

**EXPLORING THE MANAGERIAL CYCLE OF PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL
LEAGUE MANAGERS IN ENGLAND AND NORWAY**

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Abstract

To gain a critical understanding of the lived challenges within the managerial cycle (recruitment, employment, termination) in professional league football, the research initially followed a qualitative approach in the form of semi-structured interviews. A total of 16 professional league managers completed a face-to-face interview using open ended questions, allowing them to share their true perspectives (Dale, 1996). The interview schedule concerned the managers' perceptions of challenges faced within the role, strategies to deal with the challenges, specific skills and qualities possessed, and future challenges within the role. Data were analysed via deductive and inductive content analysis (Biddle, Markland, Gilbourne, Chatzisarantis, & Sparkes, 2001; Côté, Samela, & Russel, 1995), and emerging themes were subjected to member checking (Sparkes, 1998). The range of experiences revealed a number of proposals for how to deal with cultural, organisational and personal related challenges. The managers' ability to delegate responsibilities and to adapt effectively to changing environments seemed critical to avoid loops of accumulating problems. Unprofessional attitudes to recruitment and sackings seemed embedded in the culture. The eagerness for short-term results was perceived as a threat to sustainability in managerial work currently and in the future. The managerial cycle model was developed on the basis of Study One findings.

Study Two aimed to examine the managerial cycle model by bringing in the internal (senior management and support staff) and external (Norwegian Football Association, League Managers' Associations) key stakeholder views on the training, development and support of managers within the various phases of the managerial cycle (recruitment, employment and termination). A total of 21 internal (n=18) and external (n=3) key stakeholders completed a semi-structured interview, which was analysed via both deductive and inductive content analysis. The findings gave insight in senior management experiences regarding managerial recruitment and dismissals. Support staff members reported that both frequent changes of managers detracted the ability to work professionally and longitudinally. They also suggested that the managers' receptivity to support was reduced in periods of high pressure. Further, managers were expected by their leaders to take care of their own development. These findings suggest that managers need to be skilled in self-directed learning to avoid superficiality in work. Preparing managers for the ability to adapt effectively to contextual changes appears to not be sufficiently integrated into the current formal training of managers.

Study Three employed a case study approach to critically examine how the managerial lived experience might change over time. Three managers engaged in one Norwegian PL-club (full season) and one manager from an English League One club (four months) were regularly interviewed during various phases of the managerial cycle (recruitment, employment, termination). Ethnographic principles were employed in the study that aimed to better understand how the managerial experience might change across situations and conditions. The managerial experiences changed along with sporting results (ups and downs), and differed in levels of trust and communication internally. The findings argue that shared understanding and trust across organisational levels are needed to facilitate internal stability and long-term efficiency, meaning that the skills to establish these conditions are crucial for sustained sporting and organisational success.

All the managers experienced challenges at cultural, organisational and personal levels related to the different phases of the managerial cycle and technical (understanding across professions), human, and conceptual skills were needed to deal with role related challenges. Given the complexity of the role, and the continuous and rapid changes that managers are exposed to, the current study suggests that contextual insights are needed to understand and ultimately advise or prepare managers sufficiently for their future role(s). Managers need consistency in their approach to gain trust from internal stakeholders, and sporting success seems to facilitate the support. To establish managerial consistency, the manager requires a clear philosophy based on cultural, organisational and personal understandings, combined with humbleness toward knowledge.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction, aims and literature review

1.1 Introduction

Football management has been a hot topic of debate in recent years (Green, 2002). They are men driven by the love of the sport (Calvin, 2015), who are extensively followed by cameras and broadcasted in almost every corner of the world in their strivings to create performances through over-paid players in the wake of incredible TV-deals (Lonsdale, 2004). The publicity and interest in the professional side of the world's biggest sport (Nesti, 2010) makes it hard for the manager to hide, or retain some element of privacy in their social worlds. They are continuously debated in papers, radio, TV and on the web. Just as we see in contemporary reality TV-shows, managers are metaphorically 'voted in' or 'voted out' after every game. Betting companies even offer odds on who will be the next manager to leave his post. The culture of blaming and relieving managers from their duties (Arnulf, Mathisen, & Hærem, 2011) was recently actualized in England by reaching a record high in 2015/16 with an average managerial tenure of 1.47 years across the top four tiers (LMA, 2016). In a Norwegian context, the average tenure has been just above two years (NTF, 2015). It has been argued that the rate of managerial turnover reflects a mismanaged industry, driven by unrealistic expectations and emotions in pursuit of short-term results (Arnulf et al., 2011). Although the degree of interest and finance involved puts influence on the way clubs are managed, professional football also possesses a high influence over their consumers (Lonsdale, 2004). For example, some managers occupy the social status akin to globally recognized superstars within industry such as film and music. Through their position, as working bosses, brand builders, and idols, they have the power to change lives. Holding such a powerful position within the often volatile, competitive and fast changing world of professional league football, would suggest that football managers need to be aware and prepared for the role in its broadest sense. This is required to not only facilitate performances in the face of exceptionally high expectations and pressures, but also the ability

to administer an unusually large responsibility of serving a club that means a lot for many people within the community. Internally, this involves creating processes that both lead to results and job satisfaction (Deci & Ryan, 2002), and externally, the exposure of humanity and compassion to people. This does not mean that every manager should behave or operate the same way, but it addresses the need to ascribe a deeper sense of responsibility to their role. Senior club managers, as recruiters and employers of managerial services, and the organisations that define the guidelines for the managerial role, should also feel and share this responsibility. Whether managers and their facilitators are aware of the scope of their responsibility, to a sense that enables customized approaches to managerial training, development and support, to emerge, are matters that are thoroughly explored and discussed throughout the current thesis.

In this regard, the present thesis explores key factors related to the managerial cycle (recruitment, employment and termination) in English and Norwegian professional football leagues. To do so, the researcher examined literature that contributed to a better understanding of the research field, or with the capacity to support discussions retrospectively to the findings. This approach is recommended within existential leadership research that aims to heighten the awareness and deepen the understanding of the contextual issues that leaders face (Fusco, O'Riordan, & Palmer, 2015). One of the paradoxes in professional football is that all can improve, but not all can win (Gammelsæter, 2013), whilst another relates to the high expectations in the performance oriented culture (Kelly, 2008a), causing a high frequency of managerial changes (e.g., Bridgewater, 2010) that impact on long-term organisational performance (Arnulf et al., 2011). A third relates to the increased modernisation of football clubs (Kelly, 2008a) that requires a broader range of skills in managers. Yet these role related requirements exist within a culture where mistrust to the

role of education prevails, especially within a British football context (Carter, 2006; Kelly, 2008a). Researchers have argued that managers need the ability to adapt rapidly to changes in the environment to avoid accumulating problems (Mintzberg, 1973). Further, managers need the ability to create predictable and inspiring working climates for their staff (Mintzberg, 1973) and players (Pensgaard & Roberts, 2002). It has also been argued that to understand the underlying factors of today's managerial functioning, a closer examination of the social context in which the manager operates is required (Gammelsæter, 2013). Arguably, the present thesis adds to this call by presenting a range of unique and novel research studies that aim to better understand the key issues related to the managerial cycle. With regards to professional league football management, there are no other studies available that have explored the managerial and stakeholder (internal & external) perspectives related to the processes of managerial recruitment, employment and termination. Research related to professional football management, Morrow (2014) explored career expectations among UEFA Pro license participants in Scotland to further understand the main issues related to a career as a manager. Whilst Kelly (2008a) explored the role of British managers drawing upon a Weberian approach, and Kelly and Harris (2010) provided insights to the relationship between managers and directors from a management perspective. Despite this important work, a number of researchers have called for additional contextual insight in the managers' role-related challenges and adaptations, to better understand the skills and personal qualities that are needed to manage effectively in the role (Chadwick, 2013; Gammelsæter, 2013; Morrow, 2014). To achieve this depth of understanding, the current research gains different perspectives to explore the managerial cycle and how the related challenges and adaptations might change over time. Furthermore, it identifies the perceived presence, quality and importance of managerial training, development and support, and discusses these issues in light of the lived experiences as perceived by managers, and on the basis of theoretical

suggestions.

1.2 Aims of Research

The overall aim of the research was to identify the key challenges related to phases of the managerial cycle in professional football managers in England and Norway, through a multi-stakeholder perspective. Moreover, it aimed to identify the managers' strategies in dealing with cultural, organisational and personal challenges and their perceived preparedness to meet future role related demands. To achieve the overall research aim, a series of evolving studies was defined.

1.2.1 Study One: Exploring the role and function of professional football managers in England and Norway: Manager's perspective

This research aims to investigate English and Norwegian professional managers' or head coaches' perceptions of their role and how they cope with managerial challenges. Additionally, it identifies formal and informal managerial skills and qualities. The study also examined the managers' preparedness to manage a club in the future, and how the manager considered the club's preparedness in meeting future demands. More specifically, the following aims were incorporated:

Objective 1: To explore the manager's perception of challenges within the role and the associated strategies employed.

Objective 2: To explore the role-related skills and qualities possessed by the managers.

Objective 3: To explore the managers' perceptions of future challenges within the role.

1.2.2 Study Two: Investigating internal and external stakeholders views on the efficacy of training, development and support in the managerial cycle in England and Norway

Study Two aims to investigate the perspectives held by internal (e.g. Chairmen, Heads of Department, support staff) and external (e.g. League Manager's Association, Norwegian Football Association) stakeholders on the training, development and support during various stages within the managerial cycle (recruitment, employment & termination) in England and Norway.

1.2.3 Study Three: Two longitudinal case studies (England & Norway) of the managerial cycle (recruitment, employment, termination): Managers' perspectives

Study Three aims to examine the lived experiences of managers throughout the managerial cycle (recruitment, employment & termination). In addition, the study also includes news articles, TV-interviews, watching games and occasionally trainings to broaden the contextual understanding.

1.3 Literature Review

As addressed in the introduction, a closer examination of the context in which the manager operates is required to understand the underlying impact factors of today's managerial functioning (Gammelsæter, 2013) have on the individual within the role. The following sections aims to provide the context and background material to the series of research studies, including cultural markers in the landscape of professional football league management, clarification of key-concepts and presentation of related theories.

1.3.1 The Context

The context in which professional football management might be understood in light of the characteristics of the sport, geographical considerations, the regulations involved and cultures is addressed in the following section. The purpose here is to critically discuss the context in which English and Norwegian professional football managers operate, as a basis for understanding their views and actions.

1.3.1.1 European Football Structures and Culture

Ever since the European Commission's decision of the "Bosman ruling" in December 1995, concerning the freedom of player movement between clubs (Lonsdale, 2004), the sporting success in European football has been concentrated in the "Big 5" national leagues (England, Spain, Italy, Germany and France). The smaller national European leagues, in countries such as the Netherlands, Scotland and Norway, cannot afford to keep their most talented players in a free-agency market (Dejonghe & Van Opstal, 2010), where players can walk away for nothing at the end of their contracts (Lonsdale, 2004). In Europe, the teams have to play in national leagues, and promotion and relegation occur between levels. Revenues depend mainly and increasingly on media income, and separated product markets result in a disadvantage for the teams located in the smaller markets (e.g. English lower leagues and small clubs in the Norwegian Premier League). Blocking of cross-subsidization within and between national leagues maintains and enhances the major teams' dominance and competitiveness in the European Champions League. Exceptionally, the so-called oligarchic leagues (Russia and Ukraine) have recently risen as the main Big 5 opponents, characterized by a practice of financing by local oligarchs and regional politicians (Dejonghe & Van Opstal, 2010). The European tradition promotes open leagues, win maximizing (Dejonghe & Van Opstal, 2010) and some financial challenges, leading to a number of experienced problems of uncertainty and competitive imbalance (Chadwick, 2013). Alongside the win

maximizing nature of competitive sport and the increased supply of money into European top football, the frequency of managerial sackings has increased. This development suggests a gap between the resultant expectations of the organisations involved, and sobriety related to a system not allowing all to win, even if all improves (Gammelsæter, 2013). The following quote illustrates the current competitive landscape that managers now operate in:

“It’s true for coaches, ‘winning is the only thing’. No matter how much they enjoy the game, coaches are fired if they do not produce winners.” (Novak, 1976, p. 86-87)

Elite environments are almost exclusively driven by performance (McDougall, Nesti, & Richardson, 2015), and clubs across Europe frequently violate their managers’ working contracts in unfair manners (Arnulf et al., 2011). Despite this observation, the European continent is generally characterized as having a socially democratic political and economic system, where parts and pieces of the football operations are still socially unacceptable or illegal under European law (Chadwick, 2013). For example, the unfair treatment of employees argue that the way "sport should be managed has raised to the top of the political agenda in Europe" (Chadwick, 2013, p. 517-518). Until recently, the approaches to the macro-management of sport were essentially *laissez faire* (Chadwick, 2013), meaning that the historical development of European sport management as a socio-cultural phenomenon has resulted in *custom* and *practice* dominating the way in which sport operates.

1.3.1.2 National Football Cultures

The current section sheds light on the English and Norwegian football cultures and the ways these might influence managerial perspectives and operations. It has been suggested that the characteristics, perspectives, attitudes and beliefs held by national football cultures have been shown to impact on the managerial approaches to leadership (e.g, Carter, 2006; Isberg,

2001). For example, the deeply socio-culturally embedded English football culture (Chadwick, 2013), built upon a working class hegemonic masculine culture (Parker, 1996), put influence on the stakeholders' perceptions of how the industry should be driven. The link from the working class is still linked to the managerial role title in England; originally, the '*gaffer*' was the administrative leader for the football team, named after the '*gaffer*' as the working leader at the factory (Green, 2002). More recently, the manager's role included sporting responsibilities, such as team coaching. In the 1980's and 90's, the organizing of professional football in the UK changed dramatically. The Premier League was founded in 1992, all-seater stadiums were introduced following the Taylor Report, revenue from TV-deals significantly increased, ticket prices increased dramatically. Consequently, clubs were transformed into public limited companies (Plc's) and media ownership over football clubs was growing (Hamil, Michie, & Oughton, 2000). Despite the highly distinctive and often unique challenges within the industry (Chadwick, 2013), the role of the football manager remained remarkably resistant to such external forces (Kelly, 2008a). For example, the traditional forms of authoritarianism still allowed the manager unusually high degrees of autonomy and power in defining their own role, and few constraints were placed on the appointment of the support staff (Kelly, 2008a). Recent research paints a picture of the management of the industry as largely isolated from external management influences by ill-prepared, insular actors, from a narrow segment of society (Kelly, 2008a). Assumptions still exist within the industry, that previous playing experience is a sufficient pre-requisite for the role of UK football management (Kelly, 2008a).

Previous playing experience seems to be the main managerial attribute also in the Norwegian Premier League. Historically, Norwegian football has looked to England ever since the sport came to land in the late 1800s. The game became popular due to its link to betting (from 1948). As betting increased, the interest and knowledge of the English game was also

enhanced and people adopted *'their'* teams (Hognestad, 2001). The popularity was followed up by regularly broadcasting English games on Norwegian television from 1969, when Wolverhampton Wanderers defeated Sunderland at home in the first televised game (Lote, 2009). According to a survey conducted in the mid-1970s, 40-50 % of the population followed the Saturday matches. It became quite common in Norway for people to associate themselves with certain teams, and to travel abroad to watch *'their'* teams. By 2011, about 104,000 Norwegians were members of well driven Norway-based supporter clubs for English teams, with Manchester United (42%) and Liverpool (35%) being the most popular clubs (Wedervang, 2011). Norwegian football attracts players from all classes of society and 70% of all 10-year olds in Norway play the game (Dalland & Husøy, 2009), suggesting that Norwegian football is not class-biased. Players are usually coached by volunteers, often parents in the early stages, and by licensed coaches as youth players. At the professional level, the managers, usually named as head coaches, follow the formal educational standards set by UEFA. As a rather small football nation, the best professional players (and their agents) seek out the bigger leagues. Occasionally, players have been sold even if the manager/head coach wants to keep them, due to the so-called “Harmony-model” (Gammelsæter & Jacobsen, 2008). This model was probably created because Norwegian clubs were not allowed to transform into Plc’s. Therefore, several clubs at the highest levels chose to sign agreements with ‘cooperating Plc’s’, which managed the financial arm of the business, while the teams were still responsible for the sporting activities. Due to financial developments in the industry, combined with applicable rules, the dominant organisational forms in Western Europe have been Plcs and non-profit voluntary football clubs (Gammelsæter & Jacobsen, 2008). While Plcs have been the prevalent structure in the UK since the late nineteenth century, Norwegian top clubs are organized as voluntary sports clubs, very often with a 'co-operating Plc', taking care of the financials (Gammelsæter &

Jacobsen, 2008). Therefore, the sporting affairs are still the club's responsibility in Norway, which follow an Scandinavian tradition in which the club operations are based upon democratic principles (Gammelsæter, 2016). This facilitates, to a greater extent than the English tradition, expectations of involving, and resistance towards autocratic, leadership behaviours (Pensgaard & Roberts, 2002).

1.3.1.3 Club Cultures

Club cultures are identified as individually unique (McDougall et al., 2015), although certain core aspects might appear to characterize all. Football has a profound impact on communities, social cohesion, identity, self-esteem, health, lifestyles and the environment (Chadwick, 2013). Sponsors are likely to possess a social-psychological foundation as much as an economic (Chadwick, 2013), and supporters tend to base their club references mainly on where they are born or currently live, or due to social influence (Barometer of Communication and Culture, 2010, in Garcia, 2012). Shared iconic identity seems to assist the formation of social capital (Chalip, 2006) and has united businessmen and the working classes in England, despite strong class divisions (Taylor, 1992). The rivalry (Dimeo, 2001; Hay, 2001) between Liverpool FC and Everton FC dividing the city in two, is an example of how class differences might be maintained in certain aspects of the culture (Lever, 1983). Whether football fosters communities depends on how it is designed and implemented, and whether the club appearance reinforce community differences or not (Chalip, 2006). The challenge is to design and market programs and events that foster community and minimize anomie (Chalip, 2006). Building the culture internally to a sports organisation is identified as the key leadership area for best practice, along with vision, operations and people, which involve the development of role awareness and organisational and team atmosphere within performance driven cultures (Fletcher & Arnold, 2011).

1.3.2 The Role of the Manager

1.3.2.1 Functions and Responsibilities

Along with the financial growth, the role related responsibilities of the manager have changed significantly over the previous decades in regards to ownership, number and qualities of staff, number of players required in squads, player power, and infrastructures (Lonsdale, 2004; Morrow, 2014). For example, Liverpool FC's 1980-81 first team squad counted 19 players and 3 first team staff, including the manager. The same seemed to be the case in 1990-91. However, ten years later, the number had increased to 28 players and 7 staff. Currently, there are 27 players and 19 staff involved in the first team, meaning that the number of first team staff has grown significantly, and actually constitutes the same number as there were players in 1990. In this respect, it could be argued that these changes inform the need for greater managerial competence.

There is little consistency in how we understand the role of the football manager (Morrow, 2014). The ways managers and head coaches operate, depend on their specific working environments and the cultures surrounding them. For example, the club size may put influence to the managerial functions; while a manager in a big club will often concentrate solely on football matters (similar to a head coach). However, a manager of a smaller club is often required to take additional administrative roles (Bridgewater, 2010). This divergent split between on-field and off-field activities is recognized by Chadwick (2013) as a consequence of an increased market control in the industry. The 'head coach' structuring of the role, which includes the training, development and performance of the first team, combined with a Director of Football, has been adopted by a number of British clubs in recent years (Morrow, 2014). Despite the structural changes and various functions, the term 'manager' is still the dominant narrative in Britain, while the term 'head coach' is the most

frequent in Norway. In the absence of a standardized terminology across Europe, the term manager will be used in the current research, with the aim to ease the writing and reading.

1.3.2.2 Managerial Challenges

The managerial function of individuals, frequently referred to as the head coach, gaffer, manager etc. across European football is far from standardized, and there has yet been little consistency in the way we understand the tasks and responsibilities of the role (Morrow, 2014). Moreover, we do not know which managerial experiences are the most important (Chadwick, 2013; McCall, 2010), and which managerial processes of adaption are the odds-on favorites to develop sustained performances (Gilmore, 2009) and successful careers (Morrow, 2014). Previous studies of managers suggest that the culture of professional football dictates that each manager, regardless of professional knowledge and/or craft experience, will be judged by results and (playing) success (Kelly, 2008a), despite the lack of clearly specified objectives (Isberg, 1991; Perry, 2000). In light of the desire to win games, trophies and avoid relegation, chronic job insecurity has been identified as a prominent feature within the management culture of the industry (e.g. Bridgewater, 2006; Kelly, 2008a). This is reflected in the increasing number of managerial changes made by clubs in European league football on a yearly basis (Lupescu, 2015). Although the competitive nature of the game obviously triggers performance related challenges, other cultural and structural aspects also have the potential to affect the manager. These relates to national structures and mentalities (Carter, 2006), club size (Bridgewater, 2010), club decisions and actions (Katz & Kahn, 1966), and the particular, and even unique organisational culture of clubs (Nesti, 2010).

According to Nesti, organisational stressors among managers include environmental, leadership, personal (private), and team related factors (2010). This might comprise lack of trust between people, notably between owners, directors and the managers (Kelly & Harris,

2010), interdepartmental infighting, inadequate leadership skills, managers chasing unachievable goals while dealing with media and supporters (Nesti, 2010), financial concerns related to player recruitment and development (Soriano, 2012), and the fast-moving and transient nature of the industry (Nesti, 2010). Moreover, UEFA Pro-license participants in Scotland perceived the lack of familiarity with non-football matters and non-football language as demanding (Morrow, 2014). Managerial unpreparedness and subsequent practice, suffering under cultures that downgrade education, was identified in British football by Critcher (1979), pointing at professional football as a carrier of working class values, beliefs and attitudes. Whereas it might be more pronounced in the UK, professional football in general has a tradition of upgrading the *physical* and downgrading *intellectual* capacities, thus tending to create one-dimensional identities among players (Gammelsæter & Solenes, 2013), the ranks among which clubs have recruited their managers. Managers deal with people, and indications that people-related challenges, such as dealing with player egos (Bridgewater, Kahn, & Goodall, 2011) and managing groups of support staff (Morrow, 2014) may cause challenges to managers, have been discussed by researchers. The respect from players has been highlighted by experienced top managers such as Sven-Göran Eriksson and Alberto Malesani as a crucial factor for effective management (Oltedal, 2012, in transcripts). This may infer that players possess a significant degree of power and influence that has the ability to affect the existence of the manager within a club environment (Morrow, 2014; Oltedal, 2012). In this respect, treating players and support team staff as active members of the leadership process has been identified as particularly salient in team sports to gain the understanding, acceptance and belief needed to bring managerial ideas into action (Nesti, 2010; Oltedal, 2012; Schröder, 2010). Although little has been written academically about the manager's private life, Nesti (2010) describes the demands placed on family life for sporting staff in football at the highest levels. Alternative literature (e.g.

Bjørnebye, 2009; Calvin, 2015; Ferguson, 2013) testifies that the nature of the position implies certain strains with regard to privacy and family life, which is likely to cause distress (Nesti, 2004).

1.3.2.3 Dealing with Managerial Challenges

This section deals with the literature related to managerial related strategies within the context of the occupational role and considers whether managers can cope with their challenges in better ways. Following a humanistic approach to stress and adaption (Selye, 1978), there are no ‘quick fix’ answers to managerial problems or set formulas for common use. Dealing with distress is rather about learning by adapting to challenging events within one’s everyday existence, more efficiently over time as one learns in the context of existence (Selye, 1978). This means that we may expect differences in the way managers perceive and deal with challenges, due to situational differences and their stages of development. For example, the Swedish top-manager, Sven-Göran Eriksson, described how his awareness of cultural importance developed by managing a number diverse European clubs, before entering the English football culture (Oltedal, 2012, in transcripts). In that respect, Isberg (2001) identified cultural and personal awareness as a basis for understanding the top-managers role. If managers are not aware of who they are (identity) and what they stand for (beliefs & values), it might lead to a collapse of trust between people, and the authentic and honest dialogue will struggle to develop (Buber, 1956). Loyalty and trust have been identified as important for maintaining managerial authority and peace to work among British football managers (Kelly, 2008a; Nesti, 2010), and bringing in one’s own staff (in which you can trust) when arriving at a new club was identified as one way managers tried to secure internal organisational support (Robson & Allsop, 2006). Some cultures have devalued the content of the managers working contract to remain both the manager’s and the

employer's flexibility to develop or terminate the working relationship (Kelly & Harris, 2010). Others brief their potential managers, specifically under which conditions (e.g., squad size and quality) they are required to work, and integrate specific evaluation criteria or key performance indicators (KPI's) (e.g., season targets), allowing the managers to evaluate whether they would fit to the role (Murphy, 2002).

1.3.2.4 Specific Skills and Qualities possessed by the manager

Although not much attention has been given by researchers on football managers' perceived skills and qualities, a handful of studies still deal with the topic. Researchers suggests that the degree of success experienced by professionals in meeting social demands largely depends on their role related knowledge (Schempp, 1993), and highlight the importance of an even broader knowledge base to cope effectively with the scope and variety of managerial functions (e.g. Carter, 2006; Giges, Pepitas, & Vernacchia, 2004; Gilmore, 2009). Following a functional leadership approach for managerial preparation (McMahon, 2007), the training of managers can be organized by the organisation itself to meet the specific operational requirements, or by nationally accredited management competencies who incorporate training to meet the basic operational needs in the organisation. Furthermore, university based incorporation of theoretical and practical aspects related to the role might be employed (McMahon, 2007). In professional football, the managerial learning is influenced by a complex mix of formal, non-formal, informal, directed and self-directed learning experiences (Nelson, Cushion, & Potrac, 2006). The research in the field suggests that the learning patterns might be both culturally and personally influenced. While a 'learning by doing ideology', or craft knowledge (Gilbourne & Richardson, 2005), is strongly rooted in the English football culture (e.g. Kelly, 2008a), Isberg (2001) draws a picture of the international top level coach as humble, and always searching when dealing with new forms

of knowledge. The section below addresses the various aspects of managerial knowledge, such as sources of learning, and perceived skills and qualities. The reader should be aware that although education is the most frequently employed description to describe formalized provision, training is considered as more job oriented, due to its focus on acquisition of learning, behaviors and skills specific to a profession (Nelson et al., 2006). According to Nelson et al. (2006) researchers should detail the formal, non-formal and informal sources of knowledge to avoid placing the sources of knowledge under broad consolidated headings, and to enable an assessment of their respective impact (2006).

Although *formal training* is not particularly valued in all football cultures (e.g. Kelly, 2008a), the UEFA accredited licensed coaching courses still represent the natural gateway for individuals who aspire to be managers in professional football (Morrow, 2014). For example, the UEFA Pro License, focusing at matters beyond the on-pitch activities, is needed to keep a managerial position in the top European leagues. UEFA holds the position to approve graduation of European football managers. Yet, graduated coaches do not automatically move into managerial positions. The key attribute to get a job is to demonstrate one has had a previous professional playing career (Carter, 2006; Kelly, 2008a). Formal learning programmes have tended to be constructively criticized by researchers due to a relatively low impact, compared to informal learning activities, but there are also findings that indicate formal learning programmes help to increase the managers' efficacy in their work (Malete & Feltz, 2000).

Non-formal training is very similar to formal managerial training, referring to organized, systematic educational activities. In this context, these refer to related workshops and seminars outside the mandatory UEFA- based education. Such training refers for example to university based programmes in pedagogy or psychology that might help the manager to improve the ability to facilitate effective learning environments. Another

example refers to Health and Wellbeing classes offered by the League Managers's Association, aiming to increase the awareness among manager regarding their own work and life by taking in experts for teaching and discussions. The university programmes allows the manager, or future manager, to go more into depth into a special topic initiated by the managers interest in learning. Additionally, university educations also involves the development of thinking critically around sources of knowledge (Paul & Elder, 2013), which is an important skill to find and evaluate the quality of information in relation to a task.

Informal learning refers to the managers' acquisitions of experience-based knowledge, skills, attitudes and insights through life-long processes (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974). The majority of learning occurs in informal settings, for example through playing experience, managerial practice and peer interactions (Bloom, Durand-Bush, Schinke, & Salmela, 1998; Nelson et al., 2006). It might also include *self-directed learning* as exploring certain fields of interest on the internet, or reading different kinds of related literature, and watching games or recordings of training sessions (Nelson et al., 2006). Entering 'communities of practice', or 'learning networks' to exchange information, share ideas or to troubleshoot are also possible sources of learning (Nelson et al., 2006) in this regard. Informal learning experiences allow managers to get a feel for managing, how to behave, and how to fulfill their day-to day role and responsibilities (Sage 1989). Learning leads to human capital, and levels of human capital has been found to explain variations in managerial efficiency (Dawson, Dobson, & Gerrard, 2000). For example, older managers are more efficient than their younger counterparts, due to their managerial experience (Dawson et al., 2000). The most efficient managers are not necessarily managing the most successful teams, but rather those who gain honours or keep a team afloat with relatively limited playing resources (Brady, Bolchover, & Sturges, 2008; Dobson & Goddard, 2001). Further, Isberg (2001) found that cultural awareness and self-awareness seemed to govern

how other factors should be handled by top European managers to achieve progress. Cultural insight involves the understanding of another country's culture in general (Isberg, 2001), but also an understanding of the specific club culture (Dawson et al., 2000). For example, a humanistic oriented coach might need to change his approach of dealing with a culture where players are exclusively used to follow managerial decisions (Isberg, 2001). A good way for the manager to enhance his own ability in this respect, is according to Isberg (2001), to stay aware of himself as a person and his actions in different situations.

1.3.2.5 Future Challenges within the Role

The scope and variety of managerial work in professional football provides for certain future challenges due to ongoing processes and constant changes in the industry and environment. Some of these are already recognized by researchers, such as issues of managerial recruitment (Kelly, 2008a; Murphy, 2002) or (un)preparedness of the club and the manager to deal with future demands (Carter, 2006; Kelly, 2008a). Additionally, chronic job insecurity (e.g. Bridgewater, 2010) is maintained as a prominent feature of professional football management. The competitive nature of modern day professional football, and the European structure of the game (Dejonghe & Van Opstal, 2010), suggests that unrealistic aspirations will represent challenges to football leadership in the future (Gammelsæter, 2013). While the nature of competitive sport remains, the size (e.g., number of staff), and infrastructure (e.g., training facilities, laboratories) of the clubs, the professionalization of the industry (e.g. specialized staff), player salaries, and public interest (and thereby increased incomes), are changing rapidly, especially in the top leagues (Lonsdale, 2004). The financial landscape and associated challenges largely faced by clubs across Europe, despite significantly increasing income in the top leagues over recent years (Lonsdale, 2004), indicate a lack of clarity and quality in strategic approaches. Strategic approaches are not

always easy for the manager/head coach to verbalize, but still possible to find through important choices made by the manager and the staff (Freeman, 1995). Organisational strategies are developed by identifying and building core competences by the workforce (Gilmore, 2009). Responses by employees on challenges posed by their environment, might have the ability to leverage strategic advantage within dynamic markets, because the knowledge, skills, and synergies achieved by employees provides the primary source of competitive advantage (Gilmore, 2009). The recent changes in some of the top clubs in England, moving from a manager (club responsibility), to a head coach (first team responsibility), places the manager closer to a “middle management” (Mintzberg, 1973, p. 3) position, with less influence in overall decisions. Unlike other industries, these managers (or Head Coaches) seem to be viewed as media favorites when things go well, and scapegoats when the club fails to meet its targets. The complexity of the role, and the associated learning required to acquire the necessary insights (Isberg, 2003) suggests that a former playing experience along is no longer adequate preparation for management (Carter, 2006). The former Wolverhampton Wanderers Manager, Kenny Jackett, held the view that: “Football is a culture all of its own. You have to understand it to work within it” (Calvin, 2015, p. 343). In this context, the distrust between managers, owners and chairmen (Kelly & Harris, 2010) might be explained in the potential lack of football knowledge among the individuals who employ and sack managers. Although the developmental paths chosen by managers in their careers are crucial for how they end up in the continuum between success and failure (Isberg, 2003), the short termism in the industry indicates that managers are also in the mercy of others perceptions of success (Bridgewater, 2010), both now and in the foreseeable future.

