeping them playing in amateur or youth football. Because the academy games prioritize learning over winning (Topkaya, 2015), and playing against the same-level young players may limit challenging situations and competitiveness. Apparently, no system can produce top level players if they play only in trainings or constantly with low level rivals. Worthy opponents are essential for attaining excellence in elite sport. In this regard, it seems that lack of opportunity in competitive league games is a significant barrier in youth player transition to professional first-team football (McGuigan et al., 2023). The primary challenge lies in persuading the clubs in the league to give young players more match time in their first team (Poli et al., 2016), as otherwise, all efforts in the club's academy might be in vain. In this context, it is advisable that if the academy player's current club does not offer any playing chances in the senior team, the player should promptly explore alternative avenues to engage in senior football. In this sense, establishing a career department within the academy or the club that assists recent graduates in finding loans or initial playing opportunities would be a logical step. A professional academy should offer players a pathway into professional career (Williams, 2014).

The present research also found that players proposed having two-games a week during their academy years to gain more experience and be ready for the extensive match program of the professional level. Additionally, it was found that Turkish young players tended to engage in organized football much later than their European counterparts. For example, one player began organized training at the age of 15, while another elite player started at the age of 16. These starting ages are considerably late in modern football training, resulting in a lower sport age for Turkish players compared to their European counterparts. The age at which one starts engaging in organized sports training is a significant criterion for further developmental stages (Kula, 2019). Therefore, to address this gap, it is proposed that organizing more games during the academy years and involving players in organized football at an earlier age could be beneficial approaches for the future.

Another finding of the research suggests a new approach to pre-school children. In most Turkish academies, the youngest age group is the U12 teams (Çevik and Onağ, 2019). This means that young players who generally start playing football before the age of 7 may experience at least a 5-year gap until they are finally selected to participate in organized football training for the first time. In the past, streets used to serve as informal football academies for preschool children, but in contemporary times, it's no longer feasible to rely on the streets to solve this issue. Children are unable to acquire the same amount of outdoor play than that of previous generations (Solomon-Moore et al., 2018). This situation suggests

that the Turkish Football Federation may need to create special projects for early football education targeting preschool children. Early coaching is also crucial for shaping the character of youngsters (Beswick, 2016), and important themes such as fair play should be instilled in the hands of qualified pedagogical coaches during these early formative years (Erdemli, 2008). Additionally, early engagement with sports is also fundamental for the development of sports expertise (Côté et al., 2003). In other words, players at their childhood years need large quantities of sport-specific activities in order to be better elite level footballers in future years (Zibung and Conzelmann, 2013). As an alternative solution, licensed football schools under the name of Turkish Football Federation in different cities may be a viable option, serving as a means for early education and talent detection for the youngest academy-age groups in academies.

Feedback Domain: Communication channels and coordination between the academy and the senior team are often disrupted when left to individual preferences. Therefore, these processes must be institutionally regulated and enforced by the club's governance. To enhance motivation and dedication, the club should introduce institutionalized financial incentives tied to the academy's achievement of pre-determined performance indicators.

Output Domain: Overemphasis on tactical and positional development could potentially lead to the cultivation of homogeneous players within the academies. Therefore, academies are advised to place equal importance on nurturing individual talents and improving players' technical skills. This is often referred to as the "X factor," where the player possesses at least one exceptional attribute to make a difference in the game (McGuigan et al., 2023). The future of football will invariably require and demand more star players who can dynamically influence the game. Recognizing this, clubs should anticipate future trends in playing and establish essential performance markers to guide development systems. Players themselves emphasized that mental skills play an essential role in distinguishing the best from the ordinary throughout long career years. Consequently, the psychological and emotional development of players should be taken more seriously and integrated into the education programs of academies as a regular component of football training. It seems clear that these services are no longer a luxury, but a necessity in modern football education.

As the research shows, young players who set goals, take responsibility, engage in self-evaluation, and exhibit self-regulation, along with a strong character (Beswick, 2016) stand higher chances of succeeding at the elite level and should be preferred by clubs. These attributes inevitably reflect on the player's private life, a crucial factor in maintaining a player's performance throughout their entire career. These qualities cannot be forcibly taught in academies; rather, the player must take personal responsibility and learn to act as a true professional to sustain success at the highest level. In connection to this topic, we have coined a new term, "cultural barriers," to describe a hindrance to the development of Turkish players. This term signifies that the cultural habits and attitudes of senior players can impact and influence the habits and attitudes of the new generation of young players. In other words, the next generation of footballers is shaped by the current and past generations of footballers in Türkiye. This form of learning, known as observational learning, is a process through which individuals learn by watching others (Abrams, 2012). It serves as an influential, albeit unofficial means of learning, supplementing the formal education provided in academies. For instance, if current senior footballers and even coaches exhibit laziness, the next generation may adopt a similar approach, perceiving it as an accepted and valid way of being an elite footballer in the country. Similarly, if senior players neglect their academic education, the following generation may also devalue studying, assuming it's unnecessary to become an elite footballer. There is a practical motivation to replicate the modelled behaviour (Abrams, 2012) because players observe its effectiveness. From professionalism to fair-play ethics, investment preferences to dressing style, many aspects of today's realities are shaped by the former generation of players. This observation may offer insight into cultural differences, explaining why there

