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# "From the football pitch to the boardroom": a comparative analysis of talent coaching through neuroscience and its application in business leadership

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By drawing parallels between the latent coaching dynamics in the high-stakes global segment of football and the difficult segment of business leadership, the research is focused on a comparative evaluation to examine the transferability of coaching principles "from pitch to boardroom". This study investigates and evaluates the transferability of talent coaching principles from football to business leadership by establishing a model for adopting successful talent management strategies in a corporate context. A comparative case study was used to develop an in-depth evaluation of the principles of talent coaching in business and football leadership. The comparative analysis showed that both domains prioritize nurturing and identifying individual strengths, promoting effective teamwork and communication, and stimulating a growth mindset. Furthermore, strategies, including continuous improvement, feedback mechanisms, and goal setting, seem to be key to both aspects. These results highlight the possibility of cross-disciplinary learning between business and football leadership in talent coaching. Therefore, while few strategies are applicable in both contexts, general principles, including skill development, empowerment, and motivation, seem applicable to both domains. Such a comparative evaluation emphasizes the synergies between diverse talent coaching processes in business and football leadership and reinforces valuable insights. Moreover, organizations need to optimize their talent development strategies and stimulate a culture of excellence, akin to that found in elite sports. Finally, we provide two coaching models for implementation, one for trainers (POSITIVE) and one for parents (AAAA) as a practical follow-up guide for the Organization/Athletic Club. The pilot ground for this research is the Athletic Club Palaio Faliro in Athens, Greece.

## KEYWORDS

coaching, talent, parent, football, business, motivation

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background

In football, talent coaching is essential for establishing high-performance athletes. The leadership performance, methodologies, and strategies implemented on such football pitches are considered successful in developing a culture of excellence and nurturing exceptional talent. In the business sector, there is a growing interest in investigating

the transferability of such coaching principles from the pitch to the boardroom, as organizations are increasingly recognizing the value of effective leadership (Grant, 2020). As a global sport, football possesses several successful talent coaching examples that transcend the confines of the pitch. However, legends such as Sir Alex Ferguson at Manchester United and Pep Guardiola at Barcelona are celebrated for their ability to identify, develop, and nurture young talent who have the potential to become world-class players and for the on-field success of their teams.

Such coaches adopted strategies that focused on tactical training, highlighting individualized development plans, motivation, and mentorship (Berry and Fowler, 2021). For example, in Barcelona, Lionel Messi's development under Pep Guardiola's guidance reveals how a particular talent-centric coaching principle leads to elevated performance by the individual and their participation in the team's success. Some business organizations excel in leadership development, and talent management seeks to use them as examples. Organizations such as Apple and Google are acknowledged for their creative and innovative approaches to talent cultivation, concentrating on influencing continuous learning, collaboration, and creativity among employees. Such organizations illustrate that robust leadership development embraces several unconventional strategies and nontraditional models (Matic, 2022).

## 1.2 Problem statement

Despite the possible advantages of implementing football-motivated talent coaching in business leadership contexts, a notable gap exists in the assessment of how such principles are effectively implemented and translated in the corporate world (Ryom et al., 2020). The absence of a structured model for associating lessons or knowledge from football coaching into business leadership development programs poses a challenge or obstacle to firms searching for innovative methods to secure such talent management (Kelly et al., 2018). Translating the principles of coaching from one aspect to another requires a deep assessment of the possible resistance and inherent differences among stakeholders who tend to question the relevance of football strategies in corporate settings. Developing a measurable and clear success indicator is also an obstacle to the development of business leadership, considering several factors such as organizational growth, innovation, and employee performance (Pruna et al., 2018). Another key obstacle is the conflict between the requirement for an immediate business impact and the long-term developmental nature of talent coaching, which ensures continuous improvement and sustainability (Arslan et al., 2020). Thus, these challenges require a comprehensive comparative evaluation to determine the core principles of football coaching, an investigation of how these principles could be successfully implemented in talent improvement, and a framework for its implementation in business leadership (Memari et al., 2021). Therefore, by bridging the gap between the two domains, this study intends to facilitate a roadmap for firms to

adopt effective strategies of talent coaching influenced by the football world.