The competitive nature of modern professional football, and the European structure of the game (Dejonghe & Van Opstal, 2010), suggests that unrealistic aspirations among individuals involved in organisations (Guttmann, 1978) will represent very real challenges

to football leadership in the future. Due to the intense public interest in professional football, the pressure on the individuals responsible for first team performances and results will rise when the objectives or KPI's are not met (e.g. Bridgewater, 2006). To deal with such pressures, a wider range of expertise among managers (Carter, 2006; Gilmore, 2009; Kelly & Waddington, 2006) and directors (Kelly & Harris, 2010) is called for by researchers to enable sensible strategies in clubs. Further, when leadership theorists (Katz, 1955; Mintzberg, 1973) and practitioners (Ferguson & Moritz, 2015) indicate that only the senior managers in a club are really in a position to introduce changes in structure, club owners should not be ignored. Managers who aim to build stability into club operations to enable development (Murphy, 2002) need their leaders' strategic blessing. In that respect, the former Liverpool FC manager, Brendan Rodgers describes the fit between the manager and the club's working ethos as crucial (Calvin, 2015), and Alex Ferguson emphasized the importance of, somehow, to establish a professional relationship with the club owners, or their representatives (Ferguson & Moritz, 2015). Although some English clubs have managed to adapt to modern football demands (Kelly, 2008a; Murphy, 2002), the working class traditions in the English football culture are described as resistant to changes in managerial structures or academic rooted innovations (Kelly, 2008a). Discrepancies in knowledge between the manager and club stakeholders, cause unfavorable communication practices inside clubs (Kelly & Harris, 2010) that threaten the function of the manager.

Long-term strategies in football clubs often include talent identification, youth development, buying and selling players, and media and public relation activities (Morrow, 2014). Controlling the spending on player salaries is an important challenge in this context (Lonsdale, 2004) that seems to grow into the future.

When it comes to job descriptions of English football managers, these have traditionally not been specifically articulated in terms of success criteria and responsibilities, except that the

manager typically requires total control over team matters (Kelly, 2008a). The tension between traditional football management and the increasing commercialization of the game is identified as one explanation (Carter, 2006). The desire by managers to maintain their authority in defining their own role is another important area of consideration (Kelly, 2008a). Specific job contracts would, to a larger extent, prohibit clubs from terminating a managers contract, and the manager's authority would be severely constrained (Kelly, 2008a). Such clarifications and limitations related to managerial contracts seem more common in the Dutch context (Murphy, 2002). Whereas a former professional player career is the key attribute to professional management in England (Carter, 2006), the Dutch approach involves a gradual induction of footballers into the skill of coaching. The role of the Head Coach is limited to the first team affairs, rather than an overall responsibility for the football dimension of club affairs (Murphy, 2002). The Dutch approach (and growing approach across Europe) and structure facilitates a more clarified set of responsibilities related to the role, and intends to bring stability into club affairs, regardless of managers that come and go (Murphy, 2002). Lack of policy for how the club should be run by the new manager was identified by Isberg (2003) in Swedish elite football. Isberg (2003) also found that managers were more concerned about the financial side of their signings, rather than the overall situation in the club. Assuming that the Scandinavian football cultures are not too different, this might be the case in Norway as well. Usually, Norwegian managers take a head coach position, which indicates a similarity to the Dutch structural approach in terms of the first team responsibility. Yet, the perception in Norway that former professional players hold the best foundation to enter a managerial position seems similar to English attitudes.

The complexity of the role and function of professional football managers has been addressed by a number of researches. As described previously, one can appoint a missing link in terms of defining the managerial position (Morrow, 2014), due to differences across

nations (Murphy, 2002) and club cultures (Kelly, 2008a). The knowledge base, skill set and practice of management is distinct from management in other sectors (Chadwick, 2013), involving measures in terms of points and rankings in addition to the financial objectives. Although not mentioned in previous research, the club size and competitive level is expected to influence on what managerial qualifications are required. In addition to the traditional coaching expertise, researchers have called for further insights from a financial and human treatment perspective (Gilmore, 2009; Kelly, 2008a; Kelly & Waddington, 2006). To deal with whatever challenges unfold within the occupational role, the modern manager is suggested to adopt a position in which he possess the knowledge needed to provide the desired overview, or to adapt to a head coach position, taking care of the first team performance and development only (Murphy, 2002). A recent change in the top clubs in England, is a change from a manager (club responsibility) to a head coach (first team), indicating a change towards a more European structure. Nevertheless, one should not ignore the possibility, as identified in football academies across Europe, that working mechanisms, patterns and practices, dictated more by different types of characters than the structural influence of the club (Relvas, 2010), even in the future. The following section focuses on literature that concern areas that managers should prepare for in the face of modern day football demands.

To make progress within the role a manager or head coach, Isberg (2003) identified two factors that proved to be of great importance among Swedish top managers across different sports. First, cultural insight in terms of understanding the culture in another country in general and specific terms was argued to have a significant guiding effect on other factors. For example, a humanistic oriented manager who went to the English Premier League realized that the players were not used to expressing their own opinions. Secondly, self-awareness was identified as a critical factor in terms of obtaining personal insight and

consciousness of their own actions across situations. Knowledge acquired by attending academic courses, and through experts or literature, was also seen as useful in private life and in their daily work. In this respect, this was considered beneficial when dealing with issues connected to player treatment and communication patterns. Managers in Swedish leagues appeared clearly to have shortcomings in self-insight, suggesting self-awareness and cultural-insight are factors that managers should prepare and develop prior to accepting new roles within a different social and cultural context (Isberg, 2003). Although the UEFA licensed coach education award is the only formal preparation needed to obtain, or retain a managerial position, the informal criteria is very often playing experience at high levels (Kelly, 2008a). As previously noted, the complexity of the role and the learning required to acquire the necessary insights (Isberg, 2003) suggests that a former playing experience is no adequate preparation for management alone (Carter, 2006).

As already mentioned, the developmental paths chosen by managers in their career will be crucial for how they end up in the continuum between success and failure (Isberg, 2003). The manager's ability to operate effectively is about acquiring information and knowledge about the context he operates within. For professional football managers, this includes the acquisition of knowledge about coaching and coaching processes, organization and culture, and the knowledge about themselves and their role (Isberg, 2003). In addition to the managerial capacity and profile, club size, structures, cultures and available resources influence the functions of each manager. Acknowledging that researchers calls for a broader expertise among professional football managers to cope with their role related challenges, one might also argue that preparedness possessed by the clubs to utilize a more holistic approach to management would be important to increase the likeliness to operate effectively. As such, a broader approach to different stakeholders in the clubs would be beneficial to enable communication across professions. In the following sections, a range of theories

linked to the ability to enhance quality communication and operations across professions and organisational levels are outlined.

1.3.3 Recruitment

1.3.3.1 Procedures

Recruitment is a highly relevant topic due to the culture of frequent managerial changes (Arnulf et al., 2011; Bridgewater et al., 2011), yet there are few studies within the context of professional football concerning what the employers base their hiring decisions upon and which methods they use. What has been noted however is that the evaluation of managerial abilities by the employers in the recruitment process are usually imperfect (Arnulf et al., 2011) and subject to overconfidence (Arnulf et al., 2011; Kaiser, Hogan, & Craig, 2006). Further, previous research indicates that the content of the manager's working contract has been a subject to devaluation to retain both the flexibility between the parts to develop, or terminate, the working relationship (Kelly & Harris, 2010). Others might be specific in terms of evaluation criteria, which allows the potential managers to make decision based on whether they will fit to the job or not (Murphy, 2002). The latter alternative enables the board to compare reliable information about the manager's performance, which optimally should inform future evaluations of the employed manager (Arnulf et al., 2011).

1.3.3.2 Manager - club considerations

The current section relates to the individual identities and the deeper levels of meaning that the managers consider as important in their lives and engagements. A common function of identity relates to the understanding of who they are (Adams & Marshall, 1996) and what they stand for (Nesti, 2010). For example, if an individual has been part of football for most of his life, and this is the world he knows and still wants to be a part of; this might lead to

further narrowing and commitment to a specific football identity. Some individuals might be recruited internally in the club after being a player, via an assistant coach position, to being appointed as the manager. As such, the meaning and direction of commitments are likely to maintain based on shared understandings, values and goals (Adams & Marshall, 1996). The philosophical dimension, which relates to the overall idea of their work, might turn out to be the most important skill a manager can acquire, not least to face the volatility in the job successfully. In that respect, the capacity to examine themselves is important for managers to enable sufficient preparation for the role (Nesti, 2010).

1.3.4 Employment

The following section refers to elements that are considered as relevant for managerial efficiency during employment. This involves the creation of environments that facilitate the motivation and development of the people that are closely linked to the manager's work, and the management and leadership aspects that need to be in place to establish clear and steady lines of communication.

1.3.4.1 Human Resource Management (HRM)

Given that central aspects of the managerial operations often involve and depend on players and staff, the knowledge of developing human resources should be considered as a key element of football management. Gilmore (2009) argued for the need to accompany asset management strategies with HRM practices to ensure the skills and qualities in staff to enact asset maximization plans at Bolton Wanderers Football Club. From a strategic club perspective, HRM functions might contribute to maximize the employee performances (Johanason, 2009), both on and off the pitch. Although many football clubs operate within an open-ended, fast changing environment, it does not mean they have no strategy (Gilmore, 2009). Strategies are possible to find in every club, embedded in the important choices made

by managers and staff in what to do and how to do it (Freeman, 1995). Those involved perceptions of practices, policies and procedures defining the organisational climate (Reichers & Schneider, 1990). For example, we assume that a climate for development and quality will lead to better quality of skills. An intermediate effect between strategic climates and performance is also expected (Veld, Paauwe, & Boselie, 2010). Members of a group, such as a football team, are subject to many of the same influences and likely to develop united attitudes (Veld et al., 2010). For example, the strategic climate that the group is exposed to is considered to have a positive influence on commitment (Veld et al., 2010). The positive relationship between quality, development, and commitment might be rooted in the fact that people working in professional football environments highly value to perform better and to do the work needed to reach targets (Gilson, Pratt, Roberts, & Weymes, 2001). HRM practices, as for example autonomy, performance management (including training and development), communication and recruitment, are relevant to include in football clubs (Boselie, Dietz, & Boon, 2005). The HMR relevance can be examined from different perspectives. The *system view* takes into account that practices are interrelated and should interact or work together to achieve their effects (Veld et al., 2010). However, the *practice approach* is probably more appropriate for managers wishing to implement the most beneficial practices, because it, unlike the system approach, highlights which practices are most relevant for creation of the desired outcomes. More specific, HRM is viewed as a “collection of multiple, separate practices without any mutually reinforcing effects” (Boselie et al., 2005, p. 342).

1.3.4.2 Motivational Climates

Within elite teams, only a minimal amount of research has examined motivational climates (Hodge, Henry, & Smith, 2014). Yet, the need for change from the traditional authoritarian management style in Britain towards a more modern style, has been called for by

professional footballers (Kelly, 2008a). Team-sport related findings in this respect, position the coach as an important creator of the motivational climate and the players' preference for a supportive mastery climate (Pensgaard & Roberts, 2002). Further, a positive feedback and performance climate was preferred among Norwegian PL players (Høigaard, Jones, & Peters, 2008) and Swedish elite athletes (Isberg, 2003). Among female elite basket and handball players were high perceptions of a performance climate (rather than a high performance climate) associated with higher perceptions of task cohesion and collective efficacy over time (Heuzé, Sarrazin, Masiero, Raimbault, & Thomas, 2006). Strong mastery climates are also found to be associated with players reporting improvements and satisfaction related to their performances among top athletes (Balaguer, Duda, Atienza, & Mayo, 2002), and with reduction of players' perceived distress (Pensgaard & Roberts, 2002). Although these quantitatively developed studies suggest that coaches should focus on creating mastery climates for athlete athletes, they do not deal with in-depth explorations of the dynamics and contributions related to motivational climates in sport teams. Moreover, the relevance of some of these studies to the current study on professional football management is limited, due to the nature of the sports, genders, and cultural variations at different levels. Closer to the current context, Hodge et al. (2014) examined an elite rugby team by conducting a case study (including coach interviews) over a period of seven years, aiming to investigate the dynamic nature of the team's motivational climate, and suggesting that leadership strategies and autonomy-supportive coaching into their work should be involved. Further, Isberg (2003) found that an environment based on giving orders seemed to prevent progress in terms of results in a Swedish elite club, whereas using communication as a central element in the learning process helped players and the team to become more efficient and effective in the pursuit of its organisational goals.

1.3.4.3 Autonomy-Supportive Coaching

A motivational climate can, from a self-determination perspective, be constructed by a manager in either an autonomy-supportive or controlling manner (Deci & Ryan, 2002). In an autonomy-supportive climate, the players are provided with choice and a rationale for tasks, feelings are acknowledged, they are offered opportunities to show initiative and independent work, are given non-controlling competence feedback, and the use of guilt-inducing feedback and overt control is avoided (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003). Controlling environments are created by managers using coercive, pressuring and authoritarian approaches (Bartholomew, Ntoumanis, & Thørgersen-Ntoumani, 2010b). Hodge et al. (2014) observed the key elements in the All Blacks' (rugby) autonomy-supportive coaching approach to be offering choice (e.g., ownership), encouraging players to take initiative (e.g., responsibility), and using empowerment feedback (e.g., improving strengths). To make use of such a coaching approach, the manager, staff and players need to be prepared in terms of possessing the required understanding. For example, if the idea is that the team will play better if the players make the decisions on the field, the players need to be confident in doing that. Although this happened to be a beneficial strategy in the coaching of Norwegian PL players (Høigaard et al., 2008), it does not mean that the same strategy would work in English football that may possess a more authoritarian culture of management (Kelly, 2008a). This cultural difference might explain the lack of success among Norwegian managers in the English professional leagues, which corresponds to Isberg's (2003) assertion of the importance of cultural insight when going abroad as a manager. A successful example of the transition for a Scandinavian (Swedish) manager into the English football culture, and the process of developing an autonomy-supportive climate in staff members and players that lack the familiarity with the concept, is extensively described by the former Manchester City manager Sven-Göran Eriksson (Oltedal, 2012, in transcripts).

1.3.4.5 Performance Management

Performance management links the goals and responsibilities of the individuals involved to the club objectives. HRM activities, such as recruitment and employee participation, put influence to HRM outcomes. For example, more employee participation might lead to increased motivation and satisfaction. The HRM activities and outcomes affect the organisational performance, involving performance indicators about organisational effectiveness, quality and efficiency (Paauwe & Richardson, 1997). The existing literature in this area primarily focuses on performances, such as service quality, profit and development of products. Transferred to football, club performance would, in addition to market and profit indicators, contain player development and sporting performance. Performance appraisal makes it easier to provide employees with feedback on their performance, to determine their needs for further developments, and to communicate their relevance and value to the organization (Veld et al., 2010). In a football context, role clarity and ensuring that staff and players feel valued and supported would potentially be a benefit from performance appraisal. Football staff and players possessing clarity of roles and objectives should be expected to perform more effectively within their roles, due to the complexity of the game and the pressure created in the wake of result expectations and external (e.g. media, fans) attention.

1.3.4.6 Stress and coping

The focus on stress in elite sport has until recent years primarily focused on the athlete experience (e.g. Hanton, Fletcher, & Coughlan, 2005). The further developments have moved into the areas of sport coaching (e.g. Thelwell, Weston, & Greenlees, 2010) and organisational stressors referring to leadership issues (Fletcher & Arnold, 2011; Kristiansen, Murphy, & Roberts, 2012). This development seems to reflect the various levels of influence to consider, such as personal, organisational,

and cultural factors, when operating within the construct of elite sport (Fletcher & Arnold, 2011; Isberg, 2003). Given the complexity, publicity and nature of the conditions in which professional football managers operate, their experience of stress, and not least the ability to cope with stress, are of significant interest in the current research. The following sections will provide a detailed critique of empirical research on contemporary stress frameworks that can help making sense of the current data.

1.3.4.6.1 Cognitive appraisal and coping abilities (Transactional approach)

The dominating approach to stress and coping within the field of sport psychology is Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional model of stress. The key element of the model is appraisal (e.g. Lazarus, 1993; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), and the approach argues that stress is not definable due to the complex system of interrelated constructs and processes involved (Lazarus, 1990).

One theoretical framework that is used to make sense of the current data is Lazarus' work on cognitive appraisal (Lazarus, 1991, 1999; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), or more specifically the further adaptations of this body of knowledge into the domains of sport performance, organisational environments, sport coaching and sport psychology (e.g. Fletcher & Scott, 2010; Hanton et al., 2005; Jones, Hanton, & Connaughton, 2007). For example, in professional sport, goals might influence anxiety responses via their influence on coping behaviors (Duda & Hall, 2001). This might lead to stress in which its effects, according to Lazarus (1993), depend on individuals' appraisal of the stressor and the coping strategies employed to handle the stress. In professional sport, the deeper understanding of the stress process in sport is suggested to reside in the performers' cognitive appraisals undertaken (Fletcher, Hanton, Mellalieu, & Neil, 2012). Distinguishing between primary and secondary

appraisal (Lazarus, 1966), primary appraisal relates to evaluations based on values, situational intentions, goal commitments and beliefs about self and world, and thus concerns meaning and significance to situations. The secondary appraisal refers to the process of identifying and determine the availability of coping resources when this is seen as needed (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). In this respect, both problem focused and emotion focused coping strategies might be applied to deal with perceived stressors. If the stress is considered as controllable by the individual that face the situation, active and problem-solving strategies are assumed to be the most productive for stress handling and reducing negative affective responses. If the stressor is viewed negatively, and the situation is considered as one with limited possibility to influence and not likely to change, emotion-focused coping will ensue. In the context of professional elite sport, the organisational environments have shown to affect the athletes' appraisal of coping option, coping response and outcome. In this regard, Hanton, Wagstaff, and Fletcher (2012) addressed a predominance of appraising sources of organisational strain as threatening and harmful, indicating a constant need among athletes to deal with oncoming organisational stressors and daily hassles. Other personal or situational factors might play a role in how the stress process develops (Hanton et al., 2012) too. Kristiansen, Halvari, & Roberts (2012) support this view by suggesting that the motivational climate created by the manager, and to some extent the overall management of a professional football club, are more important than personal orientations when it comes to coach-athlete stress. Given the pressures that might arise among senior club stakeholders on the manager's performance (Arnulf et al., 2011; Kelly & Harris, 2010), these pressures might easily be transferred to the players in order to produce results (Kristiansen, Halvari, et al., 2012). For example, the way the head coach deals

with media when the result is lacking might influence the stress levels in his players (Kristiansen, Halvari, et al., 2012). Also staff management, team atmosphere and lines of communication were identified as the main people issues when investigating of the leadership and management in elite Olympic sport (Fletcher & Arnold, 2011). The operational superstructure of professional sports organisations, such as financial management, strategic considerations, planning, athlete selection and sport specific regulations (Fletcher & Arnold, 2011), indicates a complexity in which a shared understanding of the overall organisational concept (vision, culture, philosophy) is needed to bring predictability and clarity into work. In the professional football context, an understanding of the levels of the particular club culture, philosophy of play (Isberg, 2003), and the ability to create involving environments that make the players and support staff feel involved and valued (Kelly, 2008a; Pensgaard & Roberts, 2002), seem to ease the everyday load resting on the players' shoulders. This means that the ability for footballers to cope with stressors relies not only on their own appraisals and coping resources, but also on their support staff's and management's abilities to cooperate and facilitate learning and performance environments.

1.3.4.6.2 Goal and need thwarting

Another approach that is relevant for the current context is the Cognitive-Motivational-Relation Theory (CMRT) of coping (Lazarus, 1966), that emphasizes the role of cognitive appraisal when determining reactions to stressful encounters (Ntoumanis, Edmunds, & Duda, 2009). Although motivation plays a central role in CMRT, the rather restrictive discussion of motivation in terms of progress or obstacles only in the motivational process has been questioned by researchers (Ntoumanis et al., 2009). Therefore, CMRT is discussed alongside with Self-

Determination Theory (SDT), and partly Basic Needs Theory, regarding facing obstacles in the performance context. The relevance of these theoretical approaches on the context of professional league football relate to both personal, organisational and cultural matters.

The unprofessional attitudes that are recognized in the football culture (e.g. managerial turnover, financial management), and the passionate figures involved (Arnulf et al., 2011; Kelly & Harris, 2010; Lonsdale, 2004), indicate that the managers in this industry are not always allowed to operate in line with their desired goals or needs. When facing obstacles, often described as frustrations by the managers, these might be recognized as *goal* or *need thwarting* in the related sport psychology literature. Both Cognitive-Motivational-Relational Theory (CMRT; Lazarus, 1991) and Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 2002) deal with the individuals' experience of being thwarted and how this might affect motivation. In essence, "the CMRT links emotion by arguing that emotions are reactions to the fate of active goal pursuit" (Ntoumanis et al., 2009, p. 250). Commitment to the pursuit of important goals releases positive emotions when leading to progress and results, while goal thwarting or delays lead to the experience of negative emotions (Lazarus, 1991). CMRT sees stress as a person-environment relationship that is viewed as taxing or exceeding the individual's resources (Lazarus, 1991), and football managers are likely to face such stress from time to time (Arnulf et al., 2011; Kelly, 2008a; Kelly & Harris, 2010). The individual's evaluation of the stressful event depends on the potential personal relevance and significance regarding its impact on valued personal goals. This is described as primary appraisal (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), and the further appraisal process is already described in 1.3.4.6. 1 Cognitive appraisal and coping abilities.

The concept of psychological needs as understood within the SDT perspective, proposes three fundamental and universal needs as being essential for individual efforts for personal growth and development. These are *autonomy*, *competence*, and *relatedness* (Deci & Ryan, 2002). In the current context, autonomy refers to the ability of football managers to engage in and make influence on factors that they consider as important. Competence relates to the need of interacting effectively with environments and the sense of producing desired outcomes. The relatedness refers to the need for the manager to be connected and accepted as a part of the social milieu. As such, the social environments are proposed to influence to which extent the manager's psychological needs are satisfied (Ntoumanis et al., 2009). Basic needs theory suggests that if need satisfaction is thwarted in social contexts, this might lead to compensatory goals and serious risks to physical and psychological well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2002). Because needs are hypothesized to be universal, the relation between satisfaction and well-being must apply across ages, genders, and cultures (Deci & Ryan, 2002). The relationship between specific behaviors and satisfaction of underlying needs may, however, differ between cultures. In a European professional football context this means that the national and club culture might shape the way managers judge satisfaction.

Although SDT research (Ryan & Deci, 2002) has explored the conditions and psychological processes that foster healthy development and effective function among individuals in the sport context (Bartholomew, et al., 2011b), very little research has considered the potential role of need thwarting in the development of managerial ill-being. Yet, quite some studies and related literature indicate the potential for ill-being as a consequence of need and goal thwarting is relevant in the professional football management context issue embedded in the industry (e.g.

Arnulf et al., 2011; Green, 2002; Kelly & Harris, 2010). Need thwarting should not simply reflect that need satisfaction is low, but rather the perception that need satisfactions are being actively obstructed or frustrated within a given context (Deci & Ryan, 2002). Deci & Ryan (2002) further proposed that deprivation of any need will lead to alternative, and often defensive or self-protective, psychological accommodations which may have severe costs for health and well-being. This includes the development of controlling regulatory styles, compensatory motives or need substitutes, and also rigid behavior patterns that may lead to further thwarting of need satisfaction (Ryan, Deci, Grolnick, & La Guardia, 2006). Controlling regularly styles are based on non-optimal forms of motivation, such as external regulation (e.g. behaviors motivated by reward contingencies), and introjected regulation (e.g. behavior motivated by one's sense of guilt) (Bartholomew, Ntoumanis, & Thørgersen-Ntoumani, 2011). Compensatory motives refer to need substitutes that do not really satisfy the thwarted basic need, but instead provide a collateral satisfaction (e.g. image-oriented outcomes) (Deci, 1980). The development of rigid behavior patterns helps individuals from the inner hurt caused by psychological need thwarting and also tends to prevent individuals from dealing with their inner experiences (Bartholomew, Ntoumanis, & Thørgesen-Ntounami, 2011; Deci & Ryan, 2002). Need thwarting assessments must capture the intensity of negative feeling that occurs when needs are actively frustrated. This negative state is not captured by the traditional bipolar approach (i.e. need satisfaction – need dissatisfaction), meaning that low levels of need satisfaction in football managers will not reliably predict ill-being (Quested & Duda, 2010).

In light of coping, it is argued that the reason behind the relatively low score on burnout subscales among elite coaches, is that individuals that are vulnerable to

stress and burnout have already left the profession before reaching the elite level (Hjälml, Kenttä, Hassénan, & Gustavsson, 2007). This indicates that ‘survivors’ only are likely to process the adequate coping skills to handle the extra pressure present in the role of a manager. To promote a healthy sport participation and enhance the opportunity to maintain a positive feel of managing (Giges, 2000), it seems required to first identify the experienced barriers with clarity and specificity (Bartholomew, Ntoumanis, & Thørgersen-Ntoumani, 2011; Giges, Pepitas, & Vermaccia, 2004; Kelley & Baghurst, 2009). Given that such barriers are likely to change over time and across situations, and the current lack of research that examine goal and need thwarting from a longitudinal perspective, one might argue for expanding the study of how relevant factors may fluctuate across the course of the season or the year (e.g. Kelley & Gill, 1993; Raedeke; Vealey, Udry, Zimmermann, & Soliday, 1992). For example, win-loss issues may be a dominant concern toward the end of the season, whereas time-role issues may be dominant toward the beginning of the season (Kelley & Baghurst, 2009), or the media pressure as a factor likely to fluctuate across the various phases of the season in professional football (Kristiansen, Halvari, et al., 2012).

1.3.4.6.3 Stress as a source for learning and development

As already adressed, the study of psychological stress in sport and how to deal with it has typically drawn upon cognitive and behavioural approaches (Fletcher & Scott, 2010) that talk about emotion focused and problem focused coping strategies (Dewe, Cox, & Ferguson, 1993). Yet, when exploring the stress and coping in the context of football management, a pertinent question would be: Do these mainstream research models fully capture the full stress experience of the manager? For example, if a manager finds it meaningful and energizing to spend more time with his loved family

or good friends; could these possibly be considered as purely problem-focused or emotion-focused coping techniques? The nature and variety of the demands faced by professional managers, how they deal, and their individual considerations upon what is meaningful in their respective lives might indicate that something else, or additional, is required (Nesti, 2010).

Despite decades of research into stress, a shared definition of stress is still not agreed upon (Rees & Redfern, 2000). An alternative view on stress and adaption that might contribute to the broader understanding of stress in football management, was developed by Selye's (e.g. 1950) in his efforts to understand life and the treatment of disease. Selye explained the response to stress through the 'General Adaption Syndrome' (GAS), suggesting that "all living organisms can respond to stress as such, and that in this respect the basic pattern is always the same, irrespective of the agent used to produce stress" (Selye, 1950, p. 1383). The GAS model involves three stages: The alarm reaction (initial reaction of body to stress), the resistance stage (adapt to the new situation) and the exhaustion stage (depleted resources to following the attempt to repair). Following this approach, the ability for living organisms to adapt to environmental change relies on their adaptability or 'adaption energy', described as a finite quality that largely relies upon generic factors. Given the nature and scope of managerial work within professional football, the managerial adaptability to stress across time and conditions should be highly relevant. By following a humanistic and certain existential psychology approaches (Nesti, 2004) that are based upon a conceptualization of psychology as a human science (Giorgi, 1970), a holistic exploration of the managerial stress experience might take place. An increased awareness of the holistic approach seeks to understand the stress and coping as it manifested itself in the managers' concrete lived situations (Nesti, 2010;

Valle, King, & Halling, 1989).

Following the ideas of Selye, who defined stress as “the nonspecific response of the body to any demand” (1978, p. 55), stress is viewed as both good (eustress) and bad (distress), depending on how your system is prepared to handle it (Selye, 1978). This involves the idea that all managers are different, which makes it “impossible to construct a rigid ‘procedure manual’ applicable to any problem that may come up” (Selye, 1978, p. 454). The current study should therefore also be open to explain the mechanisms of psychological stress in managers as far as understood, outline how this knowledge might be applied to managerial problems, and finally describe how the managers apply successfully to their own problems. Due to the broad definition of stress (Selye, 1978), qualitatively based studies (Isberg, 2001; Kelly, 2008a; Kelly & Harris, 2010; Morrow, 2014) helps narrowing down the current scope by offering rich insights to some of the managers’ contextual concerns. Moreover, Nesti (2010) seems to catch the cultural basis and occupational stress faced by top managers in Britain based on applied experiences as a sport psychologist. This alternative approach to psychology and stress (Giorgi, 1970; Nesti, 2004; Selye, 1978) adds a broader view on the managers’ stress context to the mainstream research literature of stress and coping in sport.

1.3.4.7 Leadership

The traditional approach to leadership to date has been within the rationalist paradigm, that attempts to distil down the essence of leadership to identify its composite qualities, behaviors and competencies (Ford & Lawler, 2007). The nature of the current study argues for setting the traditional leadership approach aside, and rather try to heighten the awareness and deepen the understanding of the managers and key-stakeholders lived experiences and worldviews, as suggested by Fusco et al. (2015). Otherwise, important contextual information might be

overlooked and less value will be offered to the reader. Yet, given that leadership is one of the most widely studied human behaviors in the literature (Higgs, 2003), it is worthwhile to evaluate the leadership patterns emerging in the context of professional football in light of existing and related literature.

Management in football is no longer representing the exclusive control of resource and information only (Burke, 2011). It also contains the deliberate processes of leadership, involving networks to engage others in change to achieve the strategy and protect the long-term future of the organization (Burke, 2011). Effective leadership is needed at every organisational level in a performance environment (Burke, 2011). While management is about running the organisation smoothly, focusing on operations, planning and control, leadership activity attends to crucial endeavors in the organization aiming to deliver strategic value (Burke, 2011). This means that leadership is not management, although managers are likely to do both (Blom & Alvesson, 2013). To make the manager's job feasible, the future orientation of the organisation, sometimes referred to as a vision, should represent a realistic, credible and promising future in ways that improve the present situation in the organization (Bennis & Nanus, 1985). To follow organisational interests, power is needed by the leader to influence others to get things done. Seeking this power for this purpose lies in the heart of leadership, and the underlying motives are critical to convince the followers and defend the organisational practice (Burke, 2011). The ability to create and develop the overall conceptual idea of the organisation is therefore considered as a crucial leadership quality (Katz, 1955).

Different approaches to leadership have been applied over the years. The leadership substitution theory (LST) suggests that there is no need to control and manage expert individuals (e.g. players), provided that they are working in line with the overall needs and aims of the club (Kerr & Jeremier, 1978). The idea that a group which are motivated and

sufficiently trained and experienced would ideally have the capacity to self-organize in an isolated sporting context (MacPherson & Howard, 2011) should have the potential to work for a football team. Yet, the rapid changes, publicity and complexity that characterize the modern professional game partly rules out the LST idea, because skills beyond sporting expertise are required when facing a broader scope of challenges (e.g. Carter, 2006). One approach that is more frequently recognized in professional football, is transformational leadership, which is based on a charismatic leadership style assuming that leaders and followers exchange resources (MacPherson & Howard, 2011). Direction, structure, and in some cases expertise, is received by the followers, and the leaders gain power and privilege (Baron & Kerr, 2003). Transformational leaders encourage innovation and promote performance cultures, focusing on rewarding target behaviors rather than punish incorrect actions (Bass, 1998). This style of management has shown to increase the creative productivity across a variety of performance settings (MacPherson & Howard, 2011) and should therefore be relevant to consider in a football setting. Another approach, functional leadership, views the manager as an important part of the workforce, rather than a leader that defines club directions and possesses overall responsibility (McMahon, 2007). This approach potentially makes the organisation less vulnerable to managerial changes because it is based on a club defined task, rather than the ideas of one person. Both the transformational and the functional leadership approach are further elaborated in the following section.

Previous research suggests that managers need to balance change and stability in their organisations (Mintzberg, 1973; Sayles, 1964). Whether this is a manager responsibility, or a senior stakeholder responsibility in a professional football club, depend on how the roles and responsibilities within the club are defined. That said, two ways of balancing change and stability are suggested; 1) By making a few changes at the time while holding everything

else constant, or 2) by alternating periods of intense change followed by periods of consolidation and stability. The latter approach leads to cyclical variations in the manager's work (Sayles, 1964). This distinction might be linked to the approaches of functional and transformational leadership respectively. The transformational approach allows managerial superiority in convincing and/or selecting people to follow his ideas of how to shape the working environments and organisational culture (McMahon, 2007). Following a functional leadership approach, the focus will be on the task rather than people, meaning that teams and individuals within the workforce group are supposed to respond to the needs of a task set by the organisation. As such, the focus on the group is central and the leader will be viewed as an important functional member of the group (McMahon, 2007). Both approaches might have relevance for leadership in professional league football, depending on whether (or to which extent) the manager is expected to take overall responsibility of the club culture and development, or rather adjust his functions to the philosophy and needs embedded in the club. The latter alternative, which is closer to a functional approach, allows flexibility and continuity regarding the manager's functions along with changes in the task, needs and competency of the workforce (McMahon, 2007). Whether the manager possess an overall responsibility in the club, or is more of a middle-manager, technical and human leadership skills are crucial to enable integrated and interactive processes to take place between the manager and his staff (Katz, 1955). Financial and human treatment insights are called for by researchers (Gilmore, 2009; Kelly, 2008a; Kelly & Waddington, 2006), in relation to the context of professional football management. Yet, based on Katz (1955) description of technical skills, the technical skills of a football manager are likely to embrace understandings of game analysis, physiology, physiotherapy, depending on the numbers of professionals involved within the support staff. This cross-professional knowledge is important to facilitate the communication between the manager and his support staff

(Grigorescu & Lupo, 2015).