are distinctions between highly dutiful, well-disciplined Danish or Japanese players and Turkish players. Therefore, expecting miracles solely from academies without an overall increase in the quality of the country's football would be futile.

Environment Domain: Academy management should proactively mitigate the potential negative effects of external influences on players' developmental processes. Since parents were identified as the most influential figures during the development and early-career phases, organizing regular and formal educational programs for them is crucial. In terms of organizational external influencers, the football federation and sports policy exert an indirect yet influential impact on the success of football academies. Federation should primarily ensure that academy-raised young players have access to competitive league systems to facilitate their development and offer reward and incentive systems to encourage clubs to play with academy-raised players. This appears to be a significant challenge in Türkiye, hindering the progression of academy graduates into professional football. A player who has graduated from an academy at the age of 19 often faces the dilemma of being ineligible for U19 teams but struggling to find a place in the A team. Consequently, they end up waiting for opportunities, wasting precious time. Concerning the policy, the results of this investigation showed that elite players frequently began their football journey with amateur clubs in their childhood neighbourhoods, underscoring the significance of grassroots football in elite player development. Regardless of their excellence, football academies can only receive players from their operating environments. This means that grassroots and amateur football serve as the initial introduction to sports for children, particularly in football. Amateur sports create a pool of potential talents, and the larger the talent pool, the better the selection chances for academies. In essence, it is from grassroots that future players are born (Hassan and Hamil, 2011), not professional football clubs competing for the titles. Therefore, if the government and the federation aim to improve professional football in Türkiye, they must prioritize collaborative efforts to enhance amateur football clubs and grassroots activities in the country. Accordingly, the Turkish Football Federation should consider re-designing the competition system and both amateur and professional leagues in an effective and realistic manner, recognizing the significant influence of national and international competitions on elite athlete development (De Bosscher et al., 2010; Sevimli, 2015).

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

In conclusion, given that all processes, from detection to selection, and from development to playing opportunities in a league, are significantly shaped by the quality of management and governance decisions, it becomes evident that success or failure in player development is never solely dependent on the abilities of academy players. It becomes crucial for academy managers, followed by top club executives, to adopt a more informed approach and a supportive mentality toward the club's academy while actively assuming their responsibilities to achieve the expected results. Additionally, the federation's and the state's sports policies indirectly influence the system. Therefore, a coherent, balanced, and long-term approach to youth football development should be adopted, with a strong emphasis on informed academy scouting, trainings, competitiveness, and well-defined transition pathways in Türkiye.

Authors Contribution:

1. **Gökhan BOZKURT:** Idea/Concept, Design, Checking, Data Collection and Processing, Analysis-Interpretation, Writing, Critical Review.
2. **Cláudia DIAS:** Design, Checking, Writing, Analysis-Interpretation, Critical Review
3. **Maria José CARVALHO:** Design, Checking, Analysis-Interpretation, Critical Review

Information about Ethical Board Permission

Committe Name: Comissão de Ética da Faculdade de Desporto da Universidade do Porto
(CEFADE)