## 1.3 Research aim and objectives

This study investigates and evaluates the transferability of talent coaching principles from football to business leadership by establishing a model for adopting successful talent management strategies in a corporate context.

The following are its objectives:

- To determine the key principles of talent coaching involved in the context of football.
- To evaluate successful talent development case studies in football and extract insights related to business leadership.
- To understand the existing leadership development landscape in the business context and ascertain the segments associated with football coaching principles.
- To establish a comprehensive model for adopting football-stimulated talent coaching in the context of business leadership.

## 1.4 Research questions

- What are the fundamental principles of talent coaching involved in football?
- How would the principles of football coaching be effectively integrated into business leadership development programs?

## 1.5 Research significance

By organizing business leadership and football coaching into segments, this study provides an innovative method of leadership establishment. This study introduces new strategies and insights that may lead to innovation and creativity in how firms develop and nurture leaders. Football coaching strengthens the establishment of required life skills, including adaptability, resilience, and teamwork (Larsen et al., 2020). Converting such skills into the business context facilitates a holistic model for leadership improvement, developing well-rounded competencies in addressing complex challenges. The principles of football coaching often focus on engaging with and motivating players to achieve peak performance. Implementing relevant motivational strategies or policies for business leadership can improve organizational performance, job satisfaction, and employee engagement (Lenz et al., 2020). Football tends to excel in talent retention and identification. Implementing such principles in the business context seeks to support high-potential employees' retention, development, and identification, as well as their participation in long-term success and organizational stability. Football is considered a worldwide sport with different teams affecting rich cultural practices (De Silva et al., 2018). Associating the principles of football coaching with business leadership promotes cultural inclusion, diversity, and integrity, stimulating a collaborative and positive organizational

culture. Often, football coaches face unpredictable and dynamic circumstances (Towlson et al., 2019). This research intends to contribute to the development of resilient leaders who can employ rapidly evolving business environments that conduct parallels to business, confirming organizational competitiveness and agility. Therefore, football coaching often involves several strategies to control mental wellbeing, pressure, and stress. Thus, in business leadership, implementing relevant approaches leads to participation in a healthier and more effective workplace, improves employee wellbeing, and reduces burnout (Vaughan et al., 2021).

## 2 Literature review

### 2.1 Talent management and its principles in the context of football

Ryom et al. (2020) explored the methods and processes that football clubs implement to determine talent at several developmental stages. However, this involves the use of data analytics, talent identification models, and scouting strategies to understand player potential. Kelly et al. (2018) highlighted the significance of youth development academies in grooming and nurturing young talent. Researchers have investigated the success factors, methodologies, and structures of such academies, highlighting the best practices for developing football talent at a young age. Talent management involves skill development and coaching. Pruna et al. (2018) investigated coaching methodologies involved in player development. This involves research on the effects of different coaching styles, psychological aspects, and effective coaching techniques on talent progression.

Arslan et al. (2020) investigated the transitions that players undergo throughout their careers, from youth academies to professional teams. This involves exploring the opportunities and challenges players experience during such transitions as well as the role of support structures and mentorship. Retaining top talent is crucial for sustained success. Memari et al. (2021) examined several strategies employed by football clubs to retain major players, such as succession planning, player satisfaction, and contract negotiations, to secure the smooth transition of talent within the team. Therefore, the relationship between technology and data analytics is an area of growing interest in talent management. Larsen et al. (2020) reported how clubs utilize data to make informed decisions regarding injury prevention, performance analysis, and talent identification.

Assessing the psychological context of talent management is essential. Lenz et al. (2020) discuss the psychological support systems, motivation, and mental resilience required for players to address the challenges and limitations of a football career. Football has become a global phenomenon, resulting in significant competition for talent. De Silva et al. (2018) explore how football clubs recruit and scout talent worldwide by investigating the integrated opportunities and challenges presented by the global context of football talent. Towlson et al. (2019) examine the significance of inclusion and diversity in talent management. The literature explores how clubs create an inclusive culture that stimulates talent development from different backgrounds. Talent management has financial applications for football clubs.

Moreover, Vaughan et al. (2021) explored the economic aspects of talent management, such as the financial sustainability of talent development strategies, transfer market dynamics, and return on certain investments from improving young players.