In terms of football (and sports) related studies in leadership, Konter (2012) suggested that more educated players solve their problems more effectively, feel more independent, and have less need for coercive power (control-based management), than the less educated players. This might relate to the knowledge required through education, but also due to the skills of critical thinking, which is a central aspect in academia. Critical thinking involves the skills to process new information and, based on intellectual commitment, using those skills to guide behavior (Elder, 2007). In this respect, clarity, precision, accuracy, relevance, depth, breadth, logicalness, significance, and fairness are intellectual standards essential to cultivate the intellect and live in a rational manner (Paul & Elder, 2013). Distanced from these standards, the authoritarian management style found by Kelly (2008) in a study of British football managers relates to a culture that rather downgrades the value of educational knowledge. This cultural aspect indicates a considerable challenge for leadership in professional football. Another factor that might cause challenges to leadership in professional football are cultures that compromise with continuity, due to frequent managerial changes (Arnulf et al., 2011). Yet, shifts in group cultures might be required to deal with player or employee turnovers, or to adjust or shift negative team/club cultures (Kerwin & Bopp, 2013). An example from football emerged when Barcelona FC decided to create a new team in 2003. After finishing their third season without a winning a title, they signed new, 'hungry' players that had not won titles before. The team's captain accepted the situation and helped Rijkaard (the Manager) to manage the group and thereby make room for the younger players. Such changes can appear both as difficult and painful, not least because you might also need to align the composition of leaders to the new course of the club (Soriano, 2012). By implementing shared leadership practices, involving interactive influence between people and a common understanding of

objectives and goals (Pearce & Wassenaar, 2013), managers seem better equipped to navigate successfully through these cultural shifts. The importance of direct contact between people, was also highlighted in a study of Performance Directors in Olympic sports in England (Fletcher & Arnold, 2011). Although the study was not directly related to professional league football, it thoroughly identified key areas of leadership in elite level sports organisations, which included vision, operations, people and culture. All these areas were suggested to have a significance related to build effectiveness into the organisational work and thus the athletic performance, which emphasizes that elite athletes “function within a highly complex social and organisational environment, which exerts major influences on them and their performances” (Hardy, Jones, & Gould, 1996, p. 239-240). Further, Fletcher and Wagstaff (2009) described our understanding of organisational functioning in competitive sport as a “blind spot” (p. 428) which is gradually been illuminated as researchers have recognized the relevance. Concerning the leadership style of Greek coaches, Aristotilis, Kamenov, & Evangelos (2013) found, by using the Leadership Scale for Sports questionnaire, that younger coaches provided players with more instructions and autocratic behavior, and ignorance of democratic and social support, than their older counterparts. Influences of coaches’ private lives on leadership style was found by Konter (2011). Rewarding power seemed more related to married coaches (amateurs and professionals), while expert power appeared to be more connected to the level of coaching.

Due to the (sporting) results driven culture of professional football, as visualized by the frequency of managerial sackings in the industry, other rules seem to apply for football managers than managers in other businesses (Arnulf et al., 2011). Not only as a temporary response to internal and external pressure, but an increased readiness to sack managers seem to maintain in teams that have established routines for early dismissals through organisational learning (Argyris & Schön, 1996). As a counterbalance to senior managers

in clubs that put up specific season goals, the long-serving former Manchester United manager, Sir Alex Ferguson, argued for not employing any specific targets, but rather build upon performance expectations and work ethics. To stay in the position, he highlighted the importance of keeping a professional relationship to the senior management to establish common understandings of the importance of long-term perspectives in work (Ferguson & Moritz, 2015).

1.3.4.8 Communication

To convince other people, the manager needs a clear idea (or philosophy) of what to do (Isberg, 2003) and the ability to communicate it (Nesti, 2010). The person that the manager tries to convince needs the ability to interpret the message. Given that the management related perspectives and principles may differ, and too the expectations related to what is good management, leadership might be compared to handle several languages and to know different cultures (Gammelsæter, 2016). Such skills allow a greater overview and understanding in the weighing of arguments before the decisions. As such, the manager operates between institutions and institutional logics. Managing is about taking decisions (or not taking them), but also to communicate to the environments through these decisions (Gammelsæter, 2016). To communicate efficiently, a clear philosophy of how to play (Isberg, 2003) and consistency in the management is needed (Mintzberg, 1973). Clarity and predictability regarding goals and how to reach them makes it easier to follow the manager and provide the desired support. A common understanding and trust are required to enable integrated communication within the club, which subsequently allows organisational efficiency based on long term strategies (Grigorescu & Lupo, 2015) and as McMahon suggested, *“the ‘how to’ is vital for success. Having the skill is one thing, getting it all together is another”* (McMahon, 2007p., 168).

1.3.4.9 Strategy

There is no clear evidence relating to what is an appropriate strategy within the context of football management, or how a good one can be developed (Markides, 2000). Therefore different approaches might be useful to consider. In this regard, four strategy approaches have been suggested by Whittington (2001) in the following model, which include the *classical*, *evolutionary*, *processual*, and *systemic*.

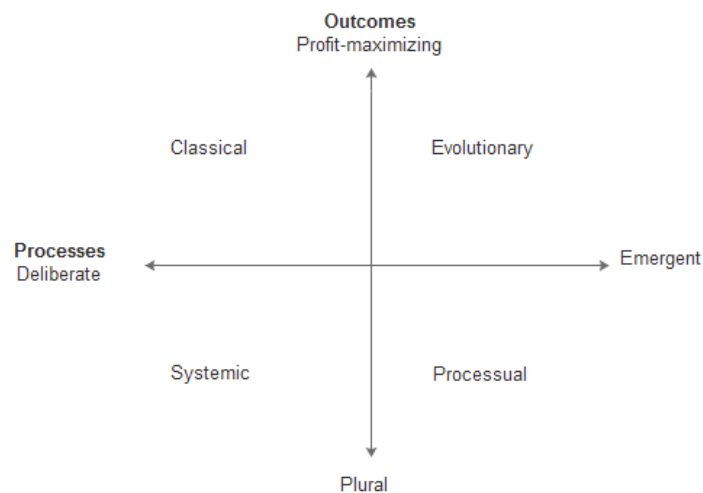


Figure 1.1: Generic perspectives on strategy (Whittington, 2001, p. 3).

The *classical* and *evolutionary* approaches are both concerned with profit-maximizing. Given the open and win maximizing oriented nature of European professional football, the pluralistic approaches (processual and systemic) should be more relevant to the context. *Processualists* believe that long-range planning is largely futile, arguing that people are too differing in their interests, understandings, attention, and actions to follow a perfectly calculated plan (Whittington, 2001). Further, the plan is susceptible to change as circumstances are modified in the organisation. The processual strategies emerges more by bonding, learning and compromise, rather than rational forward planning (Mintzberg, 1994). As such, processualists “doubt the value of rational long-term planning, seeing strategy as an emergent process of learning and adaption” (Whittington, 2001, p. 4). Strategic behavior

rather tends to become entrenched in the routines and operational procedures imposed by the political exigency and cognitive limits. Managers then try to comprehend by consecutively building strategies by simplifying and ordering within the complex and chaotic world they face. To fit into an approach that downgrades the importance of rational analysis, limits the search for flexibility and reduces expectations of success, the involved should accept and work with the world as it is (Whittington, 2001). When identifying strategies within organisations holding a processual approach, the observer should look at what they do, rather than ask what their strategies are (Whittington, 2001).

From the systemic view, strategy does matter, suggesting that the objectives and practices of the strategy depends on the particular social system in which the strategy is made (Granovetter, 1985). In a professional football club culture, these might be professional pride, managerial power or local patriotism perhaps. As such, the systemic approach “believes that strategy reflects the particular social systems in which strategies participate, defining for them the interests in which they act and the rules by which they can survive” (Whittington, 2001, p. 4). The norms that guide strategy derive more from the cultural rules of the local society than the cognitive bounds of the human psyche. It is argued that from this perspective, there are no easy paths to optimal strategies, nor a universal or timeless recipe for success (Whittington, 2001), meaning that what is successful in one context might not be successful in a different one (Whitley, 1999).

1.3.5 Termination

Optimally, the decision to sack (terminate the contract) a manager should be an informed decision made by an assessment of the performance of the manager in question (Arnulf et al., 2011, p. 3). This would require a comparison of reliable information of the manager’s performance to a valid body of knowledge regarding good and bad managers by the board (Arnulf et al., 2011). Given the limited knowledge of the basic managerial skills and

qualities needed to perform efficiently within the role (Chadwick, 2013), the lack of knowledge of how to lead within the particular context of professional football (Gammelsæter, 2013), the lack of will to specify contracts in some football cultures (Kelly & Harris, 2010), and the internal and external pressures to perform (Bridgewater, 2010; Kelly, 2008a), the possibility for failing in carrying out a tidy termination process should be quite high.

There are various ways that managers can terminate their contract. They might go to a new position internally or externally to the club. Some might retire due to illness or personal reasons. Others leave their job or get sacked due to disagreements internally in the club, and quite a few lose their jobs based on poor results compared to the perceived expectations. However, the vast majority of the related literature concerns managerial sackings. The average tenure in English and Norwegian professional league football is 1-2 years (LMA, 2016; NTF, 2015). The low average tenure is partly a consequence of clubs developing self-reinforcing cultures in sacking the manager as a strategy of solving problems internally (Arnulf et al., 2011). In a Swedish study, ten coaches that had been sacked or not got their contract renewed, blamed the board for the decision regarding a number of issues, such as promises related to player budgets that were not fulfilled, and board members that seemed to lack knowledge of the game and thereby struggled to understand the link between sporting and financial factors. Ultimately the manager was responsible for a project that lacked clarity and basis for communication, and the expectations regarding the performance criteria became clear when the results turned poor (Isberg, 2003). These findings are in line with previous descriptions of poor knowledge among employers in the football industry in how to develop, evaluate and terminate working contracts (Arnulf et al., 2011). Nesti (2010) highlights the importance for the manager to know who he is (identity) and what he stands for (philosophy) in tough times. This depends on the managers ability to react and deal with

problems that never have existed before, and the ability to maintain a long-term view when facing the team and himself in terms of career goals and aspirations (Nesti, 2010).

1.3.6 Summary

The literature review has drawn upon literature related to management in the context of professional football. The chosen literature touched upon cultural, organisational and personal aspects considered important for efficient management. Further, it aimed to cover the central elements (training, development, and support) in the various phases within the managerial cycle (recruitment, employment, and termination). In fields where the existing literature linked to the particular topic is limited, related literature from other sports, levels and businesses has been included. The intention is that the selection of literature informs the dominant research questions within Studies One, Two and Three, and the subsequent critical synthesis in Chapter 5 that aims to add meaning to the current research findings.

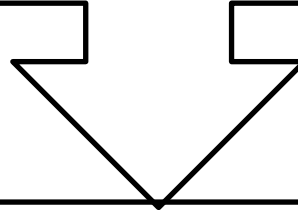
1.4 Mapping the research journey

The research aims to explore both manager and key internal and external stakeholder perspectives on contextual issues (i.e., challenges, adaptations, training, development, support) within the various phases (i.e., recruitment, employment and termination) of the managerial cycle. Secondly, the findings are discussed in light of existing literature, and further in relation to how the new understandings might offer considerations for applied football management, especially in a training and development context. The following schematic offers a brief outline and nature of each study. It also specifically states the aims and methodological approaches respectively. Between the studies within this thesis, additional schematics will be provided to explain how the previous study, or studies, informs the following.

Chapter 2: Study One; Exploring the role and functions of professional football league managers in England and Norway.

Specific aims: To investigate the manager's perception of challenges within the role, how they cope with managerial challenges, identifying role-related managerial skills and qualities, examine the managers' preparedness to manage in the future, and considerations of the club's preparedness in meeting future demands.

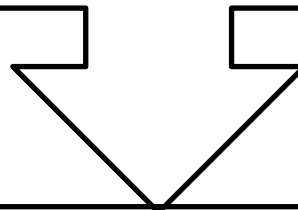
Methodology: Semi-structured interviews were carried out with 16 managers holding a professional league experience. Content analysis procedures were employed to create lower order themes, higher order themes and general dimensions.



Chapter 3: Study Two; Investigating the internal and external stakeholder views on the efficiency of managerial training, development and support in the managerial cycle in England and Norway.

Specific aims: To examine the managerial cycle by bringing in the internal and external key stakeholder views on the training, development and support of managers.

Methodology: Semi-structured interviews were carried out with 21 internal (n=18) and external (n=3) key-stakeholders. Content analysis procedures were employed to create lower order themes, higher order themes and general dimensions.



Chapter 4: Study Three; A longitudinal case study of the managerial cycle (recruitment, employment & termination): Managers' perspectives.

Specific aim: To examine the lived experiences of managers throughout the managerial cycle (recruitment, employment & termination). In addition the study also includes news articles, TV-interviews, observing games, and occasionally observation of trainings to broaden the contextual understanding.

Methodology: Longitudinal case studies of managerial experience within two different clubs (Norwegian and English). More specifically, four managers were regularly interviewed during various phases of the managerial cycle. Ethnographic principles were employed.

Chapter 2 - Exploring the role and functions of professional league managers in England and Norway: Managers' perspective

2.1 Introduction

This research aims to investigate English and Norwegian professional managers' or head coaches' perceptions of their role and how they cope with managerial challenges. More specifically, following aims are incorporated:

Aim 1: To explore the manager's perception of challenges within the role;

Aim 2: To explore the managerial strategies applied to deal with challenges;

Aim 3: To explore the specific skills and qualities possessed by the manager;

Aim 4: To explore the perceptions of future challenges within the role

2.2 Method

A qualitative position, using a naturalistic approach, was adopted to explore and gain a context specific understanding (Hoepfl, 1997) of the role and function of professional football managers. The data should provide richness, depth, and the details needed to allow people understand the reality of this particular field (Pummel, Harwood, & Lavelle, 2008; Scanland, Ravizza, & Stein, 1989). The author aims to reproduce experiences that embody meanings and cultural understandings that operates in the "real world" from a manager/head coach perspective (Denzin, 1997).

2.2.1 Qualitative approach

"The world of qualitative implies an emphasis on processes and meanings that are not rigorously examined, or measured (if measured at all), in terms of quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 4). Qualitative research may be described as *"... a systematic empirical strategy for answering questions about people in a bounded social context. Given any group, role, community, or locus for human interaction, it is a way of answer the primordial question 'What's going on here?'"* (Locke, 1989, p. 7).

To explore ‘what’s going on’, a qualitative approach should stress the socially constructed nature of the professional football managers reality (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) in an attempt to make sense of, or interpret, the phenomena in terms of the meanings professional managers and head coaches brings to the researcher (Denzin, 1997). The author will emphasize the value-laden nature of inquiry by seeking answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994), such as the managers’ and head coaches’ shape meanings of work events in effort to make sense of and understand their role and workplace (Silvester, 2008).

In a work and organisational psychology perspective it would be pertinent to investigate how the manager or head coach communicates what the organization (club) expects from him in terms of performance targets and how these should be achieved. Although one of the central functions of job analysis is to facilitate a shared understanding of good and poor performance (Silvester, 2008), obtaining useful information to processes aiming to shape roles and organizations (clubs) should be of interest. To map the roles and functions of professional football managers, iterative and interactive qualitative methods such as interviewing and participant observation are often more useful than quantitative, highly structured and mechanistic approaches (Silvester, 2008).

2.2.2 Sample

A total of 16 Managers/Head Coaches from the English and Norwegian professional football leagues aged 36 – 71 years ($48,1 \pm 10$ years; mean \pm SD) agreed to participate after being contacted and informed of the nature of the study. The sample included managers with experience from the Premier League, Championship, League One and League Two in England and/or Premier League in Norway, and their nationalities were English (n=7), Norwegian (n=7) and Swedish (n=2). Within the sample, there were managers with the additional experience from US, Swedish, Danish, German and Belgian club football.

Gaining access to professional football managers normally presents major difficulties for researchers (Kelly, 2008a). To obtain a sufficient sample, endorsements from the Norwegian FA, Norwegian Football Coach Association and an invite from the League Managers Association eased the access to managers along with the co-author's involvement over the years as players, teachers and consultants within the professional game. The managers were contacted directly or indirectly by phone-calls, e-mails or Short Message Service (SMS). Following recommendations for data rich individuals (cf. Jones et al., 2007; Thelwell, Greenless, & Hutchings, 2008), these participants had worked as managers at high levels for a sustained period of time ($11,75 \pm 8,6$ years; mean \pm SD). Thirteen of the participants had played professional football before their coaching careers, and all were UEFA A or UEFA Pro licensed managers. The author informed and agreed with the participants about the degree of confidentiality employed in the study (e.g. avoidance regarding names of persons, clubs and places) by obtaining a consent before any data collection.

2.2.3 Interview Schedule

Interviewing is considered as one of the most common and most powerful techniques used when the intention is to understand our fellow human beings, and the most commonly used interview type is face-to-face verbal interchange (Fontana & Frey, 1994). Semi-structured interviews were carried out in Study One by using open-ended questioning, to avoid too much rigidity in the interview process which might reduce the chances to successfully capture the managers/head coaches experience (Dale, 1996). Having considered procedures employed in previous and similar studies (e.g. Biddle et al., 2001; Côté et al., 1995; Gilmore, 2009; Olusoga & Butt, 2009; Olusoga, Butt, & I., 2010; Relvas, 2010; Scanland et al., 1989) an interview guide was deductively developed. The first section contained introductory comments and demographical information, such as how the manager arrived the club and his history as a player and a manager. These questions were important to capture moments

in their life which happened to be crucial for their career choice and their ways of working, and they also revealed certain football-cultural patterns affecting coaching and management. The second focused on managerial perceptions of current or previous challenges (Morrow, 2014), their priorities (Bridgewater et al., 2011), and further sought to identify strategies used to deal with role-related challenges (e.g. Bridgewater, 2006; Kelly, 2008a). Both current and prior experiences were examined. The third segment of questions explored the specific experience, skills, education and expertise the managers possessed, seeking to uncover how this working methods, beliefs, and thinking around his position as strengths, weaknesses and how these eventually had changed over time. The fourth segment focused on the future challenges in and around the club and how these could be met. These questions were seeking to identify club strategies and the extent to which the club and the manager were prepared to meet those, including financial challenges and player flow, and performance goals, processes and outcomes. Finally, both the interviewee and the interviewer were provided with the opportunity to add comments, questions or clarifications.

2.2.4 Interview Procedure

The interviews were carried out at club arenas or training grounds (offices and common areas), at hotels or at university offices. In each case the researcher prepared for the interview by studying the manager's or head coach's history and thereby noting potentially interesting areas of particular relevance. The first author sent a copy of endorsements, information sheet and consent form to the participants ahead of the interview. In cases where that was not possible, the managers read the sheet and approved just before the interview. The researcher made sure that the managers/head coaches had read and understood the information before the consent forms were signed. The interview was carried out on the basis of the overall sections. By using semi-structured and using open-ended questions, the respondents were able to express their views freely with the ability to probe any emerging areas of particular

relevance or interest (Faulker & Sparkes, 1999). All of the interviews were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim. Each interview lasted for 30 – 75 minutes, and 168 single-spaced pages of transcripts were typed. The interviews conducted in Norwegian or Swedish were translated to English subsequently, as the first step in the data processing.

2.2.5 Data Analysis and Representation

The objective of the analysis was to make an organized system of categories emerging from the unstructured data which represented role and function related dimensions of professional football managers. Procedural guidelines of a range of authors (e.g. Biddle et al., 2001; Côté et al., 1995; Relvas, Littlewood, Nesti, Gilbourne, & Richardson, 2010; Scanland et al., 1989) were considered to enhance the credibility of the data analysis (Hanton & Jones, 1999). The subsequent analyses procedure in Study One is detailed below:

First, all of the interviews were carefully transcribed verbatim by the first author, urging to avoid assumptions and non-contextualized perspectives that might have underpinned the research (Roulston, deMarrais, & Lewis, 2003). Secondly, a detailed examination of the interview transcripts was conducted. Thematic content analyses was applied to distil the large amounts of information emerging from the transcripts, and to identify common themes within the data (Biddle et al., 2001). The procedure is carefully described and discussed as a methodology by Biddle et al. (2001) and structured by Scanlan, Tavissa, & Stein (1989) in a way that it allows the researcher to organize raw data into interpretable and meaningful data and categories (Côté et al., 1995; Hanton & Jones, 1999) as illustrated by Biddle et al. (2001) in figure 2.1, first square. Based on the predetermined quotes and the literature foundations applied in the interview schedule (2.2.3.), the analyses started deductively and continued inductively with the quotes emerging from the data (e.g. Relvas et al., 2010; Scanland & Ravissa, 1989).

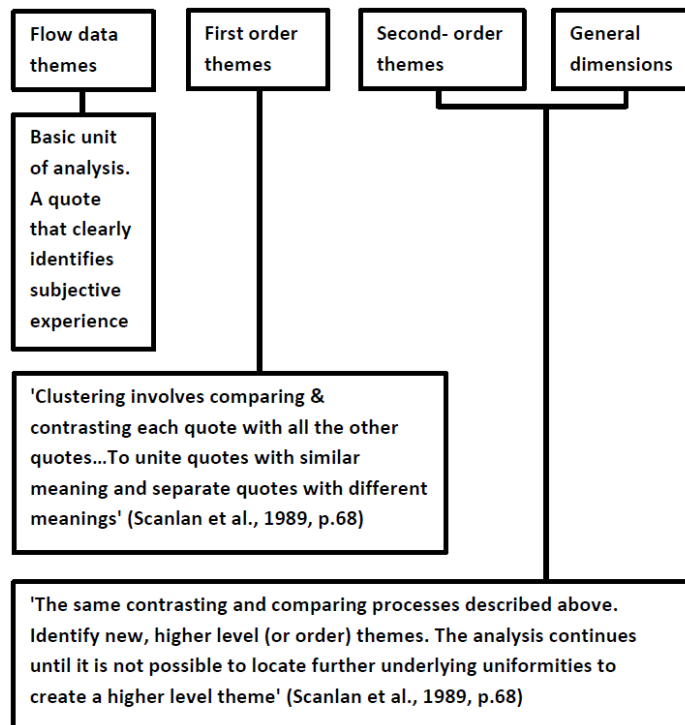


Figure 2.1: Structure and rationale for the process of content analysis (Biddle et al., 2001, p. 797).

Third, common features between meaning units were identified. First order themes were created by comparing meaning units, clustering them to organize them into distinct categories (Côté et al., 1995). The categories were named based on the shared common features of meaning units. For instance, the following meaning unit elicited by an English lower league manager as "financial challenges":

I might have a good player who I wanna get on a two year contract. Now, the club would say to me: Well, we can't. We have not the finances to commit to two year contract, so we only keep them on one year. Now, if he has got one good year, he then move on for nothing, and that's frustrating, but you have to accept that... (C3E)

New, higher level themes (second order themes) were identified through comparing and contrasting the first order themes. The clustering process continued until it was not

possible to create a higher level theme. In this case a third order theme was included before the general dimensions finally were defined.

Coding of participants (Krane, Andersen, & Streaan, 1979) as for example C1N (Coach 1 Norway) or C1E (Coach 1 England) enabled us to remove identifying characteristics from the participants where these might compromise the anonymity and to help the researcher to investigate any evolving correlations and differences based on the participants' league affiliation. In terms of researcher triangulation, two other members of the research team (in addition to the first author) considered the themes independently and achieved consensus between the researchers.

2.3 Results and discussion

We recognized challenges, adaptations to role-related challenges, specific skills and qualities, and perspectives of future directions in all of the managers. Nineteen general dimensions related to “contextual challenges” (N=10) and “dealing with managerial challenges” (N=9) emerged from the data analysis. Further, seven general dimensions related to managerial skills and qualities managerial “skills and qualities” (N=7), and a total of ten general dimensions emerged regarding “future demands” in the role (N=10). Each of these dimensions are outlined and discussed in the below sections. When reading the results, the reader should be aware that not all managers are representing every finding. The tables attached are useful to enable the reader to keep track of the distribution across the interviews. The findings should broaden, and bring additional depth to how we understand the challenges faced by football managers.

2.3.1 Contextual challenges

A total of ten general dimensions emerged concerning perceived challenges in the managers. To structure the chapter and ease the reading, these general dimensions are distributed and

discussed under the headings of cultural, organisational and personal challenges.

2.3.1.1 Cultural challenges

Cultural challenges covered three general dimensions: 1) managing personal relationships in a high-pressure environment/culture, 2) performance linked expectations, and 3) multimedia makes challenges to professional work.

Table 2.1: *Managers perceptions of cultural challenges faced within the role.*

1 st order themes	2 nd order themes	General dimensions
Not embraced by the club as a manager (n=1) Personal relationships to board members and leaders not strong enough (n=2) Distrust when loosing (n=1)	Challenges with personal relationships	Managing personal relationships in a high pressure environment
Unprofessionalism among people in the business (n=4) The waiting game is tough (n=3) Continuous change of leaders (managers) (n=1)	Short-termism in the business culture	
When you are afraid you do stupid things (n=1) The more games you've got without the desired outcome, the more pressured and stressed you get (n=2) Responsibility for the product (n=1) Risk of getting sacked if you don't get the results (n=1)	Internal expectations	Performance linked expectations
Fans' expecting in the levels of results (n=1) Expectations higher than reality in media and fans (n=2) The fans are happy depended on the last game (n=1)	External expectations (fans)	
Media takes a lot of energy out of you (n=3) Media takes a lot of time (n=4) Media doesn't really care about you (n=2) The press is mostly concerned about negative news (n=2) Selling papers on conflicts within the club (n=1) Media cares about stories that sell (n=2)	External expectations (media)	
Multimedia makes players waste their time (n=1) Social media ruins the dressing room mentality (n=1)	Internal challenges with multimedia	
Lies published anonymously by fans (n=1)	External challenge with multimedia	Multimedia makes challenges to professional work

2.3.1.1.1 Managing personal relationships in a high-pressure environment/culture

Managing personal relationships in a high-pressure environment/culture may cause certain challenges. A League One manager described that the fans did never embrace him due to his background from a rivaling club. A second outlined in details the lobbying, pressure, distrust and infighting that took place inside an EPL (English Premier League) club after a run of bad results. Another two managers, holding an EPL experience, described the interference of owners, and sometimes chairmen, undermined the managers' work with team and players, exemplified by the below quote:

He (the owner) wanted to have the last word. He wanted to decide. He decided who to buy and... Ultimately, I couldn't take it any more. It wasn't my team. (C5N)

The unprofessionalism among people involved in the football industry emerged as a sub theme to the short-termism in the business culture. Key stakeholders that involved themselves in decisions considered by managers to be beyond their competence, seemed to cause frustrations. Negative feelings that occur when goals or are actively frustrated might be recognized as goal or need thwarting in the literature, and might lead to ill-being if the manager consider his autonomy to be weak considering the responsibilities resting on his shoulders (Quested & Duda, 2010). The following example brings additional depth to how an experienced EPL manager was placed on the side-line when it came to player recruitment:

If I said a player, and he (the chairman) didn't like him... He's got his own agent who is his friend, and, u'know, he wouldn't try too hard to sign him, would he? (C7E)

Distrust between managers and their leaders, has previously been addressed by Kelly & Harris (2010) in British top football, and the former Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson highlighted the importance of, somehow, develop professional relationship to club

owners or their representatives (Ferguson & Moritz, 2015), because the senior managers possess the final say for club directions (Katz & Kahn, 1966) and managerial sackings. Usually, the chairman, on behalf of the owner, told the manager to leave. Often without a warning or a fair rationale for the decision. The managers experienced the sackings as unfair and tough. A League One manager that yet not had this experience talked about the constant fear of getting the sack, due to an average time of unemployment of 18 months (LMA, 2015). Another League One manager, who was recently sacked, broadened the description of the pressure present when a team is struggling:

A lot of the time when managers' struggling you put managers that are out of work coming to the games, and I don't like the situation. In a way you feel as you are putting pressure on other people, and it's a really tough business because I'm only gonna get another job if someone else fail. (C3E)

An experienced English top manager explains the short-termism present in the English Premier League as a matter of unprofessional leaders' urge for immediate results on the pitch, in the following quote:

He (the owner) looks at the results. A few bad results; the Manager gets the blame. When I was in C (club), the owner didn't come to any games. He lives in Bahamas or somewhere. He doesn't come to football. But he sees maybe on television, and if you lose a few games he rings to the chairman: Get rid of him. (C7E)

The current findings refer to the short-termism in the football industry involving high managerial turnover which has been frequently enumerated in previous literature (e.g., Bridgewater, 2010; LMA, 2015; Natland, 2007). Yet, the current findings adds head and heart to the common phenomenon of managerial sackings, in terms of bringing forward reflections and feelings present among some of the individuals constituting the numbers of

these statistics.

2.3.1.1.2 Performance-related expectations

Performance-linked expectations seem to develop internally in the clubs, or externally among fans and media. The internal performance expectations causing pressure on managers related to results. In periods of bad results, managers could do stupid thing because they were afraid, which ultimately influenced the sport. As the responsible for the sporting results, the risk of getting sacked increased along with poor results:

Obviously, the more games you've got without the desired outcome, the more pressured and stressed you get, like there's less time left till it's got to loosen up.
(C6N)

Externally, fans might expect results beyond reality and seem happy depending on the last game. The expectations regarding media appeared more fragmented: First, media may take a lot of time and energy out of a manager due to the number of interviews. Secondly, managers pointed at the media's concern about negative news, rather than taking care. In the below quote, an experienced manager compared the way the media puts pressure on the manager in times when the team is losing to the TV-program "Shall we dance":

Working as a coach today is like being into a big show, like you've been 'voted out' the next day. It's like "Shall we dance". You lose a game, you lose the next one; OK, it's time to vote. We vote him out, u'know, and the media starts the snowball. (C2N)

The culture of sacking managers is a well highlighted in previous literature (Bridgewater, 2006; Natland, 2007), suggesting that low average tenure is partly caused by self-reinforcing cultures developed in clubs as a strategy of solving problems internally (Arnulf et al., 2011).

2.3.1.1.3 Multimedia challenges to professional work

Primarily the older managers seemed to be bothered by multimedia. Internally, managers perceived multimedia as a waste of players' time and as a treat to the dressing room affairs, as exemplified in the following quotation:

Whatever happening in the dressing room, stays in the dressing room. That was always the gospel rule in football. That you didn't broadcast that someone had a fight in the dressing room, or [if] someone said something in the dressing room it stayed in the dressing room. But now, you've got to...as soon as it happens people are tweeting this and sending pictures in. It's a ruined dressing room mentality at the moment. (C3E)

Lies published anonymously by fans on fans' forums and message boards could also cause problems for the manager. Notably, younger managers did not mention the multimedia issue, suggesting that they are more likely to accept the social media or video-game trends.

2.3.1.1.4 Summary

The over-all findings linked to cultural related challenges seemed to draw upon the massive football interest and increased broadcasting of club affairs on and off the pitch. It seems to be integrated in the football culture that both internal and external stakeholders tend to expect more than the manager perceive as realistic. When the outcome-expectations are not met, managers feel the pressure. Everyone involved seemed aware that the results came through the players. Hence, the approaches to develop a winning team could differ between managers and their leaders. Sometimes owners and chairmen seemed to go beyond their role, by making sport-related decisions to the first team to bring immediate wins to the club. Managers perceived such actions as violating their role responsibilities, undermining the

consistency of work, and eventually reduce the power of the player team. Yet, the manager was the one to replace when the results failed.