Date: 26.04.2024

Number:16_2024

REFERENCES

1. **Argote, L., ve Ingram, P. (2000).** Knowledge transfer: A basis for competitive advantage in firms. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 82(1), 150-169. <https://doi.org/10.1006/obhd.2000.2893>
2. **Abrahams, D. (2012).** *Soccer tough: Simple football psychology techniques to improve your game*. Bennion Keary Limited Publishing.
3. **Abrams, M. (2012).** *Anger management in sport: Understanding and controlling violence athletes*. Human Kinetics.
4. **Açıkada, C. and Hazır, T. (2016).** Uzun süreli sporcu gelişim programları: hangi bilimsel temellere oturuyor? *Spor Bilimleri Dergisi*, 27:2, 84 - 99
5. **Akkoyun, S. (2014).** *Türkiye'deki futbol kulüplerinin alt yapılarının yapılanması, yönetim biçimleri, idari yapısı ve avrupa'daki örneklerle kıyaslanması*. İstanbul Kültür Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yüksek Lisans Tezi. İstanbul
6. **Armour, K. (2013).** *Sport pedagogy: An Introduction for teaching and coaching*. New York: Routledge
7. **Barker, D., Barker-Ruchti, N., Rynne, S. and Lee, J. (2014).** Moving out of sports: a sociocultural examination of olympic career transitions. *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, 9(2), pp. 255-270
8. **Bonney, N., Larkin, P. and Ball, K. (2020).** Future directions and considerations for talent identification in Australian football. *Frontiers in sports and active living*, 2:612067.
9. **Böhlke, N. and Robinson, L. (2009).** Benchmarking of elite sport systems. *Management Decision*, 47(1), 67-84.
10. **Brown, J. (2001).** *Sport talent: how to identify and develop outstanding athletes*. Champaign, IL Human Kinetics.
11. **Chadwick, S., Arthur, D., and Beech, J. (Eds.). (2017).** *International cases in the business of sport* (2nd ed.). Routledge
12. **Beswick, B. (2016).** *Odak noktamız futbol: Oyun zihinde nasıl kazanılır?* Remzi Kitabevi.
13. **Çevik, S. and Onağ, Z. (2019).** Qualitative research on reasons why Turkish football clubs are unable to train youth team players well and possible solutions. *CBÜ Beden Eğitimi ve Spor Bilimleri Dergisi*, 14(2), 326-343
14. **Chelladurai, P. (2014).** *Managing organizations for sport and physical activity: A systems perspective* (4th ed.). Routledge.
15. **Colvin, G. (2008).** *Talent is overrated*. Nicholas Brealey Publishing
16. **Collins, D., Cruickshank, A., and Jordet, G. (Ed).** *The handbook of elite sport performance*. New York: Routledge.
17. **Coutinho, P., Mesquita, I., & Fonseca, A. M. (2016).** Talent development in sport: A critical review of pathways to expert performance. *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, 11(2), 279-293.
18. **Côté, J., Murphy-Mills, J., and Abernethy, B. (2012).** The development of skill in sport. In Hodges, N. and Williams A.M. (eds) *Skill acquisition in sport: research, theory and practice* (pp.269–286). New York: Routledge
19. **Côté, J., Erickson, K., and Duffy, P. (2013).** Developing the expert performance coach. In D. Farrow, J. Baker, C. MacMahon (Eds.), *Developing elite sport performance: Lesson from theory and practice* (pp. 17-28; 2nd edition). New York: Routledge
20. **Coyle, D. (2009).** *The talent code*. Random House.
21. **Cruickshank, A. (2019).** Culture, leadership and management with elites. In Collins, D., Cruickshank, A., and Jordet, G. (Ed). *The Handbook of Elite Sport Performance* (pp. 201-211). New York: Routledge.
22. **De Bosscher, V., De Knop, P., Van Bottenburg, M., Shibli, S., Bingham, J. (2009).** Explaining international sporting success: An international comparison of elite sport systems and policies in six countries. *Sport Management Review*, 12, 113–136.
23. **De Joode, T., Tebbes, D.J. J., and Savelsbergh, G.J.P. (2021).** Game insight skills as a predictor of talent for youth soccer players. *Frontiers in sports and Active Living*, 2:609112. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fspor.2020.609112>
24. **Ehmann, P., Beavan, A., Spielmann, J., Mayer, J., Altmann, S., Ruf, L., Rohrmann, S., Irmer, J. P., and Englert, C. (2022).** Perceptual-cognitive performance of youth soccer players in a 360° environment differences between age groups and performance levels. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 59(4),102120
25. **Erdemli, A. (2008).** *Spor yapan insan*. İstanbul: E Yayınları
26. **Ericsson, K. A., Krampe, R., and Tesch-Römer, C. (1993).** The role of deliberate practice in the acquisition of expert performance. *Psychological Review*, 100(3), 363–406.
27. **Foreman, J., Gee, J.P., Herz, J.C., Hinrichs, R., Prensky, M. and Sawyer, B., (2004).** Game-based learning: How to delight and instruct in the 21st century. *EDUCAUSE Review*, 39, 50-66.
28. **Freeman, R. (2010).** *Strategic management: A stakeholder approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
29. **Freeman, R.E. (2017).** Five challenges to stakeholder theory: a report on research in progress, in Wasieleski, D. and Weber, J. (Eds), *Stakeholder Management*, Emerald Publishing, pp. 1-20
30. **Graneheim, U.H., and Lundman, B. (2004).** Qualitative content analysis in nursing research: concepts, procedures and measures to achieve trustworthiness. *Nurse Education Today*, 24(2):105-12.