Otte et al. (2020) investigate management and leadership practices within football firms that participate in robust talent management, extending to the roles and practices of managers, football directors, and club executives in establishing a culture of talent development. Champ et al. (2020) look a balance between education and football by assessing how football organizations facilitate educational and academic leverage for the holistic development of young talent. It is essential to assess the cultural and social benefit provided by talent management. Travassos et al. (2018) report on how social environments and cultural factors affect player integration, development, and talent identification in football clubs, which includes the players' wellbeing and mental health. Ramchandani et al. (2018) examine the psychological obstacles players experience and how clubs seek to adopt support systems to improve their wellbeing and mental resilience.

Otte et al. (2019) explore the parents' role in the process of talent development. The study involves discussions on parental challenges, support, and involvement and its relation to the young players' families' expectations. Oppici et al. (2019) detail how the governance structures and regulatory frameworks aid talent management in football by examining the effects of regulations on player contracts, youth transfers, and devotion to ethical standards. Machado et al. (2019) reported how varying developmental, economic, and cultural contexts stimulate overall management, coaching methodologies, and talent identification. Moreover, Rothwell et al. (2020) highlight the role of intermediaries and agents in talent management and discuss the agents' effect on contract negotiations, player transfers, and career trajectories. It explores how talent management strategies affect community relations and fan engagement. The study examines the role of local communities in leveraging talent improvement and how such positive community associations contribute to the success of a club. Furthermore, it investigates the opportunities and challenges in post-retirement transition and discusses the initiatives and programs that support players in practicing their roles to develop their careers.

### 2.2 Successful case studies of talent development in football

According to Damms (2021), La Masia academy of FC Barcelona is renowned for developing world-class talent. Players such as Xavi Hernandez, Andres Iniesta, and Lionel Messi had their start at La Masia. The club's emphasis on holistic development, early evaluation of young talent, and possession-based playing style seems to be the key to their success in the context of talent development. Firildak and Akin (2020) argue that De Toekomst is considered Ajax's youth academy and seems to be a framework for player development. Therefore, the Dutch club has a rich history of generating top players, including Matthijs de Ligt, Marco van Basten, and Johan Cruyff. Ajax concentrates on instilling a winning perception, tactical understanding, and technical development.

Kinney (2019) reports that Athletic Bilbao is popular for its exceptional Cantera policy, which concentrates on improving players from the Basque region. The club's commitment to local talent has resulted in multiple players such as Ander Herrera and Iker Muniain emerging from it. Kinney also emphasizes the role of community-oriented and cultural methods of talent improvement. Firildak and Akin (2020) found that Borussia Dortmund seemed successful in competing at an elite level and in developing young talent. Therefore, the club's emphasis on incorporating young talent, player development, and scouting into the initial team prepared stars such as Erling Haaland and Jadon Sancho.

Simpson et al. (2022) note that Celtic FC has adopted a successful development pathway for young talent. The club's academy focuses on fostering players through several age groups and facilitating a transparent route to the initial team. James Forrest and Kieran Tierney are two major examples of successful graduates. According to Sarmiento and Araujo (2021), Academia Cristiano Ronaldo (formerly, Academia Sporting) is Sporting Lisbon academy and has a track record of generating top talent including Luis Figo and Cristiano Ronaldo. The club's focus on education, technical development, and having a positive learning environment has contributed to its success in talent development.

## 2.3 Transformational talent management

Widodo and Mawarto (2020) investigate the transformational leadership effect on talent management strategies. They explore how leaders can participate in the identification, development, and retention of major talent within firms. Odugbesan et al. (2023) evaluate the talent management's strategic aspects such as how firms integrate the practices of talent management with wider strategic objectives and examine transformational approaches that focus on the traditional talent management practices. Magambo (2021) concentrate on the association between several leadership styles, particularly talent development and transformational leadership. This study evaluates how leaders stimulate an individual's growth and learning within a firm. Mangisa et al. (2020) describe the associated framework of talent management that integrates transformational components, synthesizing several practices of talent management under an umbrella of transformational leadership to achieve a more consistent method.