The idea that modern football allows you to compete with yourself and others through measures (e.g. points, trophies, records) (Guttmann, 1978) seemed to be present in everyone involved. Yet, the open and win maximizing oriented nature of European leagues leaves no option that everyone can meet their expectations of improvements and results (Dejonghe & Van Opstal, 2010). The conspicuous nature of rankings and trophies might distract the work of creating and maintain the sporting and organisational processes needed to develop performances over time (Ferguson & Moritz, 2015; Gilmore, 2009; Gilson et al., 2001). The short termism of the culture, exemplified by managerial sackings (Bridgewater, 2010; Natland, 2007), might be difficult to deal with for the manager and thereby cause distress (Quested & Duda, 2010; Selye, 1978). The surplus of managers in the industry (LMA, 2015) indicates that the culture of managerial changes is likely to remain, and thereby put strains to the manager's ability to perform his job in a consistent (Isberg, 2001) and authentic (Fusco et al., 2015) manner. Further investigations should dig into the perspectives held by internal (club) key stakeholders regarding their experiences of and basis for the processes taking place inside the club in phases where the expectations are not met.

2.3.1.2 Organisational challenges

Organisational challenges (see table 2) embraced five general dimensions: 1) Club history and cultural expectations 2) insufficient/inadequate training facilities, 3) managing player turnover and small budgets, 4) managing players with variable levels of professionalism, and 5) managing group dynamics and interactions.

Table 2.2: *Managers perceptions of organisational challenges faced within the role.*

1 st order themes	2 nd order themes	General dimensions
Large process to make the number of staff fit with the club's needs, finances and size (n=1) Playing style (n=1) To get everyone to pull the rope for the same philosophy (n=1) Chosen truths inside the club based on past performances (n=3)	Internal challenges	Club history and cultural expectations pressure environment
Unfair expectations among supporters based on success long time ago (n=1) Unfair expectations due to sudden richness among people in the area (n=1)	External challenges	
	Clubs need to prioritize better training facilities (n=3)	Insufficient/inadequate training facilities
	No own ground (n=2)	
Work hard to get new talents in (n=2) Improve what they've got in small clubs (n=1)	Player recruitment and development	Managing constant player turnover and small budgets
Bigger clubs come and take the player and buys him off (n=2) Keep pushing players forward and play them to sell them (n=1) Selling players may impair the battle strength of the team (n=3)	Best players continues to bigger clubs	
Selling players to make money (n=3) Players move for nothing because the club can't effort 2-year contracts (n=1)	Financially challenging to keep players	
Tiresome process to get new cheap players on board (n=1)	Financially challenging to get new players in	
Cuts in player budgets (n=1) Wage structure (n=1) Less money than rival clubs (n=4) Finance is the big challenge in lower leagues (n=1)	Financially challenging to compete	
Football just seen as a job by players (n=1) Other activities seen as more joyful (n=1) Players don't know their own best (n=1)	Lacks the joy of playing football	Managing players with variable levels of professionalism
Poor professionalism among players (n=3) Not all players are keen on analyses (n=1) Players look at the target, not the road (n=1)	Not all are prepared for professional demands	
Need to control the dressing room (n=2) Need to convince the old players (n=2)	Managing the dressing room cultures	Managing group dynamics and interactions
Dealing with success (n=1) Dealing with non-merited groups of players (n=1) Need for differentiated coaching (n=1)	Managing mental challenges in the group	
	Building team structures and quality standards	

2.3.1.2.1 Club history and cultural expectations

Club history and cultural expectations were rooted internally and externally to the club. In this respect, the internal challenges were linked to the large process of making the number of staff fit in with the club's needs, finances and size, playing style, getting everyone to pull the rope for the same philosophy, and dealing with "chosen truths" inside the club based on past performances. The following quote gives insight in a manager's first impression of established thought patterns inside the club when he arrived:

They almost got relegated the season before we (managing team) came. Well, I think the main issue was that I think they looked at themselves as...not losers, but almost, almost men, nearly men, and that's good enough. So the mentality was the first challenge with the players and the club. (C5N)

Isberg recognized this as "unwritten policies" (1991, p. 89), referring to established thought patterns in the club culture (e.g. performance expectations or playing style). The expectations could either hype or downgrade the club's capabilities. Some managers recognized both established and new expectations externally, perceived as unfair and based on success long time ago or even due to sudden richness among people in the area. The following quote describes how a culture that changed and re-established put demands on the team's performance, and thereby caused challenges for the manager:

Culture has changed, along with the town. T (town) was a factory town with a shipyard and a big canning factory. Everyone was working here. There were so called 'working class people' living around the stadium. Today there are no working class people. Everyone is stinking rich in every direction. When you are stinking rich they can mean and say whatever they like, and it's another thing: They even think they can buy victories. (C2N)

Whether the manager was more or less ambiguous than the established expectations in and around the club, it seemed to be the gap between expectations that caused distress in managers. To enable conformity, the manager could either choose a club with similar ambitions, or narrow the expectation gap either by giving in or tuning the club in his direction. Giving in, however, could cause additional distress, according to this Norwegian manager:

You have to take pain to have success, but it will pass away. If you give in, the pain will last forever... (C2N)

2.3.1.2.2 Insufficient/inadequate training facilities

Insufficient/inadequate training facilities related to the clubs' need to prioritize better training facilities and the problems occurring when the club does not own its own ground. The following quote indicates a matter of priority that certain clubs need to address to provide more quality into football by improving the technical environments.

I visited C (club) to watch them train at a surface that was obsolete. The best teams in Premier League are training at a surface that is equal to, or even better than the match fields. There we have something to strive for in Norway. The technology exists to have excellent grass fields and artificial grass fields. We need the will to have sufficient facilities. (C1N)

Insufficient facilities during winter and spring was also an element in that limited the abilities to train local. The lack of self-owned facilities seemed to bring less predictability into the daily work of the manager. For example, a League Two Manager had to remove kids and dogs' dirt before each training because his team was training on a school field. The findings indicated differences between levels, meaning that this challenge was a subject mainly in English lower leagues and in Norwegian clubs. In the literature, such differences

are linked to the tradition of open, win maximizing (Dejonghe & Van Opstal, 2010) leagues in Europe, leading to a number of experienced problems of uncertainty and competitive imbalance (Chadwick, 2013).

2.3.1.2.3 Managing constant player turnover and inadequate budgets

Both the Norwegian PL and the English lower league managers perceived *managing constant player turnover and inadequate budgets* as a leadership issue. This dimension involved player recruitment and development, good players continuing to bigger clubs, and managing player turnover and inadequate budgets. Managers of small clubs might feel that they had to work hard to get new talented players in. If they failed, they had to work harder to develop and improve the current players to make the team competitive. Additionally, the frustration might extend when bigger or financially stronger clubs pick or buy your best players, as elaborated by an English lower league manager:

I might have a good player who I wanna get on a two year contract. Now, the club would say to me: "Well we can't, we have not the finances to commit to two year contract, so we only keep them on one year". Now, if he has got one good year he then move on for nothing, and that's frustrating...(C3E)

Such frustrations might be recognized as the manager's negative feeling of being hindered or thwarted from reaching his goals (Lazarus, 1991; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), given that the loss of these players is likely to impair the team performance. Although the process to get new 'cheaper' players in was perceived as demanding by these managers, some clubs earned good money on selling their best players. Yet, if a club had the finances to buy new good players, that was not always perceived as the best option, as explained by a Norwegian manager in the below quote:

Of course, we have to replace them, but you can't replace them with players who are

better, because it will kill the wage structure. (C5N)

Freedom of player movement between clubs (Lonsdale, 2004) and financial discrepancies between clubs and leagues (Landre, 2014) clubs within countries and across Europe, means that smaller leagues cannot effort to keep their most talented players (Dejonghe & Van Opstal, 2010). Managers that built a general (club) management responsibility into their work, seemed more likely to understand the importance of player departures from interdisciplinary point of view than the managers maintaining a sporting interest and responsibility for the first team performance only. This connection is further discussed in the chapter of managerial skills and qualities.

2.3.1.2.4 Managing of players with variable levels of professionalism

Some players lacked the commitment and interest in playing football or seemed unprepared for professional demands, and the managers tried to understand why. Occasionally, managers felt that players squandered their talent because they were not aware of the reality outside football, as exemplified by an English lower league manager:

They lack desire because they don't know any better, so they don't realize that it's a hard world out there and it's a different world, and none is enjoyable of what they are doing now. (C2E)

At the highest level, pampered, young players seemed to lack the experience of hard work, due to their easy access to “everything”. The levels of players’ professionalism was recognized through players’ routines in training; how they dressed, whether they played for themselves instead of the team or through their interest (or not) in analyzes. Yet, even lazy players can be leaders, according to this manager’s experience:

You've got certain players here that are leaders in the culture, and drivers. Like N

(name) who is one of the best and most important players, but who doesn't manage to live the life that a footballer is supposed to. Can't keep up the level. (C5N)

The managers did not seem to appreciate poor attitudes among players. Due to the managers' responsibility in creating performances and results through players, their frustrations caused by players that do not respond in satisfactory ways are understandable. Strong mastery climates are associated with improvements and satisfaction related to performances (Balaguer et al., 2002). Therefore the desire to develop as a player is important. Improvements of the motivational climate in the group might help reduce distress between managers and players (Pensgaard & Roberts, 2002).

2.3.1.2.5 Managing group dynamics and interactions

The managers perceived managing the dressing room cultures and managing the mental challenges in the group as important, due to the commitment (Lazarus, 1991), connection and accept involved (Deci & Ryan, 2002). The young managers seemed concerned about getting respect among players. In regards to controlling the dressing room, the most experienced managers would convince the most experienced players first, and the younger would follow. The mental group challenges referred to dealing with success (or the lack of success), adapting to players' need for differentiated coaching, and to build team structures and quality standards. Developing group dynamics and interactions might take time, according to the statement below:

We have got quite far, but we almost needed all last year to get there: Roles, role acceptance and to become a team. (C7N)

The ability to convince people to follow your ideas, is previously suggested to depend on the managerial clarity (Isberg, 2003) and consistency (Mintzberg, 1973) in communicating his messages. This might explain why the older and more experienced

managers seemed to gain respect among their players more quickly than their younger counterparts. Yet, younger managers that have got clear ideas and do possess the contextual understanding needed, should be confident in dealing with players.

2.3.1.2.6 Summary

The overall findings regarding managerial views on organisational challenges points at the development or maintenance of organizations (clubs) and team (player) performances as significant issues. The context in which the manager operates seem to affect the number, levels and types of challenges faced. For example, when EPL managers are dealing with pampered players, lower league managers emphasize the hard work of getting in players cheap. Yet, one challenge related to dealing with people seemed to appear more commonly: If the manager did not get well along with the internal (club) key stakeholders, he was not the right manager for the job. Differences in club cultures, needs and managerial qualities might represent parts of the reason why little consistency is previously achieved in the way we understand the manager's tasks and responsibilities (Morrow, 2014), and why some clubs are thorough when recruiting new managers (Murphy, 2002). Yet, if consistency in work is needed to approach sustained success (Carlson, 1951; Crust & Lawrence, 2006), one can argue that the ability to enable and maintain human relationships is basic. This includes the abilities to communicate across professions (e.g. finances, overall strategies) in the organization (Carter, 2006). Given that an understanding of the role builds confidence in the manager and that the managerial tasks and responsibilities depends on the club context (level, size, culture) and personal abilities, one can argue that cultural awareness, self-awareness, and humbleness towards knowledge are keys (Isberg, 2003) to succeed in the role, and a premise to manage in a consistent way. Hence, it is tempting to argue that personal consistency in managers is essential to contribute in the development of organisational consistency. Given that organisational consistency may reduce the levels of confusion and

distress among stakeholders (Ferguson & Moritz, 2015), and thereby release capacity to forwardly directed work, the area might be an interesting one related to managerial and organisational efficiency.

2.3.1.3 Personal challenges

Personal challenges (see table 2) embraced two general dimensions; 1) Inherent expectations/aspirations and demands, and 2) Strains on personal development and private life.

Table 2.3: Managers perceptions of personal-related challenges faced within the role.

1 st order themes	2 nd order themes	General dimensions
Gain promotion (n=2) Improve in terms of points and rating (n=2) The ones who join this are bad losers (n=2) Involvement beyond being a head coach (n=2) Evaluate yourself to continuously get better (n=1) Blaming yourself when players don't succeed (n=1)	Pressures based on personal ambitions Pressures based on development Pressure to communicate efficiently	Inherent expectations And demands
Give honest answers as clearly as possible (n=1)	Managers lack time for self-development Managers need time to themselves and family	Strains on personal development and private life

2.3.1.3.1 Inherent expectations and demands

This dimension emerged from pressures based on personal ambitions, personal developments and the quest to communicate efficiently. Managerial ambitions was for example recognized through the aspiration for promotion with their current teams, or by reaching a higher competitive level by changing the club:

I've got the ambitions of being out in Europe, out in the Premier League, so sometimes when I see...I can't really realize my ambition here. Sometimes you

think...puhh...how long am I gonna stay? (C5N)

Others were concerned about improving upon the past season in terms of points and rankings, or they were simply so bad losers that they wanted to win every game. These findings are consistent with previous statements dealing with the nature of competitive sport (Dejonghe & Van Opstal, 2010; Guttman, 1978). Yet, a few managers seemed to possess a broader approach to their role by getting funds in and by concern about the club's involvement in the community. The drawback of taking too much of a responsibility into the role, seemed to be the risk of overload and burnout. Two managers possessed the experience of placing too much of a burden on their shoulders and subsequently suffer from depressions. Although burnout in football managers is to date an understudied topic, certain personalities might be more exposed to burnout than others (Hjältn et al., 2007; Selye, 1978). Workaholic personalities and control freaks were correlated by higher levels of depression, poorer mental health and lower levels of job satisfaction among physicians although they felt the workload made them better physicians (Lemaire & Wallance, 2014). Similar patterns and descriptions were found in the managers that suffered overload-related depressions. One of them described the extent of deviant behavior experienced when he went to Sweden during his sick leave. He ran detours every time he noticed a Norwegian registered car. Another manager, who lost his job while receiving professional help to overcome a massive depression, served the following message to young up-and-coming managers:

Remember that football is a poem. I think that is Bill Shanks': "Much more than life and death is a job that you wanna do well", but just because you give 24 hours a day doesn't mean you can do it any better than if you give it quality eight hours. (C5E)

2.3.1.3.2 Strains on personal development and private life

Unsurprisingly, managers' perceived lack of time as a challenge. "Hard work in unrelenting

pace” (Mintzberg, 1973, p. 29) among the managers seemed to have many unpleasant effects. For example, it was perceived demanding to catch up impulses and progress in the environments besides doing the main job. Carlson (1951) suggested that top management may cause certain intellectual isolation, due to the lack of time to read or go to a theatre or a concert. Mintzberg names it a “loop” (1973, p. 5) when managers are forced to adopt work characteristics that make it difficult to receive the impulses needed to improve and update, which eventually leads to superficiality in work. In effect, this leads gradually more-pronounced work characteristics and increased work pressures. Such loops are hardly consistent with work efficiency, not least in the context of professional top football where managers have to face significant external pressures in addition to the internally and inherently developed pressures. Acknowledging that self-development is important to keep up with rivals and to prepare for future challenges, it is easy to understand the frustration described by this English lower league manager:

You got to have some time to yourself. You gotta regroup and recharge the batteries. You gotta have some time for your family and have a family holiday. So, you gotta squeeze another course somewhere in the land, and it's difficult. (C2E)

The above quotation confirms the perceived lack of time as obstacle to develop managerial expertise. Another unpleasant effect, was the struggles to find time for private life. Similar to previous findings among business managers (Carlson, 1951), the managers opportunities to be with their friends and families seemed severely curtailed. An interesting quotation appeared when a very experienced Norwegian Manager looked at his private life in retrospect:

I may perfectly well brag about myself for doing this [being a successful manager], but it has had its price [family life], and I'm not sure if I would do it again. That I

had embraced that much. Of that, I am pretty uncertain. (C1N)

However, this manager, among others, maintained that he never looked back (thus contradicting himself). When he touched these undone bricks in life, he seemed to evoke a sense of guilt. Yet, maintained that he had transferred some positive life skills to his children.

2.3.1.3.3 Summary

In line with previous studies on the personal challenges that may arise in the wake of managerial workload and demands (Carlson, 1951; Mintzberg, 1973), the current findings emphasize the risk to be obtained by time. The study of personal related challenges in professional football managers seem to deal with the urge to develop within the role, and the prize needed to pay to get there including health issues and lack of time for family and friends. Knowledge of how to manage time should therefore be of great relevance to managers. One manager suggested to replace huge number of working hours with more quality. Quality in work, which partly relates to role-awareness (Isberg, 2003), seemed to be one of the anchor points to organize their time. The ability to obtain profession related updates in efficient ways, seem to be another. More quality in less hours might help managers to keep their health and personal life balanced. The managerial and organisational preconditions to enable efficiency in work are key issues that will be dealt with further down the chapters by reproducing managers and key-stakeholder perspectives in light of existing theory on the topic.

2.3.2 Dealing with managerial challenges

A total of nine general dimensions emerged concerning managerial dealing with role-related challenges. These referred to: 1) Delegation of responsibility, 2) understanding players individually to maximize their potential, 3) knowledge acquired through lived experience and continued mentorship, 4) communication strategies to facilitate a positive learning curve, 5) creating organisational change to avoid conflicts, 6) strategic vision and operational practices, 7) the tackling of sporting and financial inadequacy, 8) relationship(s) with media, and 9) strategies to promote physical and psychological well-being. Each dimension will be closer examined and discussed in the following sections before the main findings regarding the managerial dealings with role-related stressors are summarized.

Table 2.4: Managers' views on how to deal with role-related challenges.

1 st order themes	2 nd order themes	General dimensions
Discuss issues with the coaching team (n=5) Let coaching staff be involved in decisions (n=2) Evaluate what have been done (n=3) Getting the staff right around you (n=4) Put responsibility into coaching staff's work (n=5)	Involvement of coaching staff in planning Involvement of coaching staff in practice	Delegation of responsibility
Discuss issues with the coaching team (n=5) Let coaching staff be involved in decisions (n=2) Evaluate what have been done (n=3) Getting the staff right around you (n=4) Put responsibility into coaching staffs work(n=5)	"Read" players to understand how to treat them individually Bring professional attitudes into players	Understand players individually to maximize their potential
Experience/knowledge (age) makes you more round edged and calmer (n=3) Concentrate on things that can be influenced rather than things that cannot (n=2) Advantage for a manager to have an educational basis, and to have been working outside football (n=1) Advantage for EPL manager to have an working class background (n=1) Managerial development by using a mentor/coach (n=5) Learning through self-evaluation (n=2)	Learning through experience Learning through self-evaluation and mentoring	Knowledge acquired through lived experience and continued mentorship
Make sure squad members understand your actions (n=3) Efficient use of coaching to promote learning and thinking (n=2) Not cross the "imagery line" between yourself and the players (2) Take an interest in the players (n=2) Involve players (and staff) to make them feel useful (n=1) Give attention to the reserves to keep them (and the group) up (n=1) Involve and agree with the oldest players (n=2) Players speak more freely in small groups (n=1)	Communicate clearly to facilitate player knowledge, understanding and learning Motivate players by involving Them	Communication strategies to facilitate positive learning culture
Pick coach assistant from the club (n=1) Never inherit staff from someone else (n=1) Organize internally to avoid backbiting (n=1) Support from directors and players keep you in (n=2)	Staff reservations to ensure loyalty Secure the position as a manager	Create internal organisational change to avoid conflicts
Development of own players and player recruitment (n=2) Pride and routines in work needed to get success (n=2) Knowledge of the club needed to decide who should work together (n=1) Never say yes to a club that is not organisationally and financially prepared (n=1) Bring in people from outside to easier make change (n=1) Study the club from inside before taking charge (n=1) Stability in philosophy down from the first team into the academy (n=1) Stability in playing style (n=2)	Routines in work to get success Organisational awareness prior to the role Stability in philosophy	Strategic vision and operational practices
Train local to save time and create synergies with community (n=2) Go to Spain in winter to get sufficient facilities (n=1) Improve training ground and club facilities to make it inspiring coming to work (n=3) Make the best of what you're got to keep up with rivals (n=1) Motivate players to play well to get paid (n=1) Make sure you're successive on the pitch to get finances to build the club (n=2)	Make sure the training ground is "light" and local Develop club and play on low budgets	Flexible approach to deal with sporting and financial inadequacy
Be honest in media (n=1) Sort out what (and who) media are after (n=1) Give messages through the press (n=2) Protect and lift players in media (n=3)	Involvement of media Use media to lift performance No point in reading everything (n=2)	Relationship(s) with the media
Good interlocutors as managerial burnout- treatment (n=1) Calm down to avoid injuries and overload in players (n=1) Use your energy onthings which can be influenced (n=2) Eight hours quality work a day better than 24 hours (n=1) Live local to spend more time with family (n=2) Scheduling of chores make family life easier (n=1) Social life and training raise the quality of life (n=1) Be with people that doesn't put demands on you (n=1)	Ways to handle and avoid overload or burnout Managing family and private life	Strategies to promote physical and psychological well-being

2.3.2.1 Delegation of responsibilities

Nearly all of the managers considered delegation of responsibilities in planning and practice as beneficial. In planning, managers discussed issues with the coaching team and involved them in decisions and evaluations. Such involvement seemed to facilitate learning, and the coaching staff seemed to find it motivating. The managers also bought responsibilities into coaching staff in practice for similar reasons. This approach is previously suggested as beneficial when coaching players from the Norwegian PL (Høigaard et al., 2008), but the current findings did not support the previously described culture of authoritarianism among British managers (Kelly, 2008a). The current findings suggest therefore that a change might be brewing in the English culture toward a more autonomy-supportive approach in managing staff and players. The dilemma of delegating relates to the result of always making individual decisions as a manager which gives his subordinates no basis on which to make future decisions (Mintzberg, 1973). Retaining all responsibility as a manager might reduce motivation and development among staff and players and thereby limit the potential effect of teamwork. The following quote clearly highlights how delegation of responsibilities enabled the manager to broaden his scope when the staff was right around him:

I leave that (training sessions) mostly to my coaches, because I like to watch and observe and see...it's more important that I oversee things, because I'm gonna make the decisions...I think that one of my strengths as a manager is that I know my weaknesses, so I leave different jobs to different people. So I delegate. (C5N)

2.3.2.2 Understanding of players individually to maximize their potential

Managers approached players individually by reading their mindsets and by adjusting training to their levels of energy and personalities. They placed effort in building professional attitudes into players through individual conversations, by making players reflect and improve, to work on players' creativity and decision-making, and finally by

building toughness in players to enable them to make the hard work as professionals. Discipline, hard work and structure implied, however, that the players were willing to do it. The findings suggests that differentiated approaches to players are necessary to maintain consistency in the manager-player interactions. The following quote conveys a manager's considerations in dealing with older players to make them perform:

I don't speak too much with the older ones. I'm just concerned to agree with them and involve them. We try to agree in elements that make them perform. They sort of shapes their week their own way, and commits to be 100 % in the training sessions.
(C8N)

Similar autonomy-supportive initiatives was observed by Hodge et al. (2014) as key elements in the All Blacks' (rugby) approach, regarding being offered choice (develops ownership), encouraging players to take initiative (delegate responsibility), and using empowerment feedback (improving strengths). Given that learning occurs when individuals adapt to challenges (Selye, 1978), managerial differentiation of challenges to staff and players seems crucial in terms of maximizing their potentials. Therefore, a change from an autocratic toward autonomy-supportive style of management may help developing the quality and well-being of players and staff.

2.3.2.3 Knowledge acquired through lived experiences and continued mentorship

This dimension relates to learning through experiences over time and through self-evaluation and mentoring. Managers cannot expect to be offered a customized development process from their leaders, due to these leaders' various backgrounds and understandings. To date, the view that a successful player career is the main attribute to be a successful manager is rooted in the culture (Carter, 2006). Apart from the formal and required managerial training, managers seem left to themselves regarding the responsibility for updates and self-

development. Yet, the current findings suggest that a young manager holding a player experience is not necessarily aware of the demands following a managerial position. The following statement indicates that more is needed to perform the role adequately within the role:

The step-by-step [formal] education, that's basic. There will be a definite advantage to have an educational basic; pedagogical, leadership, management, and performance psychology. It is an extra benefit to have been working outside football. If you go straight from the player career and just have seen football via some courses and straight in, than you have just been there, and I believe that makes you a bit poor.
(C3N)

The (English) League Managers Association in cooperation with the (English) Football Association currently develop a mentoring service addressed to young and unexperienced managers. Some of the Norwegian managers in the current study reported that they frequently used mentoring, whereas some of the English managers wished they had used one when they started. An English, experienced manager explains why:

I think, if you could have someone that could mentor you, certainly, when I first started. To a bit make you aware of the pitfalls of the day we been through from their experiences. That's a worth piece of advice. I would have advised young managers not to be afraid to look at people that have done it before and that can give you some guidance on some of the actions that are in your head. (C5E)

Kelly (2008a) suggest that British managers might be more concerned of watching their back, rather than concerning about receiving advices form others. The benefits of using mentors seem to revolve around increased awareness, and the relation between the mentor and the manager seem to be central. The oldest manager in the current sample tells a story

of how knowledge may develop through own experience as well. In the below case regarding his change of player treatment over the years:

The young N (name) was a nerd; very clearly football profession oriented and not very person oriented. That has changed and balanced. At my older days I'm far more concerned about the interpersonal than I was as a young, as I was just concerned of "flat back four" and "break troughs" and those things. So that's the development of myself as a coach. (C9N)

Although the knowledge acquired through lived experience may make managers more flexible and calmer in their player approach, the managers educated as teachers (N=4) seemed to possess the understanding of efficient player management at a significantly earlier stage than the rest.

2.3.2.4 Communication strategies to facilitate positive learning cultures

Communication strategies to facilitate positive learning cultures were utilized by managers to increase player knowledge, understandings and learning, and to motivate players by involving them. The manager needed to communicate clearly to players to make sure that the squad members understood their actions. To enable a clear dialogue, some of the managers highlighted the importance of keeping the distance between themselves and the players, referring to the importance of understanding the difference between the roles. A player who consider himself as a friend of the manager, will be confused when the manager let him down by for example being degraded to the reserve team. The subordinates trust to the manager relies on the consistency in managerial decisions (Mintzberg, 1973). Also the arenas for communication seemed to occupy managerial considerations. Joint meals allowed the distance between the players and the coaching staff to decrease. Further, asking for players' opinions, giving attention to the reserves, involve and agree with senior players or

to split players in smaller groups, seemed to make it easier for players to speak more freely and it made them feel useful. A lower league manager holding a teacher background explained the link between communication skills, autonomy and in players and their abilities to perform as a team:

I can't stop the game on a Saturday in a league game and say: "Woops! Stop! You shouldn't do that!", so they have to be able to develop that thinking themselves. So rather than try and coach them, I'm trying to get'em a coaching 'ment' of thinking. And I think that my teaching background have helped me in it. (C3E)

Autonomy-supportive climates that provide players with choice and a rationale for tasks promotes initiative, independent work and responsibility (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003) and ownership to their development (Stelter, 2002). This finding reinforces the current impression that the unilateral aristocratic approach to management described by Kelly (2008a) might be a subject to change. Yet, similar to findings by Kelly (2008a), managers created sometimes internal changes to avoid conflicts by bringing in staff to ensure loyalty or by organizing the physical environments to avoid backbiting. For example, by making sure that people do not sit in couples or by physically dividing the sport and administration departments. A manager, who already had made significant changes in the club since he arrived, explained why he insisted to bring in his own staff:

I will be allowed to bring my own. I will never go and inherit a staff from someone else, because you can't trust them. You need a staff that you can trust. (C5N)

To secure their position as a manager they emphasized the need of support from leaders and players. Such support was especially important in hardship periods. Bosses that was clearly supportive, and players that valued the qualities possessed by manager, seemed to increase the possibility to overcome periods of bad results. Support from the club's senior

managers has, however, previously proved to be a demanding task (Kelly & Harris, 2010). This seemed to be the case in the current findings as well, particularly related to English Premier League experiences (see 2.3.1.1.2).

2.3.2.5 Create internal organisational change to avoid conflicts

This general dimension aligns with previous findings regarding distrust between internal stakeholders that triggers managers to take precautions to increase their likeliness to make and keep their job (Kelly & Harris, 2010). Different approaches were used to enable and maintain loyalty internally to the club. Regarding staff reservations, one manager used to pick an assistant coach from the club because the assistant would be loyal to the manager that the club had hired. Another manager held that he always brought his own staff to a new club of the following reasons:

I will be allowed to bring my own. I will never ever go and inherit a staff from someone else, cos you can't trust them. You need staff that you can trust. (C5N)

Trust as a prerequisite for enabling organisational effectiveness is previously highlighted by Grigorescu and Lupo (2015). To secure the position as a manager, both physical and relational actions were taken. For example, backbiting was avoided by dividing the sport section from the administrative staff, or by ensuring that more than two persons were lunching together. Additionally, the support from directors and players was important for keeping the job, not least in periods of poor results:

Probably they thought that what was done in training and match preparations and not at least what was done to analysis after the matches, that was probably trustworthy enough to keep me in. (C9N)

2.3.2.6 Strategic vision and operational practices

Maintenance and stability was also seen as important related to the organisational direction and productivity. By establishing routines and expecting pride in work seemed to help in to streamline the standards and maintain quality in work at every level of the organisation:

Being the kit-man is a big job, cos then now [knocking the table] the players come in every morning and the training gear is rolled together, like you're in the army, on your place. So every morning they come in, it's immaculate. And that costs a few hours' work extra for the kit-man. He should put his pride [into it]. That's his job: Do his best for the players. (C5N)

Organisational awareness prior to the role was perceived as important for different reasons. First, knowledge of the people inside the club would help the manager in his evaluation of who should stay in and who should be leave, with the aim to make it possible to work together. Further, if organisation change was needed, this would be easier to implement by in bringing people into the club from the outside. Finally, the importance of considering the financial and organisational preparedness of the club was important before signing the contract, was perceived important of the following reasons:

I will never in this world say yes to anything when I'm not quite sure that the economics are OK, the administration is operative, structure is OK and that you in a way can compete on equal terms. (C3N)

One manager was able to study the club from the inside for six months before taking charge, due to a planned managerial transition when the old manager reached retirement. This enabled the new manager to better understand the club cultural

patterns and operational practices without any role conflicts involved. Although planned managerial transitions that involved the awareness and acknowledgement by all parties involved are not usual within the culture of football, Soriano (2012) describes how a similar process was successfully carried out in FC Barcelona in 2003 based on a conscious decision to change the course of the club. Another aspect of stability in the club draw upon a consistent philosophy down from the first team into the academy. The following manager explain why stability and belief in playing style is important in the following quote:

I'm very concerned about processes. I've got a playing style and a motto that says "You've got win the league by playing", and I clearly never compromise with my playing style because I know that. I rather loose than change, like I improve rather than change. I think that's important because I need to teach my players to get complete, like the team has to get complete. If I put very much limits into it, this puts limits to the results at the end. I think that is parts of the explanation of why we have got this far, that we dominate matches all the time.

(C8N)

2.3.2.7 Flexible approach to deal with sporting and financial inadequacy

This dimension relates to managers' of small clubs dealings with challenges due to low budgets. One way was to put in extra hours in preparing the training facilities and in player development. The training ground seemed to be a significant sporting issue for the managers, because it was their working place. It should be local to simplify the logistics for everyone and, as verbalized in the following quote, it should be inspiring:

This is your training ground, and you're gonna make sure that it's light. So we're all use time to improve it. That's one of the parts that I've got to the battle, a battle I

wanna win, and I'm slowly but surely gettin' there. (C2E)

Working on players' mindsets to make them understand that they can be as good as or better than teams from bigger clubs, was perceived as a cheap way improve the sporting performances. Players seemed to understand that playing well paid off, due the possibilities to bring money into the club through good performances:

Just make sure you're successful. Win the league. Get into the champions league, then we'll get a new training ground. (C5N)

The increasing differences in incomes between leagues and levels in Europe, and the need to face these, is previously highlighted in the literature (Dejonghe & Van Opstal, 2010; Lonsdale, 2004). As such, the current findings reviles views on how these differences and their related challenges are experienced from the inside.