31. **Gulbin, J., Weissensteiner, J., Oldenziel, K., and Gagné, F.** (2013). Patterns of performance development in elite athletes. *European Journal of Sport Science*, 13,605-614.
32. **Hassan, D., and Hamil, S. (Eds.).** (2011). *Who owns football? Models of football governance and management in international sport* (1st ed.). Routledge.
33. **Haugaasen, M., Toering, T., and Jordet, G.** (2014). From childhood to senior professional football: A multi-level approach to elite youth football players' engagement in football-specific activities. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 15(4), 336-344.
34. **Helsen, W, Hodges, N., J., Van Winckel., and Starkes, J. L.** (2000). The roles of talent, physical precocity and practice in the development of soccer expertise. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 18(9), 727-736.
35. **Holt, N. L., and Dunn, J. G. H.** (2004). Toward a grounded theory of the psychosocial competencies and environmental conditions associated with football success. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 16, 199-219.
36. **Houlihan, B. and Green, M.** (2008). *Comparative elite sport development: Systems, structures and public policy*. Elsevier
37. **Hoye, R., Smith A. C. T., Nicholson, M., Stewart B., and Westerbeek, H.** (2012). *Sport management: Principles and applications*. Oxon: Routledge
38. **Jones, B., Eather, N., Andrew Miller, A., and Morgan, P., J.** (2024). Evaluating the impact of a coach development intervention for improving coaching practices and player outcomes in football: the MASTER Coaching randomised control trial. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 29:6, 652-669.
39. **Kaplan, T.** (2016). *Futbol: Antrenörlük Eğitiminde Kavramsal Boyutlar*. Palet Yayınları
40. **Kelly, A.L., Williams, C.A., and Wilson, M.** (2018). Developing a football-specific talent identification and development profiling concept – The locking wheel nut model. *Applied Coaching Research Journal*, 2: 32-41.
41. **Kingston, K., and Wixey, D., and Morgan, K.** (2018). Monitoring the climate: Exploring the psychological environment in an elite soccer academy. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 32, 1-34.
42. **Kokstajn J., Musalek M., Wolanski P., Murawska-Cialowicz E., and Stastny P.** (2019). Fundamental motor skills mediate the relationship between physical fitness and soccer-specific motor skills in young soccer players. *Frontiers Physiology*.10:596. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fphys.2019.00596>.
43. **Kula, H.** (2019). *Sporda yetenek seçimi ve ilkeleri*. Ankara: Gazi Kitabevi
44. **Kuper, S., and Szymanski, S.** (2009). *Why England lose and other curious phenomena explained*. Harper Collins Publishers.
45. **Levitin, D.J.** (2006). *This is your brain on music: The science of a human obsession*. New York: Dutton.
46. **Machado, M., González-Villora, S., and Teoldo, I.** (2023). Selected soccer players are quicker and better decision-makers in elite Brazilian youth academies. *International Journal of Performance Analysis in Sport*, 23:2, 65-82.
47. **McGuigan, M., Dello Iacono, A., McRobert, A., Cowan, D., and Unnithan, V. B.** (2023). Facilitators and barriers associated with youth player transition to professional first-team football: A key stakeholder perspective. *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, 1-11
48. **MEB** (2022). *Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, Strateji Geliştirme Başkanlığı, okul ve öğrenci sayısı istatistikleri*. <https://istatistik.meb.gov.tr/KurumSayisi/EgitimKademelerineGore>
49. **Mele, C., Pels, J. and Polese, F.** (2010). A Brief review of systems theories and their managerial applications. *Journal of Service Science* 2(1/2), 126 – 135.
50. **Mendizabal, X., San-Jose, L. and Garcia-Merino, J.D.** (2020). Understanding and mapping stakeholders of sport clubs: particularities, Sport, *Business and Management: An International Journal*, 10(3), 359-378
51. **Mills, A., Butt, J., Maynard, I., and Harwood, C.** (2014). Toward an understanding of optimal development environments within elite English soccer academies. *The Sport Psychologist*, 28(2), 137-150.
52. **Moser, A., and Korstjens, I.** (2018). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 3: Sampling, data collection and analysis. *The European journal of General Practice*, 24(1), 9-18.
53. **Moran, A., and Toner, J.** (2017). *A critical introduction to sport psychology* (3rd ed.). Routledge
54. **Müniroğlu, S., and Subak, E.** (2018). An overview of the Important points of talent selection in sports. *Research and Investigations in Sports Medicine*, 3-3.
55. **Nesti, M., and Sulley, C.** (2015). *Youth development in football: Lessons from the world's best academies*. Routledge
56. **North, J., Lara-Bercial, S., Morgan, G., and Rongen, F.** (2014). The identification of good practice principles to inform player development and coaching in European youth football – UEFA Research Project, Leeds Beckett University, UK.
57. **Patton, M.** (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*, 4th ed., SAGE Publications
58. **Poli, R., Ravenel, L., and Besson, R.** (2016): CIES Football Observatory Monthly Report n°19-November 2016. Retrieved at <https://football-observatory.com/Demographic-study-of-football-in-Europe>
59. **Reilly, T., Williams, A., and Richardson, D.** (2003). Identifying talented players. In T. Reilly, and A.M. Williams (Eds.), *Science and Soccer*