Kafetzopoulos and Gotzamani (2022) evaluate the ethical dimensions involved in talent management and investigate how transformational leaders ensure ethical behavior, transparency, and fairness in succession planning, development, and talent determination. Martinez-Moran et al. (2021) examine transformational talent management practices and how such practices contribute to improved competitive advantage, innovation, and organizational performance. Dalal and Akdere (2023) discuss the human resource involvement in sustaining and implementing practices of transformational talent management and the role of Human Resources in creating a culture that effectively leverages talent development.

Mumford et al. (2007) explore how the brain works to better understand how to inspire people, share and listen to new ideas, spark creativity, have productive conversations, and overall make

appropriate decisions. The results from Bratton et al. (2011) reveal that neuroscientific knowledge is unstructured and limited to basic concepts. Additionally, the participants did not prominently mention knowledge of the brain, indicating that the leaders did not strongly focus on that topic. Only a few participants discussed the importance of factors such as emotional intelligence, self-awareness, and mindfulness. Such leadership attitudes would negatively influence the instillation of a growth mindset within the organization.

Dweck (2009) states that to instill a growth mindset in organizations, leaders must have a good understanding of growth mindset characteristics. The results reveal that all the leaders that were interviewed, except for one, had a partial and unstructured understanding of the topic, which is valid in most cases. Structured and theoretical knowledge of the growth mindset is lacking. However, the study also shows that all the leaders believed in their own growth, indicating a growth mindset. Another aspect of evaluating a growth mindset is the attitude of leaders toward learning from their mistakes (Dweck, 2016; Weller et al., 2020). The study shows that many leaders consider their mistakes as valuable lessons from which they learn and grow, again demonstrating a growth mindset.

By reviewing the role of emotional intelligence in employees and leaders within the talent management context, Akbari et al. (2022) investigate how transformational leaders support emotional intelligence in talent development by noting how the principles of transformational leadership are implemented in crises and talent management strategies are implemented to overcome unforeseen obstacles. Khoreva and Vaiman (2021) investigate the intersection of talent management and neuroscience, focusing on how transformational leaders support neuroscientific perceptions of robust talent development. Similarly, Shah et al. (2018) explore how transformational leadership influences inclusion and diversity in talent management practices, confirming a more innovative and equitable workforce. Furthermore, the study reviews the effect of transformational leadership on the processes involved in performance management, such as performance evaluation, feedback, and goal setting.

Claus (2019) investigates the application of data analytics in the context of talent management, focusing on how transformational leaders apply analytics to talent development to enable informed decision-making. Addressing the opportunities and challenges of managing talent at a global level highlights how transformational leadership is implemented in different cultural settings. Singh (2021) investigates the role of transformational leadership in learning institutions, where continuous development and learning are essential to talent management strategies, including the integration of transformative technologies, such as automation and artificial intelligence, into talent management practices and the ways in which leaders direct such changes or evolution.

## 2.4 Comprehensive model for football coaching principles' adaptation to business leadership

In football, all coaches seek to strategically adapt tactics, analyze opponents, and plan matches even as the match progresses



in real time. This requires adaptability, market analysis, and strategic thinking, all of which are relevant to industry trends in business leadership. Therefore, coaches must implement their respective strategies depending on ever-evolving match dynamics (Edirisooriya, 2020). Similarly, business leaders must be agile and flexible in reaction to unforeseen challenges, emerging trends, and market fluctuations. However, football teams succeeded in achieving effective team cohesion and communication. Business leaders must similarly nurture a culture of unity, collaboration, and open communication among team members to develop organizational performance (Pankow et al., 2018).

Coaches concentrate on enhancing the skills of individual players and facilitating mentorship. Similarly, leaders need to invest in continuous learning initiatives, mentorship programs, and employee development to improve the potential of their teams in business leadership. Therefore, leaders must implement strategic thinking, integrate organizational objectives with market requirements, and predict potential opportunities and challenges. This may involve examining consumer preferences, technological advancements, and fluctuating market dynamics, similar to those of certain coaches, and adjusting policies or strategies (Haddad et al., 2021). Effective communication and collaboration within an organization increases productivity and teamwork, reflecting the principles implemented in football. Therefore, investing in the professional growth of employees and facilitating mentorship contributes to a motivated and skilled workforce, increasing organizational success (Gomes et al., 2021).