2.3.2.8 Relationships with media

The media pressure on a top football manager has previously been compared a top politician's (Ferguson & Moritz, 2015) due to the vast interest in the game, although the football manager is not the top leader of the club. This is different compared to other industries, where the Chief Executive is likely to be company's public face (Mintzberg, 1973). The public interest, and thus the media pressure, decrease at the lower league levels. The media relations reported among the current participants dealt with the involvement of media, the use of media to lift performance and the advice that there is no point in reading everything. One manager considered being honest in media as important to take the sting out of what happened inside the club. To keep the media pressure at a practicable level, a media communicator could help sorting out what (and who) the media was after. Some managers used media to lift performance by giving messages through the press. Others attempted to lift performances by boasting players in media and by letting the media push the manager

rather than the player, as exemplified in the following quote:

We invested in a goalkeeper in X [club] some years ago. A young goalkeeper which got a lot of rough treatment in media, and there was one match in which he did a bad fault so we lost the game. Then I got some questions at the press conference about why we lost. I told them I was a coward; I did some cowardly tactical choices. Then they focused on that rather than the goalkeeper. (C4N)

Protecting the players from the media seemed important to make the players stay focused on what they were going to do. A similar pattern was previously indicated by Kristiansen (2012) in American soccer. Given that the sporting results depended on their players' performances, the managers seemed willing to "put their head on the chopping block" for them. Not all managers listened to radio or read the papers. When managing at the highest level in England, the manager had to protect himself by avoid reading papers or listen to the radio. The managers who read papers, preferred to keep a balanced view on the writings due to the nature of dissemination:

I have experienced that I'm not as bad as they [the press] write when we lose two games in a row, and I'm not as good as they write when I have won two or three in a row, but almost always somewhere in the middle...The media's dramaturgy is to move things from edge to edge. (C7N)

2.3.2.9 Strategies to promote physical and psychological well-being

Given the complex and exposed nature of professional football management, some of the managers possessed strategies to promote physical and psychological well-being regarding handling overload and managing family and private life. In terms of overload in work, one manager perceived calming down (manager and players) in stressful periods as helpful to avoid injuries. Following a transactional stress perspective, these are examples of

problem focused (calm down) and emotion focused (talk to friends) coping strategies respectively (Lazarus, 1966). Another manager, who had suffered from burnout, never went to any professional treatment, but he had good interlocutors to help him. The following quote gives a hint of how this experience turned out to be before he approached his friends:

It probably was the sum of long work, double roles, and it was so bad that I remember when I drove up to the north of Norway to walk in the mountains, it was like, when I drove through Sweden and saw a Norwegian car, I was running detours. (C1N)

An English manager experienced a depression for similar reasons at the age of 36, after six years as a manager. In retrospect, he thought that a mentor or an older manager could have helped him to manage more efficiently in the start of his career. Preferably someone experienced picked by himself, not necessarily with a football background, who lived local and who could spend the time needed. The (English) LMA offers currently both training and support related to managers' health and well-being, which indicates that this is considered as an important issue in football management. Although commitment to work may cause distress, some managers made adaptations that helped turn the situation manageable. For example, living local (close to the training ground) with the family rather than traveling around living away, made it easier to stay focused at work and to spend more time with the family. Balancing responsibilities and needs at work and privately seemed important to handle stress. Small adaptations, such as scheduling scores to prevent quarrels at home, or spending time with people that do not make demands on you (e.g. children and friends) was perceived meaningful and a source of positive energy.

2.3.2.10 Summary

The findings suggested that managerial tackling of role-related challenges depends on the context and the managerial capabilities. Different levels seemed to release different

pressures (e.g., in relation to media and staff) which subsequently requires a custom set of coping skills. The findings indicated that the quality of managerial adaption might develop through experience and that use of mentoring or holding a pedagogical (teacher) education are likely to increase the learning curve. Many management qualities seemed important to create stable and predictable relations to players, staff and leaders. Maintaining healthy relationships in a professional manner seemed important to remain trusted in periods where the team struggled. If the manager did not find a way to come across to his leaders, he seemed exposed to dismissal as soon as the sporting results did not meet the club (usually owner) expectations.

The findings related to trust (and distrust) between leaders are partly similar to previous research (Kelly & Harris, 2010) and experiences (Ferguson & Moritz, 2015) provided. Different to previous findings, the current findings suggest that the managers have turned more open to involve staff and players and delegate responsibilities. Further, the results suggest that mentoring and educational knowledge accelerates managerial learning. Mentoring might also reduce psychological stress in unexperienced managers, because it potentially helps the manager to avoid pitfalls. A range of coping strategies were employed by the managers that can be recognized as problem focused and emotion focused strategies (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Yet, the variety of the managerial stress experience also involved cases in which it was impossible to categorize between these two strategies. This means that the transactional approach to stress and coping might work in some cases, while others are better covered by the exposure to a holistic understanding of the field of stress and adaption (e.g. Selye, 1978). The current findings also indicate, as previously suggested, that managers holding a consistent understanding (Isberg, 2001) and execution (Mintzberg, 1973) of their role deal more effectively with contextual challenges.

2.3.3 Managerial skills and qualities

A total of seven general dimensions emerged concerning the managers' perceived skills and qualities (see table). To ease the reading, the general dimensions are further placed under the headings "learning" and "personal qualities".

Table 2.5: Managers' perceptions of their role-related skills and qualities.

1 st order themes	2 nd order themes	General dimensions
	Willing to do the education needed (n=2) Don't do enough education (n=1) The manager made all the players take coaching badges (n=1) Pro-license compared to a university degree (n=2)	External motives to formal education
"Power knowledge" through player and coaching experience (n=2) Related education and research is essential (n=3) Selectivity on football based research (n=1) Education and work besides playing in Norway (n=2) Licensed coaching education is rather slim compared to an university education (n=3)	Education, research and experience is essential Quality of coaching education	Awareness of the quality and use of informational sources
Educational insight makes it easier to deal with players (n=2) Education is broadening club culture (n=3) Learning from other clubs and managers (n=3) Reading about management based on interest (n=2) Lot of good things to bring in from the business sector into elite football (n=2) Working makes you appreciate what you've got (n=3) Players should appreciate what they've got in England (n=2)	Broadening culture based on educational sources Learning from other sources	Broadening culture based on formal education and informal insight
	Football profession kind of coach (n=2) More of a manager (n=2)	Flexibility in defining one's role due to managerial qualities
Introvert (n=1) Staff want to work with me (n=1) Don't like people tell me what to do (n=1) Small things are different from person to person (n=2) Not desperate to have success because of previous success as a player (n=1) Naive (n=1) Being yourself (n=3) Calm (n=1) Stone hard with players (n=1) Manager's office is "everybody's office"; very involving (n=1) Great responsibility beyond being a coach (n=1) Not taken anything for granted (n=1) Drive to learn (n=4) Love watching football and being involved (n=3) Improvements in terms of promotions (n=4) To see players develop (n=6) The excitement of important games (n=1) Want to do the job well (n=1)	Personality Distinctive managerial behaviours Passion for managing	Person specific qualities affecting managerial operations
	A clear vision about playing style (n=5) Attention to details in work (n=3)	Clear ideas and practices about playing style and details in work
Easy to forget the football related thing (n=1) Far more concerned with the interpersonal when getting older (n=1) Great advantage to be pedagogically skilled (n=3) Ability to talk conversationally about what you're doing (n=1) Care about the players as persons (n=2)	Human treatment as important as the football related things Important human treatment skills when working with players	Competence on human treatment

2.3.3.1 Learning

The general dimensions concerning about managerial learning involved external motives to formal education (1), awareness of the quality and use of informal sources (2), and broadening culture based on education and informal insight (3).

2.3.3.1.1 External motives to formal education

External motives to formal education related to the willingness to do the education needed to qualify for managing at higher levels, or the perception of not doing enough education. The views of the difficulty of and attitudes towards formal education differed between the managers. Mainly English lower league managers possessed the ‘have to’ rather than ‘want to’ attitude towards formal education. Partly because of they were short of time, and partly because they lacked intrinsic motivation. A young League Two manager explained his motives to make the formal education:

“To get to the top, where I wanna be, I got to make sure that I get every year possible education. Every badge and course. I’m willing to do them when I can to make sure that I get to the top” (C2E)

Previous literature related to the issue suggests that the lack of educational interest among managers relates to the working class traditions that the British football culture is built upon (Green, 2002; Kelly, 2008a). According to self-determination theory, the intrinsic sources of motivation, which involve stimulation, coping and knowledge, are more powerful and durable than the extrinsic (Deci & Ryan, 2002).

2.3.3.1.2 Awareness of the quality and use of informal sources

The awareness of the quality and use of informal sources seemed to be reserved the Norwegian and Swedish managers. They perceived the sources of education, research and experience as essential, and shared their views upon the efficiency of the coaching education.

One manager who possessed a University Master's degree, but lacked a career as a professional player, explains in the following quote what non-formal education meant to him:

I would never been here today or had ten years as a head coach at the highest Nordic elite if I had not conducted my education. No chance! (C7N)

Several of the managers had worked outside football and made university education besides being a player. One of them seemed quite selective about his choices regarding sources of self-directed learning:

I don't bother speaking with people at the "Olympiatoppen" [experts working with Norwegian Olympic athletes]. It makes me quite contrary because they haven't got the clue about football. I'll rather go to Liverpool John Moores [University] or other places where billions are spent on research. There are reasons for why Englishmen play like this and Spaniards make this and that. (C6N)

Among the managers holding a university degree, the quality of the formal coaching education was viewed as rather slim. They considered, however, a coach education as a bachelor or master degree combined with practice as a powerful basis. The Pro-license was found more interesting than the initial licensing (UEFA A and B) because it was more related to management and creating club cultures.

2.3.3.1.3 Broadening of culture based on educational and informal insights

The current section refers to formal, non-formal and informal sources that help building networks, values and understandings perceived as useful for personal and collective learning. Education and managerial training seemed to broaden the club culture in levels of reflections and understandings among the involved and add weight to messages given to players. The

extended value of formal training related to networking between managers, which equipped them with the opportunity to call colleagues for advice whenever needed and to feel as a part of a community. Another advantage related to how educational insights improved the manager's ability to build critical thinking into the learning culture:

The actual teaching program helped me to deal with difficult personalities. It gave me different insight into learning strategies... I think it has broadened our culture, so I very much trying get them [players] to take responsibility for what to do and then how they are learning. I think that's the big advantage. You also broadening your thinking. They're [educators] trying educating you to think more. Not just accept everything that's comes at you. (C3E)

The informal sources of broadening the managerial understanding referred to learning from other clubs and managers, reading about management, and the experience from working outside football. Whereas the selection of informing communities (e.g. partnership clubs), persons (e.g. mentors) and literature related to supply of knowledge, the experiences from working outside football referred to both knowledge and appreciation of the opportunity to work inside the football industry:

We worked outside [football]. We got to get up at six o'clock in the morning, not get home until six o'clock at night. So, we appreciate all we've got [inside football] and every day we're trying to translate that to the players. (C3E)

2.3.3.1.4 Summary (learning)

The overall learning-related findings indicates that managers use both formal, non-formal and informal sources of learning. The most common source seems to be informal learning. Although the current study do not intend to be a comparative one, it was hard to overlook the different attitudes between the English and Norwegian/Swedish managers to

formal training and non-formal education: The English managers seemed, in general, more extrinsically motivated than their colleagues from Norway and Sweden. The Norwegian and Swedish managers seemed more skillful in their approach towards self-directed learning. To understand these differences the current findings suggests that it might be useful to look at differences in educational backgrounds and the national football cultures. Whereas only one out of seven English managers possessed a university background (one year teaching program), six out of nine Norwegian/Swedish managers had completed one or more university degrees. Therefore it is reasonable to assume that there is a correlation between an academic background and the ability and motivation to think critically and learn. The result may also reflect national football-cultural differences regarding the status of academic education respectively.

Humbleness toward knowledge benefits the basis for improvements related to the managers work (Isberg, 2001). The resistance to academic rooted innovations among the English managers is in line with previous signs in the in the English football culture (Kelly, 2008a). Managers that lack the learning skills needed adapt efficiently, run the risk of being left behind (Mintzberg, 1973). This might explain why the vast majority of English Premier League managers in recent years are obtained from other countries, aiming to manage the trend of change toward modern football demands (Carter, 2006; Kelly, 2008a; Murphy, 2002).

2.3.3.2 Personal qualities

The general dimensions that relate to personal qualities comprise flexibility in defining ones role due to managerial qualities (1), person specific qualities affecting managerial operations (2), clear ideas about playing style and details in work (3), and man management competence (4).

2.3.3.2.1 Flexibility in defining ones role due to managerial qualities

The flexibility in defining ones role due to managerial qualities related to whether the manager was a football profession kind of head coach or more of a manager holding an overall club responsibility. The title ‘Manager’ or ‘Head Coach’ did not always describe their actual role. The manager’s interest and skillset seemed to influence more, as it emerges in the following quote:

I’m a football profession kind of coach. Not much of the other things around. I was at the training field [in a former EPL-club] every day as the responsible for the trainings. I had three coaches to help me: One goalkeeper coach and two others. So, I felt more like a head coach than a manager. (C9N)

Although the majority of the managers seemed to be mainly concerned about the football profession matters, some possessed an overall concern to their work. This related to player wage structures, budgets, interior and interactions with the community. Adoptions of an overall responsibly might imply more delegation of the work at the pitch, as described in the following quote:

I’m more of a Manager. I don’t really go full out in training. I don’t do all the training sessions. I leave that mostly to my coaches, because I like to watch and observe and see. I like to do some coaching once in a while, but it’s more important that I oversee things because I’m gonna make the decisions. (C5N)

2.3.3.2.2 Person specific qualities affecting managerial operations

Person specific qualities seemed to affect managerial operations due to different personalities, distinct managerial behaviors, and their passion for management. The personalities varied between the managers. One manager confessed that he was introvert and happy with his own company, which he assumed was partly the reason why he did not build

relationships to his leaders. Another perceived himself as naive in the sense that he would not limit himself in terms of sporting expectations. A third did not like to be told what to do, and a fourth had the strength that people liked to work for him. Small things seemed different from person to persons, as explained in the following quote:

I think it's the personality of the coaches. I've seen the knowledge of the game is very much the same, and organization, but small things are different from person to person. (C2N)

One similarity between the managers regarding their reasons for committing to football management apparently linked to identity. This involved being a part of the 'football family' as they had been since they were kids. One manager who was suffering of recently being sacked and therefore had to make the step out of the 'football family' for a period of time, seemed address his identity towards football as the main reason for returning into management:

I feel very privileged to spend the majority of my life in doing something I really enjoy. I've not done a day's work in my life. I have just done something that is...woke up and wanted to do every morning. I've not been the same as a player and a manager, u'know. I think I can. I think I'm decent in what I do. I wanna continue improving myself and that's through football...(C6E)

Possessing a strong football-related identity might partly explain why football managers keep going despite the culture of sackings (Bridgewater, 2010) and massive pressure. Further reasons to approach and maintain in the occupation are outlined in 2.3.3.2.4.

2.3.3.2.3 Clear ideas about playing style and details in work

One pattern found regarding distinct managerial behaviours was being true to yourself as a person, meaning being yourself and vouch for the role-related decisions and operations. Lack of self-awareness, role-awareness or ability to perform your role might lead to superficiality in work (Mintzberg, 1973). In other words: If the manager lacks awareness of himself or the way he operates, he will probably not be able to convince his followers. Other distinct behaviors affecting managerial operations referred to calmness by thinking rather than shouting, or by being demanding toward players to build the team. Further, one of the managers possessed a wide community involvement as an extended self-initiated responsibility. Another had never played football professionally which implied hard work without taking anything for granted on his way to become a professional football manager. The following quote describes how an involving appearance may shape the mood-state in work:

This is everybody's office. We sit here every day, show up at 8:30, always discussions. Seven men, discussing what's next, laughs of things and stuff and I'm very involving. I think no one can say anything else. Even more and more (involving).
(C8N)

2.3.3.2.4 Passions for managing

The final and most voluminous of the person specific qualities referred to the participants' passions for managing. These were recognized as the drive to learn, the love towards watching and being involved in football, the desire to improve in terms of results and promotions, the joy of seeing players develop, the excitement of important games and the desire to do the job well. The drive to learn was carried out by reading, seeking out to the world's best (football) practices and, as exemplified by the following quote, by being creative:

I'm driven by development. I'm driven by learning and I'm driven by creating something together with others and to make others better and of course to make myself better. So learning is the word for my drive. (C8N)

Such a drive to learn, recognized in the literature as self-directed learning (Nelson et al., 2006), as previously recognized among Swedish top coaches (Isberg, 2003), seemed present among the Norwegian and Swedish managers only. The English managers seemed more passionate by watching football and being involved in the game. This difference might be explained by the resistance towards academia embedded in the British football culture (Kelly, 2008a). While a non-formal (university) education was possessed by most of the participants from the Norwegian PL, only one of the English participants possessed a university education.

Another reason for being involved in football management, is already linked to identity in 2.3.3.2.2. Especially the lower league managers perceived staying involved in football as more appealing alternative than a life working outside football:

I do love the game. I watch it on box. Any game on the box, I watch it. I go and watch games. I love being involved to it. I don't want to go back to roofing or removal or whatever it may be. U'know, football is my game and that's what ultimately wanna do for the rest of my working days. (C2E)

The desire to win and promote, and the pleasure of seeing players develop and move on to bigger teams, was present across the managers' nationalities, and is previously discussed in relation to the nature of sport (Gammelsæter, 2013). Another frequently mentioned passion relates to player development. The following example gives insights in one facet of how a manager finds it rewarding to see players develop:

It can be very rewarding [seeing players go to bigger clubs] because you are working

with players, then they go on to better teams. You play a big part in that. You've worked with those players, you've improved those players, and they have made a real opportunity to be out in a better life. Those three [recently sold players] that are gone now will be made for life financially. (C1E)

Seeing players move on to bigger clubs made some managers happy, due to their care and perceived responsibility for their players' development. The pleasure in motivating others seemed to be the main driving force for this experienced Norwegian manager:

I love the matches because that is the important thing, but your biggest motivation is to seeing people develop. To see people be motivated, listen to you, do the right things and succeed. That is the motivation. That is the drive who got you; why you are doing this. (C2N)

The above examples of managerial drivers represents common patterns of passion among the participants. Despite the similarities, each individual seemed to have his own twist to his passion(s). The designation 'passion of football' was used by the participants about what is recognized in the literature as a positive social identity (Swanson & Kent, 2015; Todd & Kent, 2009) and the object of special interest within their job (Anagnostopoulos, Winand, & Papadimitriou, 2016). The last example highlights how individually embedded managerial interests might be:

The six last minutes of the [final league] game; I've never experienced such a mood at a football match ever. It was crazy and I had goose-bumps, and that that's a memory which is my motivation because I want that back. (C6N)

The findings suggest that managers involve in football and maintain their involvement due to their passions of football. The passions seem to depend on special,

individual interests or desires, such as winning, watching football, learning, seeing players develop, or to attain certain mood states. Identity, in terms of work in the industry they loved and knew rather than working outside football, emerged among the English managers. The (Norwegian and Swedish) seemed more driven by their passions to learn and develop. Despite the similarities in the findings, none of the managers had identic passion-profiles. This means that both key-industry stakeholders and managers advantageously can take account of the differences in managerial skills and qualities regarding the recruitment, development and support of current and future football managers. The findings also add depth to our understandings of why managers commit to a job, which previously is associated with inhuman pressure and unpredictability (Kelly & Harris, 2010).

2.3.3.2.5 Summary

The knowledge base, skill set and practice of sports management is distinct from management in other sectors (Chadwick, 2013), and a contextual understanding is needed to enable is needed as a basis for making informed operations (Gammelsæter, 2013). The issue of awareness regarding personal involvement and practice is previously emphasized as an important factor for managerial success (Isberg, 2001), probably because the manager needs to know who he is to appear in predictable ways to gain trust in his followers (Mintzberg, 1973). In this regard, the current study suggests that a reflected view upon the managers' individual identities and interests (named as passions) is an important part of facilitating self-awareness among football managers. There is little evidence that clubs and external associations (e.g. FA's and LMA's) employ thorough individual considerations in the recruitment, training and support of football managers (Kelly & Harris, 2010; Morrow, 2014; Murphy, 2002). The respective knowledge, capabilities and attitudes possessed by these key industry stakeholders regarding the managers' contextual needs is therefore worthwhile exploring. For example, the current results suggest that British managers seem to be more

open-minded than previously regarding involving people and to delegate responsibilities, which argues for support from employers and educators to enable managers developing skills in how to build autonomy-supportive working environments. An examination of these stakeholders' understanding and capacity to meet such needs is therefore important to evaluate with the aim to improve the existing supply.

2.3.4 Future challenges

A total of ten general dimensions emerged concerning the managers' perceptions of future challenges in the role (see table 2.6). To ease the reading, the findings are further presented under the headings football-cultural, organisational, and managerial challenges. Yet, an overall summary on the "future challenges" is presented at the end of the section rather than presenting separate summaries to each category.

Table 2.6: Future challenges related to football culture as seen by the managers.

1 st order themes	2 nd order themes	General dimensions
Ranking and qualifying system in Europe has changed (n=1) Increasing financial split between counties (n=1) Changes in player's expectations (n=1) Manager jobs due to agents work (n=1) The head coach role has changed (n=1) Finances is killing the game at lower levels (n=1) Increased demands to make sure clubs are run correctly (n=1)	Changes in football politics Changes in role related expectations and functions Increasingly tougher to run lower league clubs financially	Managing changes in the society/societies of football
Children's and youth coaches lack competence (n=1) Training small kids are important training for top managers (n=1) Managerial training and services do not meet the need (n=2) Employment of unexperienced people in coaching positions (n=2) Employment of unexperienced people in leading positions (n=3) Need a structure in Norwegian professional football (n=2) Lack of structure in Norwegian player development (n=1)	Inadequate preparations of coaches and managers Former playing career is the main attribute to leading and coaching positions Lack of structure	Inadequate preparation of coaches, leaders and players
Old range training doesn't stimulate players (n=1) Players don't kick on because of the standard of coaching (n=1) Coaches lacks knowledge of children's treatment (n=1) Culture is underpinning fear (n=1) Tradition of authoritarian management style in England (n=2) More uneducated players in England (n=1) Less engaged players in England (n=1)	Coaches lack knowledge of human treatment Authoritarian coaches Uneducated players	Traditional attitudes complicates player development

2.3.4.1 Football cultural challenges

The football cultural challenges dealt with managing of changes in the society/societies of football (1), inadequate preparations of coaches, leaders and players (2), and traditional attitudes that complicates player development (3).

2.3.4.1.1 Managing changes in the society/societies of football

Managing changes in the society/societies of football related to changes in football politics (e.g. ranking- and qualifying system), changes in role-related expectations and functions and the view that it has become increasingly tougher to run lower league clubs financially. This increasingly wider financial gap between big and small clubs, which has been addressed in previous research (Gammelsæter, 2013), seemed to put influence on the people involved. Whereas increased access to money seemed to make young players ‘soft’ and ‘pampered’, reduced access to money in the lower league sent a number of lower league clubs into administration. The financial challenges in lower leagues were stressed by a League Two manager:

Unfortunately, I think the decision in Great Britain eats everyone. Every club's feeling the pain. Finances is killing the game, certainly at the lower levels. (C2E)

The tendency to spend more money than the clubs can effort has previously been linked to the clubs' lack of strategic capacities (Lonsdale, 2004) in the face of the desire to win, progress and promote within the competitive game (Dejonghe & Van Opstal, 2010; Novak, 1976), suggesting that clubs that enable to work strategically will perform better in the long run than those who do not (Lonsdale, 2004). Yet, the discrepancy between perceived available finances and the job expectations, might cause distress in managers that never find an end to it or a manageable way to handle the situation (Selye, 1978).

2.3.4.1.2 Inadequate preparations of coaches, leaders and players

Inadequate preparations of coaches, leaders and players were addressed by some of the Norwegian managers. This related to the lack of competency in youths' and children's coaches in Norway and lack of structure in Norwegian player-development, acknowledging this work as important for future player quality. Some of the critique related to the perception that the formal coach training do not meet the actual needs, as elaborated in the following quote:

The Portuguese have a university education in most of their coaches, and in that way holds more than 100 or 200 coaches abroad that are educated at a university. (CIN)

The quality of the formal managerial education, delivered by the FA's within a structure predefined by UEFA, is further discussed in Study Two.

The culture of recruiting leaders and coaches seemed to be based mainly on a former player career. Similar to previous findings (Carter, 2006; Kelly, 2008a), the majority of the managers in the current study was gradually recruited to managers in a club they had played in previously. The findings suggest that there is still a culture of recruiting their own people in football rather than take a view of the broader possibilities. Recruitment of unprepared persons to leading positions might subsequently lead to unqualified decisions:

One of the major accidents for Norwegian football in the 2000 – century, when we employed very many skilled people [former players], but with no experience as a leader in leading positions, as coaches and sporting directors. That has set us back. (CIN)

A second perceived setback in Norwegian football related to the lack of structure in Norwegian football which was assumed to impair the quality of player development and thereby the quality of future players.

2.3.4.1.3 Traditional attitudes complicating player development

Traditional attitudes that the managers perceived as complicating player development in the English football culture related to the lack of knowledge to man management, authoritarian coaching, and uneducated players. The managers held that an old-range type of training did not stimulate the players, implying a need for something else to prepare future generations of players sufficiently:

The coaches can do the technical and tactical practice all day, but actually, the conversations that you have with children and developing what we call a growth mind set; how are we gonna do that? Lot of coaches can't do it. (C4E)

A culture underpinning fear was viewed as a challenge for the development of future generations of players. Two interesting notifications made by the managers were that there is no room for authoritarian coaches, referred to as “shouters”, in the English Premier League anymore. A Norwegian manager, holding a managerial experience from both the English and Norwegian Premier League, described a gap between English and Norwegian approach to coaching, and a former English League One manager added depth to this cultural issue:

I've been in Norway, I've been in Spain, I've been in Portugal, it's not that same fear. Culture [in England] is, you can't beat you lose. (C4E)

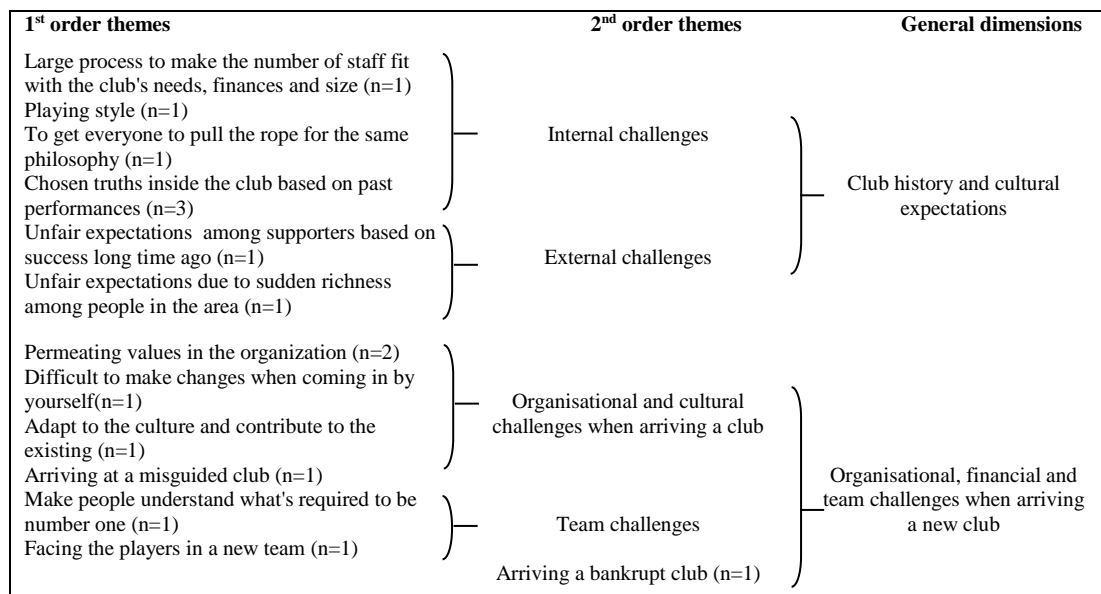
The fear-based management refers to British working class traditions, valuing physical abilities rather than intellectual, and the largely use of authoritarian leadership (Carter, 2006; Kelly, 2008a). Another culturally affected distinction addressed by a manager regarding Norwegian and English players related to their levels of education, suggesting that the levels of education had an impact on the players' interest of for example game analysis.

He believed that the English football's bias towards working class culture had something to do with that too.

2.3.4.2 Organisational (club) challenges

The organisational challenges referred to managerial dealings with club history and cultural expectations also in the future and the organisational, financial and team challenges met when arriving at new clubs.

Figure 2.7 Future organisational challenges as perceived by the managers.



2.3.4.2.1 Dealing with club history and cultural expectations

Managers experienced both internal and external challenges related to their *dealing with club history and cultural expectations*. The internal challenges referred to “chosen truths” embedded internally in the club regarding club ambitions or peoples’ behaviors, similar to patterns previously identified in top sports clubs (Isberg, 1991). For example, negative trends such as staffs’ backbiting, had a tendency to continue:

If you come in to a club who's used to lose, used to be down and used to have conflicts; these things will continue. (C2N)

The external challenges related to expectations, pressures and attitudes in the clubs' environments towards playing style, ambitions and behaviors. Football has often a profound impact on people (Chadwick, 2013), with the capacity to influence for good or ill (Chalip, 2006). The current study confirms the previous suggestions concerning that the link between a club and the local community can be quite powerful, as emphasized by the manager in one of the smaller Norwegian clubs:

If we didn't behave properly or did bad things, that would influence the whole place.
(C4N)

Based on previous knowledge and the current findings, club cultural knowledge and the awareness of the club as an actor in and a potential contributor to society, should maintain as an issue for managers and their educators.

2.3.4.2.2 Organisational, financial and team challenges when arriving a new club

Organisational, financial and team challenges are also expected for managers arriving at new clubs. These might inform the focus of the managers. For example, if the club is close to bankrupt when the manager arrives the challenge is to turn the financial situation to the better. Managers that arrived at misguided clubs felt the need to build values into work, which means creation of organisational change. Organisational change was not perceived easy to make on your own, which made the argument for bringing some of your own people when arriving. Superiority in convincing and/or selecting people to follow managerial ideas of how to shape the working environments and organisational culture, might be recognized in the literature as a transformational approach to leadership (McMahon, 2007). Alternatively, the manager could adapt to the culture and contribute to the existing, which relates more to a functional approach to leadership (McMahon, 2007). Whatever approach chosen, the challenge to plant a clear message of how to play seem expected from the playing

team. Given that a clear philosophy of how to play (Isberg, 2003) and that consistency in management is needed to enable efficient communication (Mintzberg, 1973), the awareness around managerial leadership is and will be important. Convincing players seemed hardest for the young and inexperienced managers that took part in the study, suggesting that the development of managerial consistency needs to mature. Processes that might facilitate the development of managerial consistency, involving awareness of the particular context the managers are aiming to face (Gammelsæter, 2013; Isberg, 2003; Oltedal, 2012, in transcripts), might therefore be an investment to be made by educators to increase confidence in football managers and reduce the risk for immediate failure.

2.3.4.3 Managerial challenges

Managerial challenges related to the building and maintenance of an effective club culture, implementations of long-term strategies to achieve success, the need of time to shape the club and play, manager recruitment challenges, and managing performance expectations.

Figure 2.8 Future managerial challenges as perceived by the managers.

1 st order themes	2 nd order themes	General dimensions
Building the player culture when winning (n=2) Building a culture implying that players practice on their own (n=1) Maintain culture related to club philosophy (n=1)	Building a player culture Maintained club culture	Build and maintain an effective performance culture
Building a talent development culture (n=4) Continuity in work and good human capital (n=2) A play of football culture (n=3) "Smiley" environments that reminds (staff and players) of success (n=3) Ways to cash in money for the club (n=3) Never cross the decided price limit when buying players (n=2) Clubs got to know their place in the "food chain" (n=7)	Developing human resources through longitudinally based strategies Adapt and develop sensible financial strategies in the club	Implementation of long-term strategies to achieve success
Takes time to create enough power (n=2) More influence in shaping the club as time goes (n=3) In most cases it takes time to build a team (n=3) Develop a playing style and never compromise with it (n=1) Takes time to build competence (n=1) Bringing pride in the club by changing the environment (n=1) Build a platform which brings balance into work (n=1)	Takes time to create the power needed to shape the club Building a team and a playing style is a process Takes time to build competence and create a real club profile	Managers need time to shape the club and play
Manager lacks knowledge about the club before signing (n=1) The club lacks of knowledge about the manager before signing (n=1) Lack of clarity about who makes the decisions (n=3) Amateurish way of recruiting managers (n=1) Leaders intervening in managers' responsibility (n=3) Manager's got an employment right after a year (n=1)	Working contracts lack clarity Unprofessional attitudes to working contracts demonstrated by clubs and managers	Manager recruitment challenges
Results (and related pressure) can change (n=2) The board will always expect in levels of results (n=1) Too high expectations compared to reality means problems (n=1) Control (decrease) expectancy levels to avoid that consequence thought will dominate (n=2) Signal to fans and media that you are making improvements (n=1)	Expectations in levels of results Initiatives to cope with high expectations	Managing performance expectations

2.3.4.3.1 Building and maintenance of an effective club culture

One of the efforts made by managers to improve is to build and maintain an effective performance culture. Player cultures seem easier to build in periods when the team wins, because the players are more responsive to critique after victories as argued in the following quote:

When we win matches, I've been critical to the players, because that's the moment to try to get into them. Because when you get critical when you are losing, they will easily feel sorry for themselves. (C2N)

A culture with the potential to meet future demands on the pitch implied that players did practice on their own. A maintained training culture needed a solid superstructure based on a consistent club philosophy, as described in the following quote:

A lot of that culture is our ex-players, players that has been around the club, who know the philosophy of the football club and can relate to what we are trying to coach and what we are trying to do... they are mentored by NN who is the Director of Football. (C1E)

Common understandings of the overall culture is previously suggested as a basis for consistency and success in work (Isberg, 2003; Mintzberg, 1973). Although the responsibility of sporting performance usually belongs to the manager, the above example testifies the Director of Football as the continuity carrier of the culture. The working mechanisms, patterns and practice in football clubs are previously linked to types of characters rather than following the formal structural lines (Relvas, 2010). This means that the role-responsibilities are likely to be exposed to internal adaptations due to the personal capacities involved.