- (pp. 307-326). London: Routledge.
60. **Samur, S.** (2018). Futbol yönetiminde organizasyon tasarımı ve süreç yönetimi. *ITU Spor Bilimleri Dergisi*, 8, 2, 30-45
 61. **Sarmiento, H., Anguera, M. T., Pereira, A., and Araújo, D.** (2018). Talent identification and development in male football: A systematic review. *Journal of Sports medicine* (Auckland, N.Z.), 48(4), 907-931. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40279-017-0851-7>
 62. **Sevimli, D.** (2015). Sporda Yetenek geliştirme sürecinin yönetimi. *CBÜ Beden Eğitimi ve Spor Bilimleri Dergisi*, 10(1): s2-8
 63. **Schreier, M.** (2014). *Qualitative content analysis*. SAGE Publications, Thousand Oaks.
 64. **Solomon-Moore, E., Emm-Collison, L. G., Sebire, S. J., Toumpakari, Z., Thompson, J. L., Lawlor, D. A.** (2018). "In my day. . ." Parents' views on children's physical activity and screen viewing in relation to their own childhood. *International Journal of Environ. Res. Public Health*, 15, 1-17
 65. **Stotlar, D.K., and Wonders, A.** (2006). Developing elite athletes: A content analysis of US national governing body system. *International Journal of Applied Sports Sciences*, 18(2), 121-144.
 66. **Stratton, G., Reilly, T., Williams, A. M., and Richardson, D.** (2004). *Youth soccer: From science to performance*. New York: Routledge
 67. **Sunay, H., and Kaya, B.** (2018). Türkiye ile Almanya futbol altyapılarının karşılaştırılması. *Sportmetre*, 16(4), 126-139
 68. **Şenaras, A. E., and Sezen, H. K.** (2017). Sistem düşüncesi. *Journal of Life Economics*, 4(1), 39-58
 69. **Şenel, E. and Saygın, Ö.** (2021). The comparison of football academy systems between Turkey and England, *International Journal of Sport Culture and Science*, 9(4), 387-412
 70. **Topkaya, I.** (2015). *Futbolda Altyapı Eğitimi: Altyapıya ilişkin genel bir çerçeçe ve altyapı eğitiminde pedagojik yaklaşım*. Paradigma Akademi Yayınları
 71. **Vandendriessche, J., Vandorpe, B., Coelho-e-Silva, M. J., Vaeyens, R., Lenoir, M., Lefevre, J., and Philippaerts, R.** (2011). Multivariate association among morphology, fitness, and motor coordination characteristics in boys age 7 to 11. *Pediatric Exercise Science*, 23(4), 504-520.
 72. **Veal, A.J., and Darcy, S.** (2014). *Research methods in sport studies and sport management: A practical guide* (1st ed.). Routledge.
 73. **Veale J.P., Pearce A.J., Koehn S., and Carlson J.S.** (2008). Performance and anthropometric characteristics of prospective elite junior Australian footballers: A case study in one junior team. *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport*, 11(2), 227-30.
 74. **Von Bertalanffy, L.** (2015). *General system theory: Foundations, development, applications* (Revised Edition). George Braziller Publication
 75. **Williams, A. M., and Hodges, N.J.** (2005). Practice, instruction and skill acquisition in soccer: Challenging Tradition, *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 23(6), 637- 650
 76. **Williams, A., Ford, P., and Drust, B.** (2020). Talent identification and development in soccer since the millennium. *Journal of Sports Science*, 38, 1199-1210
 77. **Yiapanas, G., Thrassou, A. and Vrontis, D.** (2024), "The contemporary football industry: a value-based analysis of social, business structural and organisational stakeholders". *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 37(2). 552-585. <https://doi.org/10.1108/AAAJ-06-2022-585>
 78. **Zibung, M., and Conzelmann, A.** (2013). The role of specialization in the promotion of young football talents: a person-oriented study. *European Journal of Sport Science*, 13, 452-460