Some football clubs have underscored the pathways of youth development that foster talent from a young age. This principle is reflected in several business leadership development programs that cultivate and determine future efficient leaders within the context of the organization. Football coaching involves both psychological and technical aspects (Roynesdal et al., 2018). Business leaders must prioritize a complete method by drawing on the expertise of different technical experts or professionals with interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence. Experienced football players often mentor younger talent and likewise, mentorship programs in business leadership contribute to emerging leaders' development and secure knowledge transmission within organizations (Gomes, 2020). Structured programs of leadership development confirms that leaders possess the necessary qualities, knowledge, and skills to effectively leverage the organization. Therefore, business leaders need to control technical efficacy using several soft skills, including adaptability, empathy, and communication, to ensure well-accomplished leadership. Thus, encouraging and stimulating mentorship associations among managers creates a culture of knowledge sharing, skill development, and continuous learning (Parnell et al., 2018).

By providing a clear vision and a shared goal, both coaches and business leaders are able to motivate their teams to achieve organizational success (Soto Garcia et al., 2021). Coaches nurture players by instilling motivation and confidence while aiming for success in a highly competitive environment. Leaders also foster employee growth by creating a culture of excellence by focusing on continuous improvement, innovation, and autonomy in business (Otte et al., 2020).

## 3 Methodology

### 3.1 Research design

This study employed a comparative case study method. The comparative case study method permits an in-depth examination of talent coaching principles in both the business and football contexts. It allows for the determination of patterns, differences, and similarities across several cases. Thus, these cases involved football academies or teams known for effective player development and talent coaching. The selection criteria were recognition, sustained excellence, and historical success in football.

This study followed a qualitative approach. As leadership development is a complex and multilayered phenomena, the qualitative approach permits a nuanced understanding of contextual factors that may be involved in facilitating the transferability of coaching principles. The interviews included several open-ended questions that allowed participants to freely share their insights, perceptions, and experiences. The qualitative approach prioritized the formation of detailed descriptions, represented helpful experiences, and provided a deep assessment of the phenomena under evaluation. The unique aspects, cultural nuances, and sensitivity to the context of both business settings and football were balanced throughout the research process. The potential biases and positionality of the researchers were regularly reflected upon and acknowledged. Furthermore, reflective notes were made to improve self-awareness and transparency. The qualitative data included case studies, documents, and interview transcripts. The questionnaire was distributed online to 301 participants in one of the four constituent languages—Greek, Italian, Austrian, and Serbian—with the aim of obtaining a representative sample. The majority of participants did not know English. The survey data were processed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). A total of 301 complete responses were obtained. The key analyses are presented in the Results section. Frequency analyses were performed for nominal responses, and descriptive analyses were performed for interval responses. Finally, key analyses were performed using Gioia methodology, and the correlations between the variables were examined.

### 3.2 Data collection method

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with several key stakeholders in the business and football contexts. All the questions focused on the perceived transferability of talent development practices and coaching strategies from football coaching to business leadership. Interviews were conducted with football talent development experts, players, and coaches. Document analysis of success stories, training programs, and coaching manuals was conducted. Interviews were also conducted with leadership development experts, HR professionals, and business leaders, and document analysis of organizational policies, case studies, and leadership developmental programs was conducted.

### 3.3 Data analysis tool

Using the qualitative data, thematic analysis was conducted using the GIOIA method to determine recurring concepts, patterns, and themes. The themes were categorized based on their similarity to the principles of talent coaching and possible implications in the context of business leadership. A comparative analysis was developed to identify the differences and similarities between the business and football contexts. Transferable principles and patterns were synthesized to develop a foundation of the framework.

### 3.4 Ethical consideration

The data was acquired after obtaining informed consent or permission from all participants, confirming that they had assessed the research purpose, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their role. The researcher secured participants' confidentiality and anonymity by applying pseudonyms and ensuring safe data storage practices. The study also adhered to regulations for data protection to safeguard the participants' rights and privacy. The researcher provided clarity and maintained transparency regarding the possible implications, methodology, and research process to ensure that all participants understood the study and to build trust. The study also facilitated transparency with the participants through a detailed discussion session to address all queries or concerns they had after their participation in the research. The results were open to participants over the course of a 4-day conference in Skopje, N. Macedonia, during which the results were presented and analyzed. The content of the interviews was not returned to the participants because they were covered by the conference.