2.3.4.3.2 Implementations of long-term strategies to achieve success

The long-term strategies referred to the development of human resources and the adaptations to the development of sensible financial strategies. Partly, the human resource development was about building a talent development culture. Some of the clubs built their brand upon a reputation of being successful in developing young players. This success was not made over night or by itself. The secrets behind it pointed in the direction of long-term focused work. Some of the key-words that emerged in this context seemed to be continuity and human capital. The following quote explains how these can give a competitive advantage for the club:

We have got something the other haven't: We've got continuity. Through that we get insanely good human capital, which sometimes may be more important than money.
(C6N)

Identifying and building core competences plays a central part of building organisational strategies (Gilmore, 2009), and within the concept of knowledge based economy, knowledge is likely to be the most valuable resource of all (Whittington, 2001). The knowledge of how to develop and keep the human capital in football clubs seems therefore as important as it seem demanding, given the cultures of frequent personnel turnover present in professional European football (Arnulf et al., 2011). In line with Gilmore's (2009) suggestions, the current findings indicate that clubs that enables to leverage strategies based on employees' informed and synergic responses on challenges, are possessing a competitive advantage in the dynamic market of professional football.

There were similarities between the clubs who succeeded in their player development and the values built in Leicester City FC in their journey to win their 2016 league trophy: To believe in players, play them, and make players believe in themselves was a part of the development process. Dearing to play entertaining football and being able to look behind the

results were elements of the environment. To build such environment, training coaches to understand the overall development culture and how to implement these ideas on the pitch was seen as important. Due to the range of previously research that suggest building motivational climates to make players grow (Høigaard et al., 2008; Pensgaard & Roberts, 2002), it is easy to follow the current managers' argument that the understanding related to building and maintaining motivational climates is important. The following quote describes the pride that might build up in the manager when the club succeed in its player development:

That's what I'm most proud of, all the players we have created here. If you look at the team, we have not bought one single player, except we bought X back. He is a local player. The rest of them have been wreckage from different junior teams about. At present day, nearly every one of them are national team players. The culture has been right, and we have worked in the right way all the time. I feel we are a bit different in terms of Norwegian football. (C8N)

The success in 'turning rocks turn into gold' seemed to interact with the club's financial strategy. This concerned not only saving money by producing your own players. It was also about selling players to bigger clubs and being clear about the price limit when buying players. Interestingly, several managers highlighted that the clubs had to know their place in the "food chain", meaning that each club need to find its niche. The chosen approach seemed to depend on club size, location and level of competition, which is in line with previous suggestions that the clubs largely have to accept and adapt to their respective place within the structure and rulings of European football (Dejonghe & Van Opstal, 2010). The following quote describes the financial side of player development and sale as a continuous process:

We do know our place in the "food chain". We know that our best players will

disappear, so it will be important to be in front to obtain new players. (C4N)

2.3.4.3.3 Need of time to shape the club and play

Managers addressed the need for time to shape the club and play, in terms of creating power and influence, and to build a team, a playing style, competences and a club philosophy. Although managers often chose to employ long-term processes in work, they seemed aware that they are not always given time in the football culture:

Most of the coaches are not in a club for very long. Not everyone is Ferguson or Wenger, which are able to shape the club in other ways than the football specific. (C9N)

When managers are given time, their influence seem to increase. One of the processes that needs time to develop is the building of a team and playing style. The building of the team could go fast depending on the present basis of players. If the basis is not in place, the process of team-development was estimated to take years. The following quote appoints a problem that quite frequently occur time to start and maintain processes meets the short-termism embedded in the football culture:

It's gonna take you between four or five years to build a youth policy. We get the kids. We start to build the team. We have good people. We believe in these people in good and bad. We're gonna stick with him [the manager]. Instead of five – six months – he's gone. (C7E)

The notion of the short-termism in the football industry as a challenge to the establishment and maintenance long-term processes in clubs has previously been related to the impatience to win and progress within a structure that does not allow everyone to do so (Gammelsæter, 2013).

2.3.4.3.4 Manager recruitment challenges

Manager recruitment challenges related to the lack of clarity in working contracts and unprofessional attitudes to working contracts demonstrated by clubs and managers. The managers often lacked knowledge about the club before signing, and likewise the clubs seemed to lack knowledge about the managers. The use of agents in the recruitment process caused further complications in the initiate dialogue (if any) between the manager and his employers. Although managers did appreciate clarity in who makes the decisions, the following quote gives the impression that working contracts are not always a matter of priority:

To be honest, I have not read my contract yet. I don't know, but I assume that I'm responsible for the first team and everything around the first team. (C8N)

Unprofessional attitudes to working contracts deemed demonstrated by both clubs and managers. Some managers viewed the recruitment process as amateurish. One manager held that the risk of failure would decrease if the manager was able to investigate the club's cash-flow, culture and the people involved before signing with a club, based on the idea that something that looks good from the outside might look bad from the inside. These reflections are in line with previous suggestions in the literature that possessing a club cultural understanding before taking charge is one of the keys to succeed as a manager (Isberg, 2003; Oltedal, 2012, in transcripts). For example, if the senior management of the club tend to intervene in the managers' responsibility, it might be the wrong club to sign. All the managers that held a managerial experience from the English Premier League emphasized the importance of the relation to their leaders. Unfortunately, not all owners paid attention to contractual allocations of responsibilities, as addressed in the following quote:

O [owner in former club] employed me and paid well. Then, I feel, it [first team

affairs] is my responsibility. Yet, he wanted to have the last word. He wanted to decide. (C5N)

The widespread of distrust between managers and their leaders in British football is previously described by Kelly & Harris (2010) from a manager's perspective. For a more comprehensive understanding of this specific topic, the senior stakeholder perspective and the premises for common understandings would provide additional knowledge to broaden the existing.

2.3.4.3.5 Managing performance expectations

Managing performance expectations was also perceived to remain in the future due to the nature and interest of the game. As mentioned in the previous section, expectations in levels of sporting results might grow too high inside the club compared to reality. If the club succeed in meeting its goals, the expectations for the up-coming season would increase. One manager who arrived a German club perceived the expectation as far too high compared to reality:

The expectations [inside the club] were far too high compared to reality, which means problems. Nevertheless, you've got to start building. I said to my wife, you don't have to unpack our things, cos we won't stay for long. I saw that. (C6N)

Initiatives to deal with high expectations related to controlling the internal and external expectancy levels by clearly signal the sporting improvements that are supposed to bring better results in the long term. Still, when the results change, the related pressure seem to change, again reaffirmed by a quote:

When you get the results everyone [inside the club] likes everybody. Everybody loves everybody. This is the key. If you don't get results, then get out! If you get the result,

stay in there! But be aware of that this can change. Sometimes you don't even know why. (C2N)

The pressures on managers due to expectations in terms of results and performances are previously discussed in relation to the win maximizing structure of European football and the nature of sport (Dejonghe & Van Opstal, 2010; Gammelsæter, 2013). The nature of these pressures seems unlikely change as long as the competitive structure remains, which forms the argument that each club and manager need to find ways to deal with them.

2.3.4.4 Summary (future challenges)

The findings related to the managerial perceptions of how both changes and resistance to change might cause challenges in their ability to conduct within the role in the future. The potential challenges for the future linked to cultural, political, organisational and personal factors. The increased imbalance of access to money between bigger and smaller clubs seemed to cause challenges for both rich and poor, due to the risk of developing superficiality in work. Superficiality in work related to the culture of recruiting football leaders based on a top-player background, leading to setbacks for future developments due to their deficient leadership competence. The findings identified an emerging move among the managers from an authoritarian style to a more player supportive style, based on the argument that players will not develop effectively in a culture that underpins fear. The clubs that enabled to establish and maintain climates for player development seemed to take advantage the process in terms of team performance and club finance. Further, the performance pressure embedded in the football culture seems likely to remain in the industry: Result expectations, poor attitudes towards working contracts, and unprofessionalism among club leaders (including owners) substantiates that managerial sackings will occur frequently also in the future.

The financial and organisational development of the industry has developed alongside with the public interest the recent decades (Lonsdale, 2004), implying that less

public interest in a club means less of the share. The current, and probably future, lack of consistency in strategic approaches in the top clubs (Lonsdale, 2004), indicates that there will not necessarily be a clear correlation between high or increasing incomes and sporting performances in the top leagues in the future (Gammelsæter & Solenes, 2013). To organize for success, the recruitment process is indeed important (Murphy, 2002), and one significant part of that process seem to be the potential of the professional relation between the manager and his leaders (Ferguson & Moritz, 2015). The findings suggested that there is no room for authoritarian manager style in the top leagues any more, which signals an ongoing change that might gain ground in lower professional leagues, and youth's and children's football over time. A change from old school management based on fear and dictation, as previously uncovered in the British football culture (Carter, 2006; Kelly, 2008a) toward a new school management that involves motivational climates and independent thinking, is widely supported in learning-related literature (e.g., Pensgaard & Roberts, 2002; Selye, 1978; Stelter, 2002). In line with previous related research (Gilmore, 2009), this means that managers and clubs that possess the will and capacity to implement a knowledge-based long-term approach to player development, are likely to get an advantage compared to their rivals in the future.

2.3.5 Discussion

The overall aim of Study One was to explore and better understand the role and function of professional football league managers. English and Norwegian professional leagues were focused to explore their perceived challenges and how they faced these. Further, due to the increased levels of financial, marketing, legal and administrative expertise (Kelly, 2008a) in most football clubs, a broader range of managerial expertise is called for by researchers (Kelly, 2008a) and practitioners (Relvas et al., 2010). In this regard, a particular focus of interest in this research was the underlying personal and environmental conditions required

to deal effectively with role related challenges (Carter, 2006; Chadwick, 2013; Gilmore, 2009; Kelly & Waddington, 2006). An increased awareness and in depth understanding of the contextual issues that these leaders face (Fletcher & Arnold, 2011; Fusco et al., 2015) is needed to give directions to manager related issues (Gammelsæter, 2013).

The results from Study One suggest that professional football managers employ a range of short- and long-term efforts with the aim to manage cultural, organisational and personal related challenges. The type and number of challenges differed, depending on personal perceptions and the conditions in the environment. The most recognizable difference in managerial philosophy appeared to distinguish between a holistic approach to management, meaning that the manager possessed an overall responsibility of the club operations, or a more traditional 'head coach' approach, meaning that the manager took charge of the first team matters only. The choice of approach seemed to be influenced by different matters; the manager's personal interest, the manager's standing within the club context, and by the managers' respective skills and qualities. Following a theory informed practitioner's reflections (Nesti, 2010), the manager's self-awareness around own identity and meaning in life informs the process of developing a managerial philosophy. When entering a club, this philosophy, or vision, should be clarified and adjusted to the views of the senior management to enable an effective working relationship (Fletcher & Arnold, 2011). Typically, the role of the manager appeared to be shaped both by the club context (e.g. culture, stakeholders, size, traditions, and finances) and by the manager himself. Some of the managers claimed that each club needed to find, and accept, its place in the 'hierarchy' in terms of creating reasonable strategies in the club, with reference to constraints within local, National and European football conditions, structures and cultures. In this context, several clubs had implemented, or tried to implement, customized strategies related to player development and

sales. Even though selling the best players to bigger clubs impaired the quality of the squad, the performance expectations often maintained equally high. The scales of performance related pressure differed, depending on the performance expectations in (staff, players, board) and around (fans, media) each club and the expectations created by the manager himself. Expectations in terms of results were not clearly specified in the working contracts, which is against recommendations in the literature due to the lack predictability and clarity it brings into the work (Murphy, 2002). The lack of clarity and significance of the contract, seemed to facilitate confusion regarding responsibilities. Managers happened to be sacked, for example by a SMS from the Chairman, often without clearly specified reasons.

The quality of managerial training was perceived differently among the managers. Some perceived the formal training, arranged by UEFA and the respective Football Associations (FA's), as rather slim compared to a University education, whereas others perceived it as demanding in terms of finding time, but also in levels of difficulty. In light of the findings it seem like a more thorough pedagogical training of coaches might turn out to be beneficial in speeding up processes that impair the quality of coaching and decision-making. In most cases, neither pedagogical skills nor financial insight are sufficiently prepared solely through being a professional football player, which (still) seem to be the main attribute to become a professional football manager in both England (Kelly, 2008a) and Norway. Without an understanding of the overrunning factors underpinning successful football management, such as leadership competence, cultural insight and self-awareness, sensible choices has shown harder to make (Fletcher & Arnold, 2011; Isberg, 2001; Nesti, 2010). It seems therefore imperative that managers and head coaches are self-aware and are able to determine the quality and efficacy of the strategies employed in their role. Given the different approaches to management across clubs and Nations, as extensively researched by Murphy (2002), van Uden (2004) and Isberg (2001), investigations of the overrunning

factors for managing effectively within football and sport organisations seems to constitute a more sensible direction for further research (Fletcher & Arnold, 2011; Fletcher & Wagstaff, 2009), rather than attempting to define the role.

In line with previous research (Bridgewater, 2010; Kelly, 2008a), the future as a manager seems judged by results and playing success. The short-termism side of the football culture placed distress in managers due to the fear of getting the sack. The managers seemed to represent one of the driving forces of the result-driven culture by putting pressure on themselves by aiming to improve upon every league position. Given the dynamics of competitive sport (Guttmann, 1978; McDougall et al., 2015), one might say that professional football is inherently producing psychological stress which has consequences for the managers working in it. The managers shared their views on the preconditions needed to achieve the desired development and result. Ironically (given the high turnover among managers), these typically relied on long-term processes regarding developing infrastructures, players, staff, and even themselves. Yet, in order to succeed in building efficiency and sustainability into work, role awareness and ability to maintain healthy relationships with their leaders, staff and players seemed vital. Both contextual factors (e.g. club size, cultures) and individual factors (e.g. experience, age) seemed to have an impact on their perceptions of challenges and adaption. This is in line with Seyle's (1978) suggestion that there are no ready-made success formula which would suit everyone. If there were, it would still not be a success formula because not all can win. In that perspective, the managers actually addressed differences and similarities in how they dealt with role-related challenges in order to make the most out of it. Whether the challenges pushes the manager to growth or pull him into trouble, seem to depend on how each manager is able to meet his challenges. Based on the findings one might argue that football managers often welcome their challenges as a source to learn and develop.

For further directions, key stakeholders' insights in their respective areas of impact on the managers' work might help broaden the understanding of the context in which managers operate. By exploring the key stakeholders insights and understandings of coinciding matters and relations to the managers, the current knowledge might be extended. A broader understanding of this context might be useful as a basis for further understanding in how to develop effective strategies for managerial coping, recruitment and preparedness.

2.3.6 Conclusions

In line with previous research, the current study suggests that the knowledge base, skill set and practice of football management is distinct from management in other sectors (Chadwick, 2013; Gammelsæter, 2013). The football-cultural impact on the industry seem to cause significant challenges to the managers' work, exemplified by poor attitudes toward working contracts, the eager to achieve short-term results and the frequency of managerial sackings. The professional relation between managers and the senior managers of the club seems important in terms of dealing with these issues. To manage team and players, a clear philosophy, delegation of responsibilities and involvement were considered as important. The issue of awareness regarding personal involvement and practice is previously emphasized as an important factor for managerial success (Isberg, 2001), due to the need of self-awareness to appear as predictable and gain trust in followers (Mintzberg, 1973). The complexity of the managerial occupation, and the need to learn quickly to avoid being left behind in a rapidly changing industry (Mintzberg, 1973), suggest that skills in self-directed learning is critical. This skill seemed best developed among the managers that possessed a university background. Given that managers are likely to face continuous developments and organisational change also in the future, the current findings suggests that the abilities to adapt and develop should be considered as a priority in future managerial training, support and development. In this regard, there is to date little evidence that club leaders and external

associations (e.g. FA's and LMA's) offers thorough programs for preparing managers sufficiently (Kelly & Harris, 2010; Morrow, 2014; Murphy, 2002). Further related research should therefore explore whether the respective capabilities and attitudes possessed by these key industry stakeholders meets the contextual needs in various phases of the managerial cycle (recruitment, employment, & termination).

Chapter 3 - Investigating the views on the efficiency of managerial training, development and support in England and Norway: A key-stakeholders' perspective

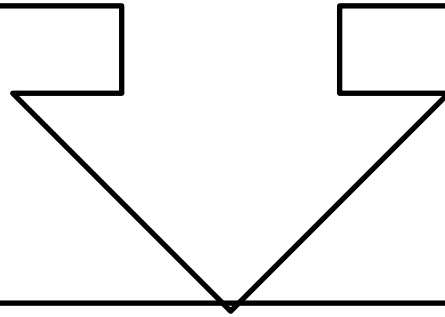
Chapter 2: Study One; Exploring the role and functions of professional football league managers in England and Norway.

Specific aims: To investigate the manager's perception of challenges within the role, how they cope with managerial challenges, identifying role-related managerial skills and qualities, examine the managers' preparedness to manage in the future, and considerations of the club's preparedness in meeting future demands.

Methodology: Semi-structured interviews were carried out with 16 managers holding a professional league experience. Content analysis procedures were employed to create lower order themes, higher order themes and general dimensions.

Findings: Unprofessional attitudes to recruitment and sackings seemed embedded in the professional football culture. The eagerness for short-term results was viewed as a threat to sustainability in work. Further, the ability to delegate responsibilities and adapt effectively to rapidly changing environments seemed critical to avoid loops of accumulating problems.

Implications: The recruitment process is important to bring predictability and maintainance into work, and should be approached more thoroughly by both managers and the senior management. A Higher Education/University Degree (e.g., teaching, coaching) seems to be a better preparation for the role as a manager than the formal UEFA-based training. This relates to the ability to adapt effectively to change.



Chapter 3: Study Two; Investigating the internal and external stakeholder views on the efficiency of managerial training, development and support in the managerial cycle in England and Norway.

Specific aims: To examine the managerial cycle by bringing in the internal and external key stakeholder views on the training, development and support of managers.

Methodology: Semi-structured interviews were carried out with 21 internal (n=18) and external (n=3) key-stakeholders. Content analysis procedures were employed to create lower order themes, higher order themes and general dimensions.

3.1 Introduction

The aim of the current study is to bring additional depth to key issues reported in Study One and to shed further light on the underlying factors that seem important in preparing managers to deal effectively with challenges they faced within the various phases of the managerial cycle. In this regard, internal (senior management, support staff) and external (FA, LMA) key-stakeholders' perceptions of the presence and quality of managerial training, support and development were investigated. A detailed description of the managerial cycle model which underpins and is used as a driving theoretical framework for Study Two is also introduced.

As mentioned previously, a handful of studies have explored different aspects of role related challenges faced by the professional Football Manager (Carter, 2006; Gilmore, 2009; Isberg, 2001; Kelly, 2008a; Morrow, 2014). Further, limitations are addressed related to how we should understand the managers role and offer a more accurate description of what the present football management actually entails (Morrow, 2014) and the skills needed to deal effectively with its related challenges (Chadwick, 2013). Arguably, an in depth understanding of the specific context of professional management is needed to give direction on how to train, support and develop managers in sufficient ways (Gammelsæter, 2013). Although the role related research focusing on professional managers' perceptions has recently increased, the experiences of stakeholders on the topic seem relatively untouched (Molan, Matthews, & Arnold, 2016; Noblet & Gifford, 2002). Yet, a few studies indicate that managerial perceptions are not always in tune with the key-stakeholders' involved (Ferguson & Moritz, 2015; Kelly & Harris, 2010; Kristiansen, Murphy, et al., 2012; Molan et al., 2016), and that relationships might change over time and conditions (Konter, 2012; Nesti, 2010). Given that these stakeholders' perceptions might have the capacity to extend the understandings emerging from Study One and the existing literature, these insights might

be beneficial for both the managers and the key stakeholders in how they should perform their responsibilities. An expanded awareness of the role and function of the manager might also provide a fertile ground for developing more appropriate programs and strategies for managerial preparations and operations.

Study Two aims to investigate the views on the efficacy of training, development and support in the managerial cycle in England and Norway from a key-stakeholders' perspective. More precisely, the study aims to investigate the perspectives held by internal (senior management and support staff) and external (LMA and FA) key stakeholders on the training, development and support during various stages within the **Managerial Cycle** (recruitment, employment & termination) in England and Norway. Given the managerial cycle model's driving theoretical position in this respect, the following descriptions are meant to explain how the model is understood and used throughout the chapter. The model was developed on the basis of the Study One results and was further customized to the Study Two research theme. The following figure constitutes the basis of the managerial cycle:

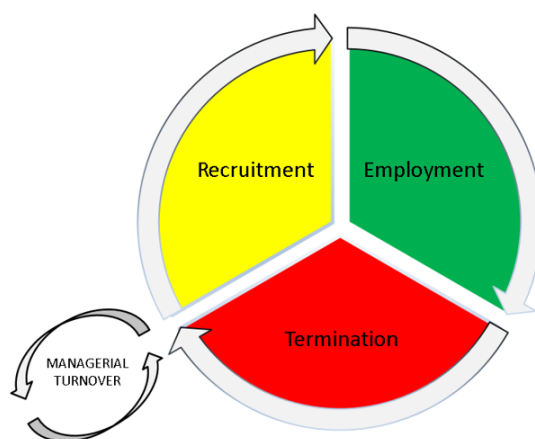


Figure 3.1: *The managerial cycle, involving the various phases of recruitment, employment, termination, and managerial turnover.*

To understand the model, certain aspects need to be clarified regarding the meaning and duration of each phase. In that regard, *recruitment* is about finding the right manager or club to sign, and the manager is *employed* from the day the contract is signed until the employment relationship is *terminated*. *Managerial turnover* is included as a part of the model due to indications that the frequent turnover in the industry has an impact on the individuals involved (Arnulf et al., 2011; Audas, Dobson, & Goddard, 1997; Bridgewater et al., 2011), and that the number of unemployed managers, for the time being, might cause easy supply of new managers to the clubs (LMA, 2015).

Based on signals from the managers that contributed in Study One, the support staff and senior management of professional football clubs were seen as crucial for the managers in enabling personal and team *development*. Significant discrepancies in the managers' views on how to sufficiently prepare for the role, also argued for a closer look at the quality of the formal UEFA-based *training* as seen by the internal (club) and external (providers of training) stakeholders. The various phases of recruitment, employment and termination were seen as particularly relevant for the rapid changing nature of European football. Study Two therefore intends to examine the model from a key-stakeholders' point of view. To customize the managerial cycle to the Study Two themes of investigation, the main objectives and participants were added to the model as illustrated below:

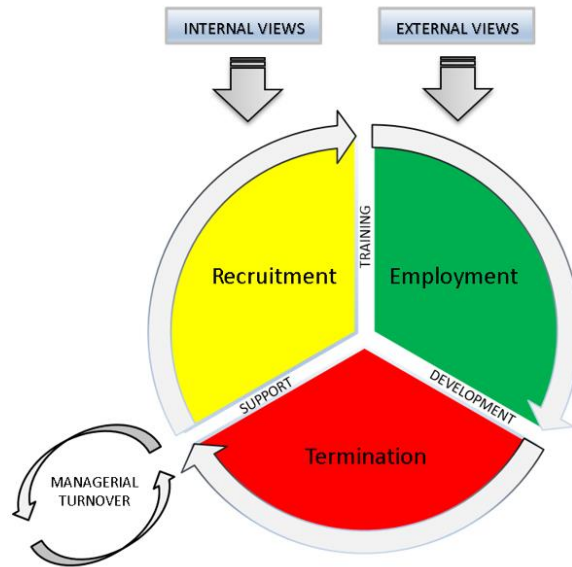


Figure 3.2: Key-stakeholders' views on the training, development and support of football managers within the Managerial Cycle.

As in most models, there is a need to address some of the limitations present. It is easy to think that the termination is actually an event of signing off. Yet, there are processes going on that involve stakeholders in different ways and at different stages. For example, in the termination phase the League Manager's Association are likely to support a manager during the termination proceedings and after, while senior club stakeholders might start the termination process months before. Therefore, the termination is considered as a phase in the current study. This means that the model allows both managers and stakeholders to stay in more than one phase at the time. For example, the senior stakeholders might work on the recruitment of a new manager before the current manager is sacked (or even knows he will be). Vice versa, an employed manager that negotiates without another club, might be involved in all phases at the same time. The reader should be aware of this simplification that is added to the model, and therefore rather use it as a support to keep track and overview as the study progresses.

3.2 Methodology

Similar to Study One, a qualitative position was adopted to broaden the context specific understanding (Hoepfl, 1997) of the efficiency of managerial training, development and support within the various phases of the managerial cycle. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with internal (n=18) and external (n=3) key-stakeholders. Based on previous findings and the study aims, the themes of the interview schedules were deductively developed. Therefore, the data should add richness and details needed to embody further meanings and cultural understandings that operates in the 'real world' from a key-stakeholder perspective (Denzin, 1997).

3.2.1 Sample

A total of 21 key-stakeholders to managers in English and Norwegian professional football leagues agreed to participate after being contacted and informed of the nature of the study. The sample included internal (n=18) and external (n=3) key-stakeholders with experience of training, development and support of professional league managers within the various phases of the managerial cycle. The participants possessed experience across the league levels, and their nationalities were English (n=10), Norwegian (n=10) and Swedish (n=1). Gaining access to key stakeholders within professional football normally presents major difficulties for researchers, because it is a "notoriously closed social world" (Kelly, 2008a, p. 401) and researchers are therefore often considered as outsiders (Kelly, 2008b). To obtain a sufficient sample, the co-author's involvement over the years as players, teachers and consultants within the professional game and the author's personal network of contacts eased the access to the target group. The managers were contacted directly or indirectly by phone-calls, e-mails or Short Message Service (SMS). Following recommendations for data rich individuals (cf. Jones et al., 2007; Thelwell et al., 2008), these participants had worked

professionally as internal or external key-stakeholders for a sustained period of time. The authors assured the participants anonymity by obtaining a consent before any data collection.

Table 3.1: The code, function, level of club, stakeholder status and nationality of the participants of Study Two.

Code	Function	Level	External	Senior management	Support staff	Nationality
EL1N	M. Training	NA	x			NOR
EL2N	CEO	NA	x			NOR
ISL1N	CEO	1		x		NOR
ISL2N	Chairman	1		x		NOR
ISL3N	CEO	1		x		NOR
ISL4N	Chairman	1		x		NOR
ISL5N	Financial Director	1		x		NOR
IS1N	Player's Manager	1			x	SWE
IS2N	Assistant Coach	1			x	NOR
IS3N	Physio	1			x	NOR
IS4N	Assistant Coach	1			x	NOR
EL1E	Director	NA	x			ENG
ISL1E	Dir of player recruitme	1		x		ENG
ISL2E	Club Owner	4		x		ENG
ISL3E	CEO	3		x		ENG
IS1E	Consultant	1			x	ENG
IS2E	Head of Performance	2			x	ENG
IS3E	Head of Performance	1			x	ENG
IS5E	Recruitment manager	1			x	ENG
IS6E	Head of Sport Science	4			x	ENG
IS7E	Head of Perf Analysis	2			x	ENG

3.2.2 Interview Schedules

Semi-structured interviews were carried out by using open-ended questioning, to avoid too much rigidity in the interview process (Dale, 1996). The structural basis of the interview schedules built upon the findings in Study One and covered the overall aim of Study Two. As such, the interview schedules can be considered as deductively developed because the sections are shaped by the managerial cycle. Yet, from an overall thesis point of view, the schedules might be seen as inductively developed because the model is developed on the basis of the Study One findings. Although adoptions were made related to the respective functions of the interviewees, all the interview schedules contained similar themes. The first section contained introductory comments and demographical information, such as how the key-stakeholder arrived their position and role related background. These questions were important to capture experiences and particular interests that might influence the way they

were performing their role and the way they were reasoning regarding the managerial cycle. The second, third and fourth sections focused on the stakeholders views on the training, development and support of the managers in the recruitment phase (Morrow, 2014; Murphy, 2002), employment phase (Kelly & Harris, 2010; Molan et al., 2016) and the termination phase (Arnulf et al., 2011; Bridgewater et al., 2011) of the managerial cycle respectively. Both current and prior experiences were examined. The fifth and final section, provided the opportunity for the interviewee and the interviewer to add comments, questions or clarifications.

3.2.3 Data analysis and Representation

The objective of the analysis was to develop an organized system of categories emerging from the unstructured data which represented the internal and external key-stakeholders' views upon the training, development and support within the various phases of the managerial cycle. The procedural guidelines were similar to Study One (e.g., Biddle et al., 2001; Côté et al., 1995; Relvas et al., 2010; Scanland et al., 1989) to enhance the credibility of the data analysis (Hanton & Jones, 1999). The subsequent analyses procedure of Study One, and thereby Study Two, is detailed in 2.2.5 Data Analysis and Representation

3.3 Results and Discussion

A total of 24 general dimensions emerged from the data analysis related the phases of recruitment (N=7), employment (N=13) and termination (N=4) within the managerial cycle. Each of the phases are further divided into themes. These themes form further structure of the sections (recruitment, employment, termination) respectively. The themes are introduced by a table containing the related general dimension(s), first order themes and second order themes. Quotes from the raw data are used as exemplars to substantiate the presentation of the results and offer contextual clarity and understanding. The results are thematically distributed and followed by discussions that synthesise academic literature. The chapter ends

up in an overall summary and discussions. The reader should be aware that not all stakeholders are represented in every finding. The tables presented in the beginning of each theme are useful to enable the reader to keep track of the distribution across the interviews. The findings should broaden, and bring additional depth to how we understand key-stakeholders views on the training, development and support during the various phases within the managerial cycle.

3.3.1 Recruitment

A total of seven general dimensions yielded from the analysis of the participants' views concerning the training, development and support within the recruitment phase of the managerial cycle. These were divided into four different themes: The external stakeholder views on the training and development of managers (1), internal stakeholder views on the preferred skills and qualities of a manager (2), internal and external stakeholder views on the relevance of managerial training (3), and the internal and external views on the process of recruiting managers (4).

3.3.1.1 External stakeholder views on the training and development of managers

The only general dimension that emerged from the current theme related to the *learning through managerial training and education*, which mainly concerned future managers' preparations for a managerial career. The content of the theme is outlined in the below table.

Table 3.2: External stakeholder views on the training and development of managers in the recruitment phase.

1 st order themes	2 nd order themes	General dimension
Teambuilding (n=1)	<div> <div>Formal training (n=2)</div> <div>Academic education increases the learning capability (n=1)</div> </div>	Learning through managerial training and education
Inspire, and deal with symptoms (n=1)		
Leadership (n=1)		
Club visits (n=1)		

There were two organised ways of preparing potential managers for the role from the external key-stakeholders point of view; through formal training and academic education. The formal training refers to the UEFA-based certification which is conducted by the FAs. In the current context, the UEFA-Pro training licence (Eggen, 2016) was viewed as more relevant, because it included team building, how to inspire and deal with symptoms or crisis, leadership and club visits. Team-building was considered as useful due to the significant proportion of responsibilities in the role concerning the man management, such getting the most out of people, managerial styles, pedagogy, communication and how to deal with the board. Another part of the training related to dealing with symptoms when things do not work. 'Primadonna management', which was an expression used by an external stakeholder, seemed to be the biggest issue in this regard. Club visits was also seen as useful to develop cases from the 'real world' into the learning process.