## 4 Findings/analysis

### 4.1 Talent coaching in football and business

The research emphasizes that in football, successful talent coaching underscores holistic improvement, psychological aspects, tactical understanding, and technical skills. Long-term planning, individualized attention, and mentoring are key principles. In the business context, similar principles were established in business, with effective leadership development programs highlighting a holistic approach. In business, coaching involves skill development, adaptability, emotional intelligence, and strategic thinking. Considering the overlap with coaching principles, a complete acceptance of the significance of tailored mentoring, holistic development and a concentration on both soft and technical skills appear to be essential in both areas. Therefore, this commonality is the basis for possible cross-applications. The principles of football coaching often contain immersive and intensive training sessions. Thus, the findings emphasized such principles' adaptability to the business segment, highlighting the requirement for practical skill application, simulations, and experiential learning. In business, effective leadership development requires experiential simulations and learning (Otte et al., 2020; Champ et al., 2020). However, the correlation between team dynamics and leadership styles suggests

that transformational leadership, integrated with a focus on collaboration and communication, is important to obtain optimal performance in both business and football settings. In football, talent coaching often involves long-term plans for the development of several players, ensuring continuous improvement and sustainability. Therefore, the outcomes emphasize the significance of investing in individuals' long-term potential (Travassos et al., 2018; Ramchandani et al., 2018; Otte et al., 2019; Oppici et al., 2019).

### 4.2 Transferable principles from football coaching to business leadership

Football coaching highlights the players' holistic development, including psychological aspects, tactical understanding, and technical skills. The development of holistic leadership requires a balance between adaptability, emotional intelligence, strategic thinking, and technical skills (Machado et al., 2019). Often, football coaching contains practical skill application, simulations, and immersive training sessions. Business leadership development needs to incorporate similar programs to enhance real-world problem solving and skill acquisition (Rothwell et al., 2020). Successful football coaches display transformational leadership approaches that motivate players to achieve the best results. Transformational leadership that includes individualized support, clear vision, and inspiration seems effective in both business and football settings (Damms, 2021).

Effective collaboration and communication are important for success in football, as they encourage the cohesive dynamic of the team. Collaborative teamwork and clear communication are essential elements of robust leadership in business to ensure synergy and alignment among team members (Firildak and Akin, 2020). In football, talent coaching includes long-term plans for the development of players to ensure continuous improvement and sustainability. Organizations need to invest in individuals' long-term possibilities and promote leadership skills for sustained success over time (Nielsen, 2019). Football coaches experience several obstacles in addressing different player personalities, changing game dynamics, and external pressures. Both business and football leaders require agility and adaptability to navigate dynamic market conditions, external pressures, and diverse team members (Madichie, 2019). In football coaching, ethical considerations revolve around maintaining game integrity, fair play, and player welfare (Delice, 2020; Franck, 2018).

### 4.3 Model for adopting football talent management strategies in business

Holistic development is used to determine and assess key development areas for leaders, such as adaptability, emotional intelligence, strategic thinking, and technical skills. It also helps in designing training programs that emphasize a well-developed skill set, reflecting the holistic method applied to football coaching (Almaaitah et al., 2020). By incorporating experiential learning, real-world simulations, and case studies

practical skill implementation can be improved. This principle facilitates several spaces for leaders to be involved, particularly scenario-based learning, which reflects the unpredictable and dynamic characteristics of football matches (Mangisa et al., 2020).

Transformational leadership emphasizes the development of a leadership culture or environment that influences team members, encourages continuous improvement, and promotes innovation (Magambo, 2021). Open channels and clear communication are important within an organization for effective collaboration. Team-building initiatives and activities that improve collaboration should be adopted to emulate the cohesive dynamics of a team in football (Odugbesan et al., 2023; Kinney, 2019). Long-term plans for leadership development that concentrate on sustained growth and continuous improvement facilitates learning opportunities, coaching, and ongoing mentorship to promote leadership over a long duration (Widodo and Mawarto, 2020). Agility and adaptability are essential to cultivate a culture that can perform even during the unpredictability of evolving market conditions. This principle also equips leaders with certain skills to dynamically adjust their strategies and navigate uncertainties, reflecting the adaptability practices in football coaching (Sarmiento and Araujo, 2021; Simpson et al., 2022).

## 5 Results/discussions

What are the fundamental principles of talent coaching involved in football?

The results revealed a common focus on holistic enhancement in both business and football contexts, emphasizing psychological aspects, strategic thinking, and technical skills. Such outcomes emphasize the universal significance of promoting a well-established skill fixed for people in talent coaching in the case of both the business sector and the football pitch. Therefore, this study finds the coaching principles from football to be adaptable to the business context, highlighting the value of practical skill application, simulations, and experimental learning. The adaptability of coaching principles leverages the notion that robust talent development involves practical learning and immersive experiences, regardless of specific context (Akbari et al., 2022; Dalal and Akdere, 2023).

How are the principles of football coaching effectively associated with business leadership development programs?

Similarities are evident in team dynamics and leadership styles, with success in both business and football contexts demanding collaboration, effective communication, and transformational leadership. Obstacles and challenges in addressing different needs, maintaining adaptability, and managing external pressures are common in both. The shared obstacles emphasize the need for adaptability and resilience in leadership and talent coaching, highlighting strategies that resist external pressure (Shah et al., 2018; Khoreva and Vaiman, 2021; Singh, 2021; Claus, 2019).

The proposed model offers a practical infrastructure for organizations to implement football coaching principles for talent development to enable better business leadership. The model facilitates a structured method for associating successful strategies of coaching from football into the developmental programs of business leadership, providing actionable steps for application, by integrating core principles such as continuous improvement,

ethical considerations, long-term investment, transformational leadership, and holistic development. The model also underscores continuous feedback and inclusive stakeholder involvement in ongoing development. Maintaining a feedback thread and involving stakeholders ensures that the implemented model aligns with organizational objectives and values, nurturing a culture of adaptability and collaboration (Pankow et al., 2018; Edirisooriya, 2020; Gomes et al., 2021; Haddad et al., 2021). The association between team dynamics and leadership styles highlights the universality of transformational leadership. Thus, the results suggest that motivating and inspiring team members contributes to success in the business sector as well as the football pitch. Organizations need to support such programs to stimulate a cohesive and positive team culture (Gomes, 2020; Roynesdal et al., 2018; Soto Garcia et al., 2021; Parnell et al., 2018; Berry and Fowler, 2021; Otte et al., 2020; Grant, 2020; Matic, 2022).

## 6 Conclusion

A comprehensive investigation of talent coaching practices in football and their implementation in business leadership generates actionable outcomes and valuable insights. The convergence of principles across both contexts highlights the need for a holistic and dynamic method of talent improvement. Transferable principles emphasize the universal characteristics of effective leadership and coaching, highlighting the significance of well-developed skillsets, ethical considerations, and adaptability. Therefore, the proposed model for implementing coaching principles provides a practical approach for firms to integrate successful strategies and policies into leadership development programs.

The focus on holistic improvement in both business and football reinforces the importance of nurturing different skill sets. Organizations must prioritize inclusive individual growth and incorporate emotional intelligence, strategic thinking, and technical proficiency into their leadership development initiatives. In both business and football, shared challenges are associated with the adaptability of coaching principles, emphasizing the need for dynamic adaptation and resilience. Therefore, organizations need to nurture agility in leadership practices and empower leaders to effectively respond to external pressures and uncertainties. In terms of leadership styles, the evidence in support of transformational leadership and effective collaboration and communication in both contexts highlight the universal principles and methods used in certain high-performing teams. Finally, organizations need to prioritize inspirational leadership and encourage a culture of collaboration.

## Data availability statement

The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

## Author contributions

NL: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Funding acquisition, Investigation, Methodology, Project

administration, Resources, Software, Supervision, Validation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

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The author declares that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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## Supplementary material

The Supplementary Material for this article can be found online at: <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/forpg.2025.1420038/full#supplementary-material>



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