According to one of the external key-stakeholders, the academic (which is considered as non-formal in the current context) learning would increase the learning capability. It made the candidate ready for the 'journey', as specified in the following quote:

An academic education makes you able to think in rational ways: Academic, planning, all this things that you learn through studies. U'know: Reflect, analyze, evaluate, and put this into system and being aware about your own development by obtaining new knowledge and learning. You need that. (EL2N)

The UEFA-based training is identified in the current study as the formal training because the manager requires this to keep a managerial position in the top European leagues, which makes the academic approaches to managerial learning as the non-formal. This categorization is in line with previous literature in the field of football coach education (Nelson et al., 2006). Although neither the formal nor the non-formal training has been particularly valued in all football cultures (Kelly, 2008a), these represent the main options for organized training of managers. Informal learning, which refers to experience based acquisition of knowledge through a life-long learning process, represents the major source of managerial learning (Bloom et al., 1998; Coombs & Ahmed, 1974). Although informal learning is not directly mentioned regarding the current theme, the finding in the above quote suggests that academic education prepares managers for self-directed learning. Self-directed learning is considered as informal due to its unorganized nature (Nelson et al., 2006) and refers to the manager's ability to target, evaluate and make use of information to generate knowledge at personal and interpersonal levels. This quality helps the manager to keep track with developments in the industry, which is referred to as being critical within leadership studies (Collins, 2011; Mintzberg, 1973) to increase learning and to avoid loops of problems and piles of pressure when organisations become more complex. As such, the current finding is in line with the previous recommendations that managers should develop qualities in self-directed learning before entering the role. Not least due to the rapid changing nature of professional football (Lonsdale, 2004).

3.3.1.2 Internal stakeholder views on the preferred skills and qualities of a manager

Three general dimensions related to current theme. These involved the understanding between club and manager in the recruitment process (1), the understanding of how to lead and develop staff and players efficiently (2), and a holistic understanding and interest of club operations (3). All outlined in the below table:

Table 3.3: Internal stakeholder views on the preferred skills and qualities of a manager in the recruitment phase.

1 st order themes	2 nd order themes	General dimensions
Understand and accept club values (n=6) Playing attention to sponsors and audience (n=1) Clarify result expectations (n=1)	Arrive the club with a clear vision (n=2) Club cultural expectations (n=7) “Chemistry” between employers and man (n=2)	Understanding between club and manager in the recruitment process
A responsible personnel leader (n=2) Trust and empower your staff (n=3)	Approach to lead and motivate (n=5)	Understand how to lead and develop staff and players efficiently
Differentiated and open approach to players and staff (n=3) Need a methodology to get young local players through (n=1)	Approach to develop staff and players (n=4)	
Psychology (n=1) Physiology (n=1) Recruitment and talent ideas (n=1) Economical knowledge (n=1) Sports science (n=2) Exponent of the brand (n=1)	Understand the related disciplines (n=3)	Holistic understanding and interest of club operations
Politics (n=3) Club operations (n=3)	Organisational and political understanding	
Carry the overall sporting responsibility (n=2) A diverse coaching experience (n=1)	Understanding across levels of sporting performance (n=3) A desire for development (n=1)	

The general dimensions presented in the above table circles around understandings that are viewed as important by internal stakeholders in the recruitment process. The *understanding between the club and manager in the recruitment process* dealt with the clarity of the managerial vision when he arrived the club, club cultural expectations and the chemistry between the employers and the managers. The selection criteria seemed to be twofold, depending on the clubs intention to fit the manager into the club culture, or if the club aimed to bring in a manager able to change the culture of the club. The clubs that kept hold of their

culture and values, expected the new manager to accept and feel comfortable with these. The following senior club manager shared his view why this was important:

If you understand the way of working when you arrive, that you hire people that you believe understand this way of working, you get the continuity that is worth very much and has been very important for C [club]. This way of running it, and the discipline related to run the club. (ISL5N)

Another expectation related to the manager's will to pay attention to the sponsors and the audience. The Financial Director in a Norwegian football club referred to these stakeholders as the reason why the clubs can pay their managers, which made the issue important when recruiting managers. This finding is in line with researchers' ask for a wider range of expertise among managers to enable the development of sensible strategies in clubs (Carter, 2006; Gilmore, 2009; Kelly & Waddington, 2006). Given that the culture still is to view a successful player career as the main attribute to be a successful manager (Carter, 2006), a wider approach to the role might not be needed to get the job. Yet, when performing the role in real, the expectations among the employers might exceed the football specific knowledge. Therefore, there might be a need to oversee that candidates to managerial positions enable an understanding that the overall club operations and values matters, as addressed in the current findings.

The 'chemistry' between the manager and the employers was viewed as a natural part of the employment process. Without this social connection, the rationale for further cooperation was not considered to exist. The importance of this first impression between the candidate and the senior stakeholders is further explained in the following quote:

In the initial sales, it is important to have some kind of 'chemistry', because you need to work tight together and discuss a lot and insofar also fights. (ISL3N)

Two different approaches to the processes of recruiting managers seemed to dominate among the internal stakeholders: To recruit managers that come in with their own clear philosophy and aligns the strategies for the workforce after that (1), or recruiting managers that fit in with the existing club culture and strategies (2). The first approach might be recognized in the literature as transformational leadership, which involves profiled leaders that persuade those who resist change, selects people, and align strategies based on his own ideas (McMahon, 2007). The second approach might be recognized within the frames of functional leadership, that looks to recruit managers that can fit in to the existing club culture and be a part of the workforce (McMahon, 2007). Given that the two approaches seem to require different types of managerial skills and qualities, it is reasonable to suggest that senior stakeholders need to be aware of their desired approach to enable a thorough process leading to candidates that fit into the clubs' needs respectively. Furthermore, the current finding should bring additional information to the basic knowledge of how to recruit managers, as previously called for by Arnulf (2011).

The second general dimension related to the *understanding of how to lead and develop staff and players efficiently*. This involved the approach to lead and motivate, and to develop staff and players. The approach to lead and motivate referred to a responsible leadership that involved trust and empowerment of staff members. The importance of being a strong leader was emphasized, referring to a leader who shared and communicated his view in a way that enabled everyone (players and staff) to have a relation and ownership towards it. Leadership that involves building responsibilities in staff and players can be recognized as autonomy-supportive is seen more motivating than operating in a controlling manner (Bartholomew, Ntoumanis, & Thørgersen-Ntoumani, 2010a; Deci & Ryan, 2002; Mageau & Vallerand, 2003) given that the people involved are prepared to adapt to it (Isberg, 2003). Although previous research indicates that the Norwegian football culture is more adaptive

to autonomy-supportive management (Høigaard et al., 2008) than the British (Kelly, 2008a), the current findings did not indicate any unpreparedness for such initiatives among the support staff. This might relate to the overall high level of education among the participating support staff members. It might also indicate a gradual change towards more liberal attitudes among stakeholders within the football industry. Given that support staff members hold a high academic level, it is pertinent to believe that managers that possess the quality of thinking critically are better prepared to communicate effectively with them and utilize their capacities. The following quotation emphasize that it might be a demanding task to get across to everyone:

You're not only responsible for two or three staff members, but rather ten to 15, 20 or 25 in even bigger clubs. You are a personnel leader as well, due to the responsibility to put several people into work and within a structure and keep them motivated and make sure they will do as good as possible. (ISL3N)

To keep staff members motivated, it seemed important that they bought into the manager's philosophy and strategic direction. Further, the staff members were motivated by being empowered by the managers, meaning that they were given the ability to contribute within their area of competence. Such delegation of responsibility seemed to be valued, but to make the transactions of information between the support-staff and the manager effective, the relation between them was critical for the following reason:

From a sport science point of view you've gotta have a manager that trust you because you make him recommendations on training and you've gotta be tight into the manager. (IS3E)

The approach to develop staff and players involved holding a differentiated and open approach towards them, and a need for a methodology to get young, local players through to

the first team. This required the managerial quality of being flexible toward people based on an understanding of what he was looking for and give accurate feedback based on the observations, and being open, balanced and extrovert seemed to be a part of that approach. Performance appraisal makes it easier to provide employees with feedback on their performance, to determine their needs for further developments and to communicate their relevance and value to the organization (Veld et al., 2010). A member of staff describes the need for differentiation and openness in the approach to players in the following quote:

You need to know what your players are like. If you've got a player who needs somebody to put the arm around the shoulder or be nice to him or you got somebody players who need discipline...it's kind of knowing that you can be quite flexible in your approach. (IS5E)

Further, the need for a methodology to develop young, local players into the first team, concerned the ability to underpin the proximity and identity of the club as a part of the local and regional community. To succeed, a plan and methodology related to how to pick and play them seemed needed.

Given that understanding of how to lead and develop staff and players is important to a club, their selection of a manager still relies on the employer's awareness and ability to evaluate such qualities among the candidates. The general football culture of upgrading physical and masculine values (Cricher, 1979), and mistrust of the intellectual (Carter, 2006), tends to create one-dimensional identities among players (Gammelsæter & Solenes, 2013), which in turn has been recruited as managers and football leaders (Kelly, 2008). This self-reinforcing aspect of the culture might explain why shortcomings occurs regarding the understanding of how to lead and develop people effectively within the football industry. In human resource management (HRM) literature, there is expected an intermediate effect

between strategic climates and performance (Veld et al., 2010), which means that the possibilities in succeeding in the development of young, local players should increase if the club involves a plan and methodology in their work. This means that clubs that are conscious about their recruitment process, might take an advantage compared to less aware rivals. Players have previously suggested that the manager is an important creator of the motivational climate (Pensgaard & Roberts, 2002), and the use of positive feedback, as the preferred coaching behavior in the Norwegian PL (Høigaard et al., 2008). The differentiated approach to players and the delegation of responsibilities toward staff members, is in line with Mageau & Vallerand's (2003) description of autonomy-supportive climates. As previously suggested, the current findings suggest that there might be a change from the traditional culture of a controlling, authoritarian management style toward more autonomy-supportive management. This change might take time due to a potential lag of competence and awareness among managers and leaders regarding what is needed, but regarding to recommendations in the literature of motivation and HMS it seems like a change that is required to enable efficient development and therefore should be a quality to consider in the recruitment process.

The final dimension regarding the internal stakeholder views on the preferred skills and qualities in the recruitment phase related to a *holistic understanding and interest of club operations*. The dimension was divided into four 2nd order themes, emphasizing the understanding of related disciplines (1), the organisational and political understanding (2), the understanding across levels of sporting performance (3), and a desire for development (4). The list of related disciplines included the understanding of psychology, physiology, recruitment and talent ideas, economical knowledge, sport science and branding. The wider range of expertise among managers asked for by the internal stakeholders, is in line with researchers call to enable developing sensible strategies in clubs (Carter, 2006; Fletcher &

Arnold, 2011; Gilmore, 2009; Kelly & Waddington, 2006). One example of how economical knowledge among managers might be of a strategic value, is exemplified by a Norwegian CEO in the below quote:

[The manager should] obtain some economical knowledge, budgets etc., because in the very end this is about being structured about the money. If you understand something about the economical fluid is turning into this, you have got a much better prerequisite in terms of the factors needed to put together a supporting system, the playing squad etc. because you are addicted to the resources. (ISL3N)

The economic and political understanding related to the awareness of what is going on around you. To read the political game was seen by some of the internal stakeholders as important to be a good and able leader. An overall understanding of club operations was also considered as a criteria in a recruitment process by some internal stakeholders. This involved an understanding of how the club was organized and an interest regarding a variety of club operations. The following English CEO explains how lack of such interest and understanding might exclude candidates from getting the job:

We didn't feel that they [candidates] put their claim into the youth, into the academy, into the education, and therefore it wasn't the best fit. (ISL3E)

This links into the next theme that concerned certain stakeholders in the recruitment process, namely the understanding across levels of sporting performance. This involved an overall responsibility for sporting affairs and results, but also to hold a diverse coaching experience across age and levels.

The final theme related to the desire for development, which referred to the urge for continuous development:

I'm trying to [reflect that in those employed]. And the Head Coach the same thing:

The desire for development, but also contribute to challenge. (ISLIN)

The desire for development might be linked to self-directed learning as described by Nelson et al. (2006). It might also be linked to the ability to keep track with the developments in the environments to avoid getting into loops of problems, due to increased superficiality in work (Mintzberg, 1973). The quality of self-directed learning might link to the general mental ability, such as intelligence and cognitive ability, which is suggested to be the most valid predictor of future performance and learning among employees without previous experience in the job (Schmidt & Hunter, 1998). Following a transactional stress perspective, the manager's capacity to evaluate based on values, situational intentions, goal commitments and beliefs about self and world, and thus concerns meaning and significance to situations (primary appraisal), and subsequently to identify and determine the availability of coping resources when this is seen as needed (secondary appraisal), might be field of consideration when looking for the next manager (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). To increase the likeliness of hiring a manager that possess the desired skills and qualities, the awareness among the employers in predicting the future job performance of their candidates should be of interest.

3.3.1.3 Internal and external stakeholder views on the relevance of formal training

The current theme involved one general dimension only, referring to the *limited value of formal training to applied management*. The lower order themes of the dimension is outlined in the below table:

Table 3.4: Internal and external stakeholder views on the relevance of formal training.

1 st order themes	2 nd order themes	General dimension
Leadership and organisational focus (n=2)	Need for more training in various professional areas (n=3)	Limited value of formal training to applied management
Media (n=1)		
Pedagogical and mental skills (n=1)		
Finance (n=1)		
Don't learn about what you need at top-level (n=1)	Discrepancy between content of training and real needs (n=3)	
Formal training of managers at low standard (n=2)		

This dimension concerned the need for more training in various professional areas, and the discrepancy between content and real needs. The needs for more training involved elaborations of the professional areas of leadership and organisational focus, media, pedagogical and mental skills and finance. The discrepancy between the content of training compared to the real needs, referred to the mismatch between the content of the education and the job the manager is expected to handle. How to use the term 'practice', was also problematized. While UEFA use the term practice as time on the pitch, a responsible at an FA – level seemed to find the off-pitch concerns related to the managerial role as more useful:

UEFA calls practice as time on the pitch. To do the same thing at Pro [as in UEFA A and B] won't be super relevant, we think. (ELIN)

To organize on-pitch practices for Pro-License participants, did not make any sense when the participants actually needed more time to focus on the off-pitch related issues in

the program. Another discussion draw on the need to differentiate the content to the realistic levels the participants were expected to operate, as questioned in the following quote:

And it is a question – to which extent should we prepare our [coaches] on to the levels of Chelsea or City or Barcelona or Real Madrid? Versus our top level and the realistic step next. (EL1N)

Based on the above findings, the overall message is that the participants do not learn about what they need at the top-levels. A further message is the view that the formal training of managers are at a low standard compared to the real needs as reasoned by the following external stakeholder:

I feel that we are lagging back when it comes to an educational system that is good enough. Doesn't mean to criticize the FA's educational system, because that is a football coach education which is good, but that should be on top of a more traditional academic education. (EL2N)

The findings related to the current views appear to question the existing content of the UEFA-based education system, due to the view that it fails to prepare future managers for the role in realistic and sufficient ways. The critique relates to the disposition of the UEFA-Pro license programme and the lack of differentiation regarding the levels the candidates are supposed to operate at. The actual reasons for the lack of accuracy are hard to localize, but the overall responsibility to shape the structure and content of the programme to something more relevant, relies on UEFA. From a researchers' point of view, a wider range of expertise among managers (Carter, 2006; Gilmore, 2009; Kelly & Waddington, 2006) is called for. The view that a need for a university education to build upon might relate to the skill of critical thinking, which involves the skills to process new information and, based on intellectual commitment, using those skills to guide behavior (Elder, 2007). Given

that the ability to learn and develop continuously (Mintzberg, 1973) and the need for insights in various professions are emphasized as important by researchers (Carter, 2006; Gilmore, 2009; Kelly & Waddington, 2006), the current findings suggests that a revision of the formal training programme is needed to better prepare managers for the reality of their existence within the role of a professional football manager.

3.3.1.4 Internal and external views on the process of recruiting managers.

Two general dimensions emerged regarding the process of recruiting managers, which are divided internal (1) and external (2) stakeholder views on the process of recruiting managers, as outlined in the following table:

Table 3.5: Internal and external views on the process of recruiting managers.

1 st order themes	2 nd order themes	General dimension
	Process of preparing candidates (n=3)	Internal views
	Owner as the ultimate decision-maker (n=3)	
	No need to specify contracts (n=2)	
	Contract relates to the manager's role and responsibilities (n=3)	
	Managers need help to review and formulate the contract to avoid pitfalls (n=2)	External views
	Structure and details needed to clarify responsibilities and consequences (n=2)	

The *internal views* referred to the process of preparing candidates, the owner as the ultimate decision-maker, and whether it was needed to detail and specify managerial working contracts to increase the predictability of the working relationship. The process to prepare candidates seemed to differ between clubs. One approach involved to hire and develop an assistant coach who could take charge when the present manager left. Another

was to watch games with the candidate to investigate whether the candidate possessed an understanding that subsequently lead to further conversations. A third approach is explained by an English CEO in the following quote:

We have a clear criteria that we score applicants against and that will build up the short-listing. The further criteria for the interviews, and then we'll do a decision that is based on the scores. Now those scores are obviously weighted, because: Yes, we want the manager to embrace the shareholders or the stakeholders, but it is more important that we win football matches. Then you get a global score. (ISL3E)

In the recruitment process, the owner might be the ultimate decision-maker, because he represents the financial contribution into the club. However, there seemed to be a split between owners that allowed his employees to perform their roles and owners that micro-managed most club decisions. In the following quote, a member of the support staff in a Championship club exemplifies the latter:

The owner makes decisions both football based and business based, personal based, whatever it might be. (IS7E)

There also seemed to be a split in the internal stakeholder views regarding the need for specifying contracts regarding the aim to bring predictability into the working relationship between the employer (club) and the manager. Some listed the managers' responsibilities. Others could not see the need, because they felt clear around every issue in the employment process before the manager signed up. An assistant coach, who used to be involved in the recruitment process for his club, put it this way:

I don't think that specifying the contract is the right way of doing it. If you do, you are the wrong guy. (IS2N)

The second general dimension related to the *external views* on the process of recruiting managers, which referred to the managers' need for help to review and formulate contracts and to assist regarding the structure and details needed to clarify responsibilities and consequences. These associations encouraged managers to seek consultancy before they became appointed. This might concern the manager's position within the organization, who to report, responsibilities and financial limitations. Further the consequences should be structured in a proper way, and be clear related to consequences regarding termination of the contract due to a sacking or if the manager choose to leave. Payment was also viewed as a key issue that should be clearly outlined in the contract, and the following example offers an insight in why:

If your manager get 50000 £ a year. If you get promoted, they say we will give you 20000 £ in promotion. OK, great. We want to know; when is the date you will receive the 20000 £. Do I get it the next day? Do I get it in three months' time? Do I get it, u'know, wait till after the next season? (ELIE)

Although the external stakeholder views that a detailed contract is needed to avoid pitfalls and to clarify responsibilities and consequences, the internal stakeholder views were not as unambiguous. They might be less informed about customizing of contracts, or less interested. Previous research on managerial contracts within professional football suggests that the club's approaches and attitudes to the contract process might differ depending on national cultures. For example, managerial contracts in British professional football might be devalued to remain a flexibility regarding the development or termination of the working relationship (Kelly & Harris, 2010), whereas in Dutch football the contracts tend to be more specified in terms of the evaluation criteria (Murphy, 2002). Different methods are suggested to have significantly different validities for predicting the job performance of candidates.

For example, the interest and amount of education is suggested to have a low validity, while the combination of testing the general mental ability [GMA] and the integrity are considered as being both valid and of practical use (Schmidt & Hunter, 1998). From a functional leadership perspective, which views the manager as a part of a workforce that operates based on overall organisational direction (club philosophy), a certain flexibility might be needed regarding the role along with internal and external changes and demands (McMahon, 2007). Given the frequent sackings present in the culture of professional football (Arnulf et al., 2011; Bridgewater, 2006), it is understandable that the managers' associations recommend specified contracts. This might not be a problem in all clubs. Yet, employers (clubs) that have developed cultures of sacking managers as a part of their way of dealing with bad results (Arnulf et al., 2011), should not be too surprised if the manager proposes a specified contract. Whatever way, the knowledge of the recruitment of managers within the context of professional football is insufficient (Arnulf et al., 2011), which makes it harder to avoid pitfalls for both the employer and the manager. That does not prevent the advice of a contract that is clear in terms of payments, basic responsibilities and what evaluation criteria, but it means that the valid body of knowledge about what is the best managerial fit for each club is not yet available (Arnulf et al., 2011). For example, the current findings suggest that a manager that is good for one club might be less applicable in another depending on for example its culture and leadership approach. If the club is following a functional leadership approach (following a philosophy based on the club culture and tasks), the contract would possibly benefit from allowing revisions along with internal and external changes and club needs. In cases where the club employs a transformational leadership approach (creating a culture based on the managers philosophy) (McMahon, 2007), the contract would probably benefit from being less flexible due to the overall responsibility of the manager needing to be an transformational leader. The lived experiences of how the employment relationships

are considered to work out, are further explored in relation to the second stage of the managerial cycle which is the employment phase.

3.3.2 Employment

A total of 13 general dimensions yielded from the analysis of the participants' views concerning the training, development and support within the employment phase of the managerial cycle. These were divided into five different themes: Managerial training and development offered by external stakeholders within the employment phase (1), internal stakeholders' views on the conditions needed for effective support of managers (2), internal stakeholder views on the conditions needed for effective management (3), situational, organisational and cultural factors that influence managers (4), and internal and external stakeholder views on supporting (giving/receiving) the manager (5).

3.3.2.1 Managerial training and development offered by external stakeholders

The only general dimension emerging within the current theme related to *seminars to develop additional skills and re-certification*. The content of the theme is outlined in the below table.

Table 3.6: Managerial training and development offered by external stakeholders within the employment phase.

1 st order themes	2 nd order themes	General dimension
	Finance (n=1)	Seminars to develop additional skills and re-certification
	Health and well-being (n=1)	
	Coaching (n=1)	
	Law (n=1)	
	Managing upwards (n=1)	
	Projection to the media (n=2)	

The seminars were offered by the LMA's (League Managers Association and The Norwegian Football Coach Association) respectively, which explains the low number of participants commenting on the current issue. The courses reflected issues viewed as relevant for the execution of the role, often offered as masterclasses or seminars. The selection of areas seems to be in line with the calling for a broader range of expertise linked to managerial preparations for the role (Carter, 2006; Gilmore, 2009; Kelly & Waddington, 2006). Strikingly, the distribution of themes seem more congruent with what the FA representative argued would be a sensible disposition of the UEFA Pro-license themes involving more off-pitch issues. The reason might partly be linked to the LMA's closer relationships with the managers and thereby the knowledge of their real experiences and needs, but might also be a consequence of less constraints regarding the content of the modules compared to the UEFA-based courses. As such, the LMAs represent an important function in the supply of role related knowledge to managers. These stakeholders have therefore a significant responsibility in keeping track with the development of the manager-related areas of knowledge, and to work politically towards the FA's and UEFA with the aim to address the actual needs as seen from their members' perspective.

3.3.2.2 Internal stakeholders' views on the conditions needed to enable effective support of managers

Three general dimensions emerged related to the conditions needed to enable effective support of managers in the employment phase from an internal stakeholder's point of view: A clear and shared philosophy to enable the basis for cooperation (1), involvement of staff and mutual trust to avoid superficiality in work (2), and a direct and balanced relationship to senior managers to enable shared understanding and trust (3). The dimensions and themes are presented in the below table:

Table 3.7: Internal stakeholders' views on the conditions needed to enable effective support of managers.

1 st order themes	2 nd order themes	General dimensions
Direct communication to enable shared understanding (n=2) Value people (n=1)	Enable communication and share ideas to make people understand and buy into them (n=2) A clear football philosophy generates opportunities for precise support and reflective practice (n=1)	Clear and shared philosophy to enable the basis for cooperation
Keep the number of staff down (n=1) Need to communicate with manager to avoid passivity (n=2) Work through a few to avoid chaos (n=3)	Balance the number of contact points to enable regular and efficient communication (n=4)	Involvement of staff and mutual trust to avoid superficiality in work
A manager that listen (n=3) Value and empower your staff (n=1) Working for common good (n=1)	Make people feel valued and empowered (n=3) Trust needed to enable close working relationships (n=5)	
Keeping a distance to enable touch and right decisions when needed (n=3) Keeping a closeness to enable stable and good communication (n=4)	Balanced relation to and stable good communication to senior managers (n=6) Need senior managers to trust you are the right person (n=2)	
		A direct and balanced relationship to senior manager enable shared understanding and trust

A clear and shared philosophy was viewed as important as a basis for the communication and understanding needed to make the members of support staff buy into the present ideas. People needed to feel valued, and seemed to prefer a direct communication with the manager to be updated on what he was thinking and to make sure that the messages were clear, as expressed by in the following quote:

I've been with managers and coaches that weren't even acknowledging [when] you said good morning to them as they walked past you, and that can't be producing. I think what comes with that; it's gotta be communication, because everyone kind of gotta know what you are thinking. (IS1E)

The view that a clear football philosophy generates opportunities for precise support and reflective practice, started with a real understanding of the manager's football

philosophy as a generic thing. The clearer idea, goals, methods and process, the easier to support. Such clarity enabled integration of sports science into the managers training philosophy and playing philosophy, for example by making the training ground a better place for reflective practice.

The communication between the Head Coach and the team is suggested to have an positive impact on player and the team performances in elite environments (Isberg, 2003). Lack of such dialogue, due to more authoritarian managerial behaviours identified as dominant in the British football culture (Kelly, 2008a), might prevent productivity regarding elite team performances (Isberg, 2003) and, as the current results suggest, internal support staff productivity.

The second general dimension that related to the current theme referred to the *involvement of staff and mutual trust to avoid superficiality in work*, emerged through the following 2nd order themes: Balance the number of contact points to enable regular and efficient communication (1), make people feel valued and empowered (2) and that trust is needed to enable close working relationships (3). Balancing the number of staff was viewed as important to enable communication between the manager and the support staff rather than passivity caused by the absence of regular communication. Depending on the situation there seemed to be an understanding among the support staff that the manager sometimes had to communicate through a few persons rather than everyone to avoid chaos. One way of increase the possibility to enable internal communication was to limit the number of staff, as explained in the following quote:

He [the manager] doesn't want to a bigger staff because he wants to have touch appointments with every staff member in every given day. U'know, because he wants to make them feel like connecting with them. (IS1E)

Making people feel valued and empowered was viewed as an agent for everyone's best. This was enabled by having a manager that listened, valued and empowered his staff. The ability to listen was viewed as a criteria for successful management, because it felt more enjoyable to work for someone that the staff members could talk to and who kept an open-minded approach to what they could bring, as elaborates in the following quote:

That's key for me come in to work every day is that I feel valued, empowered and the ability to go on with your expertise. (IS3E)

The last factor that needed to be in place to enable an interconnected and productive workforce was trust. Trust allowed people to be less worried about internal backbiting, which made it easier to stay focused on their job and being creative in the knowledge that everyone is pulling in the same direction. The following quote gives words to the meaning of trust from a coaching team member's point of view:

You need to trust each other in a way that makes you understand that people need dialogues between them now and then without others worrying about what they are talking about. Like the most natural thing. That's trust. (IS4N)

Communication, involvement and trust seem to represent central elements in enabling productive interactions in the work around a football team. Touch appointments with every staff member allowed the closeness needed to exchange ideas, the involvement of staff made them feel valued and stay motivated, and trust formed the confidence needed to stay focused and creative in work. Most of the research related to the area of motivational and autonomy-supportive climates in team sport e.g. has examined the manager/coach – player relationship, rather than the manager-support staff relationship. However, these studies suggest that communication plays a central part in learning and performance related processes (Isberg, 2003), and that autonomy-supporting climates, involving opportunities

for initiative, and independent and non-controlling competence feedback, is preferred (Deci & Ryan, 2002). According to Veld et al. (2010), performance appraisal eases the process of providing feedback to employees on their performance to determine their needs for further developments and to communicate their relevance and value to the organization. As such, it is reasonable to believe that the mechanisms behind the support staff's and players' well-being and growth are similar. However, the competence among the involved might differ and influence the manager's approach. For example, a manager raised in a culture of authoritarianism is probably not able to understand nor follow autonomy-supportive strategies. Likewise, staff members would probably find it difficult to respond to an autonomy-supportive managerial approach if they did not possess any previous related experience. The managers cultural insights and skills to deal with cultural differences is therefore suggested as key to managers who go abroad (Isberg, 2003), but should actually be relevant to managers going into any club culture. Such considerations were made by Sven Göran Eriksson when taking charge in Manchester City FC (Oltedal, 2012, in transcripts), which according to Mitzberg (1973) should be a sensible action because people seem to oppose rapid changes, especially if they lack competence in the area that is supposed to change.

The final general dimension referred to the subject related to the importance of *keeping a direct and balanced relationship to senior stakeholders to enable shared understanding and trust*. The related 2nd order themes draw around the role balance between the manager and the senior stakeholders. A fruitful communication between them involved trust. Yet, the senior stakeholders seemed to be a bit ambivalent when it came to their relation to the manager. They recognized the need for closeness to enable a stable and good communication, but at the same time, some felt it was needed to keep a certain distance to ensure they were able to make tough and right decisions (e.g. sackings) when needed. Others

did not care about keeping the distance at a ‘professional’ level, because it was easier to talk about problems and probably turn them around at an early stage if the relation was close. The following quote exemplifies a CEOs’ view of facing the manager:

[It is] more about keeping a closeness [rather than keeping a distance]. It should not smell burning rubber when the CEO arrives. That you keep a stable relation and a stable good communication. (ISL1N)

The trust between football managers and senior managers was viewed as important, but in different ways. A common element seemed to be that they needed to be in line with their thinking, but that this thinking might differ across clubs and persons. In one club, the lifeblood of the manager depended on the belief of the chairman. In another, the owner, categorizing himself as a virgin to football, felt he had to trust the manager of the following reason:

It is in line [manager’s and owner’s way of thinking], but it’s as well, as I said, you would agree with your lawyers. I don’t need to agree because they are the experts. I’m happy with that. In every business you need competent people. We can’t do all, do we? (ISL2E)

Although the above owner trusted the manager, a widespread lack of trust between managers and directors in British professional football was found by Kelly and Harris (2010) from a managers’ point of view. The finding from the current study are not equally uniform, suggesting that the cooperation between managers and their senior management might also work well. However, both the competency and the strategical thinking among the involved might differ. Both trust and distrust might, at least partly, be explained in the lack of competency: A manager might lack the understanding of senior stakeholders’ concerns and vice versa. Isberg (2003a) suggest that both cultural and self-awareness are important factors

to succeed as a football manager. The current findings suggest that such awareness is as important also within the senior management of the club. Getting the club on the same page and to gain a shared understanding is vital for success, but it involves competence (McMahon, 2007). Given that the ability to draw a common thread out of many differing subject areas is arguably one of the most important skills of a manager (McMahon, 2007), this knowledge should be an area of interest both in the training, mentoring and recruitment of football managers and senior club stakeholders in the future.

3.3.2.3 Internal stakeholder views on the conditions needed for effective management

The current theme involved two general dimensions, referring to the ability to track and follow changes in the environments (1), and the creation of environments that produce performances (2). Both dimensions are explained more into details in following section.

Table 3.8: Internal stakeholder views on the conditions needed for effective management in the employment phase.

1 st order themes	2 nd order themes	General dimensions
Self-development regards learning (n=2) Consult persons or environments with useful information (n=1)	Bring in inputs from the outside (n=2) Systematize data processing and identify signals from the noise (n=1)	Ability to track and follow changes in the environment
Keep a stable relation and open communication (n=3) Desire to try something new if operational climate is hard (n=1) Players and staff need a feeling around their environment (n=1) Renew group dynamics to suit the culture (n=1) Make players and staff want to work (n=4)	Create motivational environments (n=5)	Create environments that produce performances
Managers should enjoy and deal within their frames (n=3) Both structure, discipline and interpersonal Skills are needed to produce results (n=2)	Defined frames for work and inter-personal abilities are needed to perform (n=5)	
Competence and qualities within the club (n=2) Clear philosophy and time needed to progress (n=2)	Creating an environment for efficient development (n=3)	
Need the capacity to customize training (n=3) Allowing impact on and ownership to own operating parameters (empowerment) (n=6)	Customize approaches and responsibilities individuals and roles (n=7)	

The *ability to track and follow changes in the environments* related to how information could be brought in from the outside (externally to the club) (1) and to the skills of systemizing data processing and identify signals from the noise (2). Although the latter theme consisted only one quote, it still has relevance for the ability to support the manager as it refers to the degree of awareness among the support staff in relation to their work. Such as condensing information into valuable signals for the manager, as highlighted in the below quote:

It seems quite clear that they [support staff] was never challenged: So a lot of my work is to check and challenge: What does that do? What does that mean? So, we brought in a new Head of Science that we felt had the skillset to cope with it. I think that's right through up the industry: I think a lot of data are being produced but it's

about identifying a signal from the noise. (IS7E)

The above quote indicates that there might be a significant lack of ability within professional clubs related to identifying and communicate valuable information from the support-staff to the manager. Arguably, to bring in inputs from the outside, through self-directed learning or by consultancy, might be valuable for different reasons. First, to clarify the basis on which the data analysis are supposed to focus (e.g. what are we looking for?). Secondly, to enable the communication line between the manager and the staff. Third, as clearly communicated in the above quote, to enable the support staff to ‘pick the raisins’ out of the porridge. This means that the overall process to identify signals from the noise involves a shared understanding, dialogue and skills. Role awareness and ability to direct focus related to new information within professional football is previously addressed by researchers within the area of managerial ability in learning and customization (Isberg, 2003; Nelson et al., 2006). The importance of clarity in work and being hand on with your tasks is previously discusses on the basis of related theory (e.g., McMahon, 2007; Mintzberg, 1973). The ability to possess self-directed learning skills and handle their own development as managers seemed to be expected among Norwegian senior managers, as revealed from the following quote:

Currently, that’s the way [manager responsible for updating himself] it has to be at ours. We have not got the resources to hire a sporting director that sort of can keep track on how things are moving. We’re not there at the moment. (ISL4N)

Given that managers need to keep track and follow changes in their environments to avoid superficiality in work (Mintzberg, 1973) the current finding strengthens the argument that the training or education of Norwegian managers should prepare their candidates for the skills to face changes in effective ways.

The *creation of environments that produce performances* dealt with the creation of motivational environments (1), the defined frames for work and interpersonal abilities needed to perform (2), creating an environment for efficient development and customizing approaches (3), and responsibilities to individuals and roles (4).

The creation of motivational environments related to the importance for the manager to keep a stable and open communication with both senior managers and his support staff. Building such positive environments enabled players and support staff to have a feeling about their work. Sometimes it was needed to change the leadership style to enable the creation of it, or to remove players that were not culturally suited. The answers were not unison among the participants regarding what was needed to make players and staff want to work, because all people, including managers, are different and have different ways to inspire and create performances, as stated in the following quote:

I've seen managers here that probably have not any clear idea of how to play, but they create environments and they manage players that want to play for them and produce performances. So it might not be the most structured and disciplined performances that produce results, but it based on that players want to play for each other and wanting to play for the manager. (IS7E)

The study of the managers role in building motivational working environments for players, is carried out among Norwegian football players, suggesting that autonomy-supportive coaching is the preferred approach (Høigaard et al., 2008; Pensgaard & Roberts, 2002). The case in England has traditionally been biased toward working class attitudes, involving a more authoritarian approach to management (Kelly, 2008a). English players might be less prepared for adaptations to autonomy-supportive coaching (Oltedal, 2012, in transcriptions) due to the British culture of authoritarianism approach to management

(Carter, 2006; Kelly, 2008a; Parker, 2001). However, the current finding suggest that you might be skillful in most areas, but still struggle to get the best out of your team if you do not inspire your players and staff. As such, the participants were able to point at aspects they thought a manager should possess, but, despite their vast experience, they were not able to describe the ideal manager. Managers could be skilled in different ways. The following quote exemplifies what might happen when a manager, in the lack of knowledge of how to build team performances, used running to punish his players every time they got beaten in a game:

When it comes to a game on a Saturday they are not gonna play for you. In my view, because mentally they are not willing to put the “the hard mile” in so to speak and they can’t because they are physically exhausted. (IS6E)

The defined frames for work and interpersonal abilities needed to perform related to the view that managers should enjoy and deal within the frames set by the club. Some managers were clever in doing that. The frames could relate to budgets, but also to expectations in and around the club:

The philosophy of the club is playing philosophy and style. What should a C (club) team look like? What should it represent? And that’s linked I think with[in] the social fabric of the city: It’s people. It’s fans. If you don’t you can expect criticism. (IS2E)

These expectations in terms of frames and philosophy might relate to a functional leadership approach where the manager is seen as a part of a workforce that is supposed to focus on a the task needed from an organisational perspective (McMahon, 2007). To produce results both structure, discipline and interpersonal skills seemed important.

To create an environment for efficient development, the club needed competence and qualities. To build competence and qualities in the club, continuity regarding managers and key-stakeholders was viewed as important. By possessing high quality in the various aspects

related to training, but also by remaining the key drivers and the key goals as a part of the philosophy, the chance of winning games would increase. The following quote gives an example of how results on the pitch became better after the club owner brought competence into the board:

I brought in competence. Changed the board. We put in a lawyer on board and an accountant, myself. Competence in all those skills that made it complete. On the pitch we have got the skills. Everything else, we needed. Just see what have happened today [playing for promotion]. On the pitch, fantastic. Off the pitch – it was graveled down, the club. (ISL2E)

Clarity and continuity seemed needed both on and off the pitch to progress. For example, if the manager has no clear philosophy, it is very hard to relate it back and seeing progress. However, a clear philosophy does not help much if the manager do not last long enough to see the progress. A challenge for some managers coming into new clubs is to customize the pace of change to his employers, as exemplified in the following quote:

If you move too hard too quickly you can threaten them [CEO's]. Particularly if they are not experts in certain areas. But they like to think that they are, or they like to think that they are at the top of the tree, you know 'odd power'. (IS2E)

The above quote points at a problem that might appear when senior managers do not possess the knowledge needed to follow the manager's ideas, and thus lack the ability to make decisions based on a common understanding. A common understanding and trust are required to enable integrated communication within the club, which subsequently allows organisational efficiency based on long term strategies (Grigorescu & Lupo, 2015). “*The ‘how to’ is vital for success. Having the skill is one thing, getting it all together is another*” (McMahon, 2007p., 168). The issue is previously discussed in light of contextual awareness

(Isberg, 2003) and managerial consistency (Mintzberg, 1973). Regardless of the senior management's competence, these leaders are still powerful because they are the employers and thereby ultimately take the decisions in the club (Ferguson & Moritz, 2015). As such, the term 'odd power', which was used by the Head of Performance in an English Championship club, refers to leaders that make decisions despite their lack of contextual knowledge and that more competent people are available.

The ability to customize approaches and responsibilities to individuals and roles is another aspect of the environments needed to produce performances. This involves the capacity to customize training individually and for the team, and being forward thinking when it comes to periodization of training. From a support staff point of view these might be expected as basic considerations for optimizing performance and avoid injuries, but it all relies on a manager who knows the subject:

I don't think enough managers or coaches have that knowledge, expertise or education where they can weight up all the different components of a players performance. (IS6E)

One way for the manager to overcome own shortcomings and simultaneously motivate his support staff is to allow them impact and ownership to their operating parameters. In the literature this approach is called autonomy-supportive (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 2002). The ability to influence upon their own work was viewed both as meaningful and productive by the participants, regardless of how they were given the opportunity. The following two quotes exemplifies how the delegation might work in a Championship and Premier League club respectively:

Operationally we have made massive gigs [actions], because we've been able to change on a day-to-day basis at the training ground. One of the benefits of the owner

being in prison: Nobody resists you. (IS2N)

I wouldn't say that he [a former manager] understood all the parameters around sport science. I think he was intelligent enough to understand that there is a role. (IS6E)

3.3.2.4 Situational, organisational and cultural factors that influence managers

Two general dimensions emerged regarding situational, organisational and cultural factors that influence managers, which are facing changes in the club and industry (1), and cultural issues that counteract development (2). These are described more into detail in the following table and text.

Table 3.9: Situational, organisational and cultural factors that influence managers in the employment phase.

1 st order themes	2 nd order themes	General dimensions
Results affects managers' receptivity (n=1) Changed strategies based on the pressure to win (n=3) Reliance between finances and sporting success (n=2)	Internal change based on the pressure to win (n=5)	Facing changes in the club and industry
Shared philosophy to succeed in the long term (n=3) Change based on increased organisational structures and complexity (n=2) Changes made without scientific underpinning in lower leagues? (n=1) Evolution of the club based on facing the modern world (n=1) Evolution internally to gain sustainability (n=1)	Demands upon organizations in continuous change (n=4)	
Managers and employers do not understand each other (n=3) Culture of spending money (n=2)	Misconceptions between managers and senior management (n=4)	
Short term club visions compromise with the longitudinal (n=2) Don't tell about your weaknesses (n=2) Physical punishment of players (n=1) Manager does not get much correction along (n=1)	Short-term approaches based on previous traditions and practice (n=6)	Cultural issues that counteract development

Changes in the club and industry that influenced managers in the employment phase of the managerial cycle, related to two 2nd order themes. The first related to internal change based on the pressure to win. The second related to the demands assigned to organisations in continuous change. Lack of (desired) results seemed to affect the ability to adapt to changes internally in the club. For example, when the manager came under pressure, his receptivity to new impulses focus seemed to decrease, although it sometimes could be useful to do quite the opposite. When the focus narrows due to the pressure from the manager's environments, he seems less able to utilize the capacity of his support staff in an active and forward thinking way. This change in the manager's behaviour affects the people around him: They become a little bit less reluctant to challenge things, and a little bit more paranoid around what they are doing. Eventually it starts to pull apart; people refocuses on simple things and look for excuses to blame others. An experienced physiologist working under a number of managers at high levels, compared the situation to having trouble in a boxing fight without the ability to think rationally:

I guess people are like a boxer against the ropes; just probably don't remember it's only one way it's gonna go there. (IS1E)

Another issue to considerer is that strategies might be changed based on the pressure to win. According to participants, people in and around the club tend to get emotionally angry when the team is not performing better than then last season, or up to the expectations. An issue in the top Norwegian PL at the moment is about being the first team to qualify for the Champion League's group stage, due to the significant profitability involved. The first club to make it is likely to outdistance the rest. The situation creates an increased pressure to win the Norwegian league, which subsequently might influence the club strategies and budgets. Yet, the nature of the game although there might be a lucky winner who makes it,

there will potentially be a financial struggle among those who were beaten. The reliance between finances and sporting success was addressed by some of the senior management representatives. The European tradition, promoting open and win maximizing leagues (Dejonghe & Van Opstal, 2010), leads to problems of uncertainty and competitive imbalance. The gap between the result expectations and realism, reflects the nature of sport: Everybody wants to win and improve, but the unfortunately system will not allow all to do so (Gammelsæter, 2013). In this context, the uncertainty related to results and income combined with internal and external performance expectations, might have implications on the future club operations.

The demands upon organisations in continuous change, was distributed on how a shared philosophy might lead to success in the long term (1), change based on increased organisational structures and complexity (2), changes made without scientific underpinning in lower leagues (3), evolvement of the club based on facing the modern world (4), and involvement internally to gain sustainability (5). An understanding internally (club) based upon a shared philosophy seemed to have the potential to ease the work for the manager, because he would not be able to do everything himself as elaborated in the following quote:

These organisational [matters] actually are so complex and it's so difficult probably for a manager to do all of that. That's why he's got a lot of shared philosophy, and you got a lot people who will reinforce that philosophy in every opportunity. (ISIE)

The change based on organisational structures and complexity, referred to the development of the specialization of support, and the changes in coaching and coaches due to frequent managerial changes. One big Premier League Club stakeholder explained how the increased complexity of football clubs makes it harder for one person to take an overall club responsibility:

We have a huge number of staff outside of the football operations. We have a business operation operating in South London. We have a Hong Kong office for the Asian market. It's evolving all the time and it becomes more and more complex. In the future of how it works, no one person can manage across that whole operation. So this is where you get the in-fluid interaction of different departments. (IS3E)

The finding indicates that challenges might differ significantly across leagues, and thus that the skillset needed among managers might vary across league levels. One member of support staff in an English lower league club reported that changes in the club were often made without scientific underpinning, similar to culturally embedded operations identified within British football by Kelly (2008a). In terms of facing the changes in the modern world and to gain sustainability internally in the club, the 'evolution' based on interactions between the manager and the senior management seemed essential. The managerial impact might merge with the club identity and values and thereby shape the future directions of the club:

X [current manager] has got a really big impact on the future of how the club evolves. And of course, we also have a very strong identity and very strong values. So overall, I think this is an evolution in process. (IS3E)

The ability to respond to changes in the industry and change internally has previously been highlighted as important management issues in the literature (e.g, Isberg, 2003; Mintzberg, 1973). It has also been argued that the approach to development and change depends on the leadership style present (McMahon, 2007). The current findings suggests that the size of the club might inform the leadership approach, and thereby how the club evolves. For example, a functional leadership approach, involving a Head Coach rather than holding an overall club responsibility, seems like a necessary adjustment in the biggest clubs. Further, the manager need the skills to interact with key-stakeholders regarding internal

changes. This might mean to anchor changes in science if the support is scientifically based, or develop a shared understanding with the senior management as the basis for club evolvement.

The final general dimension related to the current theme concerned *cultural issues that counteract development*. These were divided into the misconceptions between football managers and senior managers and short-term approaches based on previous traditions and practice. The misconceptions referred to situations in which the managers and employers did not understand each other. For example, in the English top leagues, the understanding between managers and owners might be complicated as exemplified below:

Owners look at the managers as sports cars, but they don't seem to think about that it needs fuel and services and that it might be very hard to control. (ISIE)

In some cases the participants did not feel that the managers understood the owner. In other occasions, the owner did not understand the manager. A culture of spending money among managers was addressed as a second misconception, referring to spending money as a big issue in itself rather than spending based on a plan related to certain budgets. The spending could occasionally relate to emotional reactions to expectations in the environment:

The emotional part related to this [using money that you do not have to get results], demands from the environments, supporters, sponsors, and additionally board members and owners. (ILIN)

The short-term approaches counteracting with development, referred to short-term club visions compromising with the more longitudinal, a tradition of not telling anyone about one's weaknesses, physical punishment of players and that managers do not get much correction along within the employment phase. In the Norwegian PL the approach seemed

to turn to short-term due to worries of relegation, which again refers to football as an emotional business:

When they are worried about relegating and use everything on repairing and patching up to secure the Tippeliga [Norwegian PL] position for next year. Then this will compromise on the more longitudinal. (ELIN)

In Britain, a different short-term aspect appeared in the results. It seemed to be a culture of not telling anyone about your weaknesses. A similar description was given both by a Norwegian support staff member that previously had been working under an English manager and from an English external stakeholder, who further explained why:

Football is unusual, because it's... Use the phrase 'the last refuge to paranoia', u'know: Don't gonna tell you about my weaknesses because you might be after my job. (ELIE)

A similar attitude has previously been identified by Kelly & Harris (2010) among British managers, suggesting that a lack of trust internally might prevent the interactions needed for internal developments to find place.

Another topic from English lower league football was, as previously mentioned, the use of physical punishment of players after a loss, intentionally to make them mentally stronger. This view seemed to be rooted in the manager's belief that his players were mentally weaker compared to the players back in the days when he used to play himself. As such, the following quote indicates that such old fashion attitudes contradicts both interactions with more up-dated support staff and are counterproductive in terms of building performances:

If the players didn't win on a Saturday they will come in and there will be physical

training sessions for the rest of the week leading into the next game. He [the manager] felt that would be the best way to prepare players for those games, but “surprise, surprise”: We had lots of injuries. Lots of players that were carrying fatigue into games and therefore the performance in a game was a lot lower than you would like it to be because the players were exhausted. (IS6E)

Previous literature has suggested that physical punishment of athletes has no fortunate effect on their motivation (Weinberg & Gould, 2003). However, there are reasons to believe that the example represents a traditional practice among several British managers based on a culture rooted in the working class society that reproduce attitudes and working patterns by informal learning (Carter, 2006; Kelly, 2008a). Further, there might be indications that managers are not challenged by their staff and leaders, although evaluations might be needed to create a developing practice within the club:

[There is] no real culture for that [evaluate managers] in the football industry, which means that the HC doesn't get much correction along. (EL2N)

The overall findings that related to the situational, organisational and cultural factors that influence managers in the employment phase seemed manifested in the cultural understandings internally (e.g. beliefs, pressures, traditions). In professional football, such beliefs and practices are continuously challenged by demands and developments related to the sport. These abilities to initiate change, adapt to changes, and interact internally to enable the club to evolve seem important. Partly, the evolvement of each club involved different operational practices depending on size and level. Yet, in line with Mintzberg (1973), keeping track with developments seemed needed for all to avoid superficiality in work. To gain an internal consistency, a shared understanding between the involved to enable development-directed interactions seemed to be needed. A shared understanding is

previously emphasized as a basis for building trust and enabling integrated communication in organisations, which is suggested as crucial to implement effective long term strategies (Grigorescu & Lupo, 2015). These internal interactions in the current study seemed, in most cases, to build upon a shared philosophy and the knowledge to enable understandings across professions. Yet, despite all these things in place, everything might be turned upside down after a period of bad results. The current results therefore suggests that situations when the pressure increases, the internal interactions that normally ensure developments within the club are put on hold. According to Mintzberg (1973), loops of problems will be caused when the manager is no longer able to keep track with developments. Given that loops are more likely to occur among managers that are not able to stay consistent in their work, being consistent as a manager (aware, clear, and predictable) should increase the likeliness to stay clear of problems.

3.3.2.5 Internal and external stakeholder views on supporting the manager

The stakeholders' views on supporting the manager related to five general dimensions: The enabling of continuous updates of club directions and competence (1), supporting the process of player recruitment and development (2), providing emotional/psychological support (3), developing mentoring services (4), and managerial ability and will to translate messages and communicate (5). Each dimension is thoroughly described and discussed in the following table and sections.

Table 3.10: Internal and external stakeholder views on supporting (giving/receiving) the manager in the employment phase.

1 st order themes	2 nd order themes	General dimensions
Look into future directions for the club (n=1) Recognize what it takes to promote and stay there (n=2) Allow people to work professionally within their functions (n=2) Develop a clear media strategy (n=1)	Preparing for organisational development (n=5)	Enable continuous updates of club directions and competence
Lack of time and money prevents support-staff developments (n=1) Hard to coach in a different language (n=1) Few people in small clubs (n=2)	Limitations in the efficiency of support (n=3)	
Reports on players and games (n=3) Freedom to recruit players within the budgets (n=3)	Financial flexibility in player recruitment (n=5)	Supporting the process of player recruitment and development
Character recruitment (n=2) Educate and challenge young players (n=1) Provide performance services and use the right players (n=2)	Ensure that the right players come in and develop right (n=3)	
	Player management and mentoring (n=1)	
Dealing with details around the managers work (n=3) Travel insurance free of charge (n=1)	Take the pressure out of managers (n=4)	Providing emotional/psychological support
Clear and open communication (n=1) Confidential helpline (n=1)	Abilities to speak freely (n=2)	
	Somebody to talk to and learn from for younger managers (n=2)	Developing mentoring services
	Aiming to build a pool of mentors available (n=1)	
Willing to listen and communicate to gain a shared understanding (n=5) Reluctance to listen and cooperate (n=3)	Variations in managers' attention to staff members (n=6)	Managerial ability and will to translate messages and communicate
Variations in the interest and understanding of operations and finance (n=1) Variations in the managerial understanding and use of infrastructure (n=2) Inclination towards habitual working patterns (n=2)	Individual variations in how to understand and utilize support (n=5)	

Enabling continuous updates of club directions and competence related to the preparations for organisational development and limitations in the efficiency of support. Looking into future directions for the club was viewed as one way to prepare for organisational development, capturing a long-term focus in terms of planning and contracts to gain predictability and stability into work. If the future planning focused on promotion, this

implied a recognition of what it takes to stay there. A club owner described how the club would eventually prepare for promotion:

We're gonna put a new pitch down, fixing things, put it on a prize, working for the council to make sure we've got the permissions. (ISL2E)

Allowing people to with their specialities (professions) within their function was seen by some senior management stakeholders to facilitate organisational development. This involved that board members mainly concerned about finances and strategy, and that practical matters seen as important for the sporting performance were operationalised:

They're [managers] are control freaks. They wanna manage the kitchen, the canteen, the laundry, kit-man, things like that. Basically, we operationalise that, so all falls under the stadium manager. (ISL3E)

The last example of ways to help the manager to save time and energy was to develop a clear media and communication strategy, which reduced the problems with media.

Three aspects of limitations in the efficiency of support were mentioned by the participants. The first referred to how lack of time and money prevents support-staff from developing themselves, because the time for attendance at courses or seeking out expertise was at the end of season when there were nothing left in the budgets. Secondly, the language might represent a limitation for a coach, as explained by a Norwegian coach in the following quote:

I had to coach in English all the time, which felt a bit humiliating because when you're coaching in English it becomes hard because you miss the spontaneity. You have to plan what to say all the time. The flow in the communication deteriorates and the explanations becomes less precise. When the explanations are not precise, you

get stops in the play, which have an impact on the overall session. I felt that I just completely lost it. (IS4N)

Third, the limited number of persons working in small clubs means that the manager might get very little help compared to the situation in bigger clubs. The amount of responsibilities placed on each support staff member is therefore likely to limit the possibility to specialize. The following quote gives insight into the wide range of responsibilities that might rely on an assistant coach, in addition to the coaching on the pitch, in a small club with few people:

[I'm responsible for] team analysis of our games and individual analysis. I also present an analysis of the opponent the day before a game and linked to tactics. I have got a GPS responsibility, all of logistics for U-19 and first team. I'm responsible for the most of practical issues. Scouting of course, not full responsible but still significantly regarding the players we recruit. Follow-ups related to the status of U-19. Meet new players, give them a lift, and get them to training every day. A lot of every-day logistics. (IS2N)

Supporting the process of player recruitment and development referred to financial flexibility in player recruitment, ensuring that the right players come in and develop right, and player management and mentoring. The support related to financial flexibility related to preparing reports, scouting, material, game tickets and maximum prizes regarding potential players to recruit for the manager. For some clubs this involved freedom to recruit players within the budgets. For other clubs, being too budget oriented did not appeal, due to the dynamic nature of the industry. Therefore some clubs seemed happy to let the manager exceed the budget on player recruitment as long as he could refer to a similar amount of income. Such extra income might for example relate to player sales or tournament bonuses.

Regarding player recruitment, the internal stakeholders viewed three aspects as important: Firstly, it was important to recruit the right characters. These players should fit into the long term strategy of the club and thus represent the next generation of players. Secondly, young players needed to be educated and challenged by the club. The education related to club values and players were developed by possessing a culture of challenging players and ensuring discipline and hard work. Third, unlike the smaller clubs which were limited by having too many responsibilities per person, English PL teams provided performance services which helped young players on their way into the first team:

You have a Head of Performance ensuring that we manage that talent with fully performance services and you have an Academy Director and a Head of Coaching that are ensuring that we're using the right players to play for the first team. (IS3E)

The final aspect of support in the process of player recruitment and development referred to player management and mentoring, which was about taking care of new players that arrived at the club. This work involved helping the players coordinating practical issues on and off the pitch to enable them focusing on football straight away. Yet, the player coordinator might function as mentor for these players, due to the close relationship that develops when helping a young player through a critical moment of life. This experience is further described in the below quote:

With the experience as a former player I'm [player coordinator] able to talk football "that way" in addition to my main functions. I joke about being the club's hobby psychologist. (IS1N)

Emotional/psychological support was provided by taking pressure out of managers and offering the ability for managers to talk freely. Pressure was taken out of the manager by dealing with details around his work to make it easier for him to make decisions. One

example might be to organize everything around the travel if the manager would like to stay overnight ahead in front of an away game. Another way to take pressure out of managers is to ensure their security in terms of insurance, as exemplified in the following quote:

We [LMA] buy services for our members. All our members, for example, have personal travel insurance, free of charge. (ELIE)

Concerning the ability to speak freely, the LMA offers a confidential helpline for members that face difficulties. Strategies to ensure a clear and open communication was also found within some clubs, although not always. One entrance to succeed in being honest to each other internally was to be clear that the responsibility was shared when the manager was struggling, and then talk to him on that basis to help him. Especially in the British football culture, as drawn by Kelly & Harris (2010) and reinforced by the research by Molan (2016), lack of trust between internal stakeholders might prevent the ability to speak freely, which argues that there is a need for a confidential helpline.

Another service that involves trust, and which is currently is building up, is *mentoring services*. The idea is that young managers might need somebody to talk to and learn from. According to the stakeholders from the manager's associations, experienced or senior manager often want to share. The following quote gives an impression of which areas the mentoring might cover:

We're talking about the non-technical issues that maybe the people learn by experience. Some of the thing that I say can be thought by non-forward people, the obviously man management as well. How do you deal with things? Time management is a big thing as well. (ELIE)

Non-forward people refers to people that are resigned, or for other reasons are not after the manager's job. Trust seems needed to enable the open relationship required to

enable learning. Distrust internally between stakeholders in British football clubs (Kelly & Harris, 2010; Molan et al., 2016) might make it difficult to come across to football managers with mentoring services unless they hold a non-threatening position regarding the manager's job.

The managerial ability and will to translate messages and communicate represents the final general dimension regarding the views on managerial support in the employment phase (and referred to two 2nd order themes). The first related to variations in managers' attention to staff. The managers' willingness to listen to and communicate with their support staff was viewed as needed to gain a shared understanding of the work. Yet, some managers seem to possess a reluctance to listen and cooperate. The reluctance could, as identified by staff members, be caused by power struggles or when the manager was in a squeeze between contradicting interests. For example, when a physio recommends a key player to rest, the number of injuries or the importance of the game might affect the decision. Another example is managers arriving at new clubs who do not trust staff members that they have to take over:

Everything I [assistant manager] did, seemed wrong. Not good enough. He [the new manager] wanted it like this and this and the one who came in as a player developer did not do his job. He took my functions all away. Within two and a half week the players didn't see me as an assistant coach any more. (IS4N)

The second 2nd order theme related to individual variations in how managers might understand and utilize support. There seemed to be variations in the interest and understanding of club operations and finance. This related to the difference between managers that tended to be interested to the first time affairs only, compared to the managers that held an overall perspective in their approach, as exemplified in the following quote:

The fascinating thing about it was the managing team coming in with the idea to run

the club and bring it forward. They were very easy to ask as long that they saw the value in, for example, meeting sponsors. (ISL5L)

Variations were also found in the managerial understanding and use of the infrastructure. Each manager was seen as certainly unique in the ways they used of support and how intensely they used it, depending on how open they appeared in dealing with different ideas. The challenge for managers in dealing with the number of staff and their competencies in bigger clubs, and the need for managers that possess the needed required capabilities to understand and make use of their staff, are further explained by the following quote:

Nowadays the infrastructure around these guys (managers) is incredible. I just think: It's like a computer in it. U'know, if you've got a five year old computer and you trying to re-Window 16 on it: It just doesn't happen because the processing power is not big enough... (ISIE)

Along with the questioning the managerial 'process power', one might also ask whether the infrastructure around the manager at times might grow too big. The England rowing coach, Jürgen Gröbler, asked himself, when he realized that the increased number of experts coming on board after a period of sporting success, and hence increased finances, actually impaired the performance because it disrupted the rowers from maintaining their already successful working routines: Does it make the boat go faster? In this particular case it was needed to bring the infrastructure back to a functional level to protect his rowers from too many impulses and inputs. Similar evaluations might sometimes be useful to carry out in professional football as well, not least in the higher leagues where the finances allows extensive infrastructures to develop. Although the infrastructure should be kept at a level

that makes the team play better, the size of it and types of support it should cover might differ depending on the needs of the team and manager's ability to understand and manage.

The final 2nd order theme referred to managers' inclination towards habitual working patterns. This related to the tradition of recruiting former players into managerial positions, which was suggested both to enrich and limit their rationale for decisions as managers. From a physiotherapist point of view, there might be an advantage that the manager understands the importance of investing in players' health. From a leadership point of view, these managers might be carriers of a culture that is not moving along with the developments in their internal and external environments:

They are the managers. They make decisions and some of those decisions might be right and some of them might be wrong. I think sometimes they are based on their own experience. The manager's experience of knowledge of when he was a player.
(IS6E)

The dominating culture of making judgements based on previous playing experience as a sufficient preparation to the managerial role is previously discussed by Kelly (2008a), arguing that isolation from external management influences makes the actors involved ill-prepared. The ability to deal with highly distinct and often unique challenges (Chadwick, 2013) is suggested to require a flexible and open approach to new knowledge (Isberg, 2003) in order to keep track with developments (Mintzberg, 1973). The flexibility refers to the ability to critically target the information needed to develop, which relates to the managers awareness of the needs at a cultural, organisational and personal/individual level and his skills in self-directed learning. The importance of cultural and self-awareness (Isberg, 2003) and self-directed learning (Nelson et al., 2006) is previously discussed by researchers in the context of learning in professional team sport coaching. The current findings suggests that

these abilities are important also for management in the context of professional football. This means that the experience from being as a former professional football player might be an advantage, but not at all a sufficient preparation for the role demands of a manager.

3.3.3 Termination

The last phase of the managerial cycle is the termination phase. As previously explained this phase might appear differently to stakeholders, due to their respective functions. For internal senior stakeholders, the process might start months before the manager's contract is actually terminated, whereas for external stakeholders the process might start just before the termination and might continue for a period of time. That is why the termination is viewed as a phase rather than an event in the current study. A total of four general dimensions emerged from analysis regarding the participants' views on the termination of managerial working relationships, which focus on the following: Sacking might lead to personal development for managers (1), influence of managerial turnover on club development (2), decreased support internally (3), and increased support from manager associations (4). These general dimensions are divided into two themes which constitutes the section's headlines and tables.

3.3.3.1 External and internal views on the influence of managerial turnover on personal and organisational development

Two general dimensions yielded regarding the influence of managerial turnover on personal and organisational development. These referred to the views that sackings might lead to personal development for managers (1) and to the influence that managerial turnover might have on club development (2). These are outlined and elaborated in the following table and text.

Table 3.11: External and internal views on the influence of managerial turnover on personal and organisational development.

1 st order themes	2 nd order themes	General dimensions
Chance of newer work in the industry again (n=1) You need the experience to develop from it (n=1)	Hard-earned experience that managers might learn from (n=2)	Sacking might lead to personal development for managers
No sufficient internal processes related to sackings (n=1) Building relations to keep the job (n=1)	Sack related preparations (n=2)	
Reports on players and games (n=3) Freedom to recruit players within the budgets (n=3)	Balancing short-term managerial and long-term club desires (n=4)	Influence of managerial turnover on club development
Hard to build for the future without a long-term vision and continuity (n=3) No job satisfaction in always waiting for the next change (n=1)	Organisational reactions related to managerial changes (n=3)	

The view that *sackings might lead to personal developments for managers*, seemed to be quite common in the culture, although just a few were able to explain why. The sack might be a hard earned experience involving the chance of never working in the industry again. To make use of this experience as a manager, required a return into managerial duty. The nature of developing from such experiences was elaborated by an external stakeholder:

When you recapitulate and analyze: Why did this happen? You start putting the bricks together, incidents and episodes along, and you realize that there were some weaknesses in this system which made this. The weakness is partly about people around that you feel you cannot fully trust. (EL2N)

The above explanations refers to an extended awareness that develops based on reflections, which enable the manager to take precautions next time. They might also help to explain why distrust and suspicion develop in a culture of frequent managerial changes. Sufficient processes to prepare for sackings were not included in managerial training (if

possible to develop at all), but the advice to building relationships to internal (club) senior stakeholders is emphasized in the following quote:

We ran a course the other day of managing upwards: Managing up to your board, to how you deal, how you project yourself to the image, how you project yourself to the media (...) It's important that you develop relationship with the board and the media to keep the job, and it's a situation of a lot of people are just focused of football the whole time. (ELIE)

Along with the argument for developing the relationship with the board, the above quotation sheds light on the specific context of professional football that involves external pressures linked to the massive interest in the game. Strong internal relationships might help or might even be crucial to deal with distractions and pressures from the outside. The importance of developing relationships to the club owners or their representatives to be able to keep the job over time has previously been emphasized in regards to professional (Ferguson & Moritz, 2015) and semi-professional (Molan et al., 2016) football management. Alex Ferguson suggests that the understanding of why being responsive to the senior management is important is developing along with age and experience (Ferguson & Moritz, 2015). This means that young managers should be made aware of this issue to potentially avoid pitfalls caused by lacked awareness.

The *influence of managerial turnover on club development* relates to the balancing of short term managerial and long-term club desires, and organisational reactions related to managerial turnover. The balance of perspectives referred to the importance of maintaining club values and investments despite managerial changes, due to the short-term pictures that might be possessed by managers as explained by a Norwegian CEO:

For us, as a club, it is about balancing this often more short-term picture of the Head

Coach or Manager possess, like what might optimized 'my' results, and thereby 'my' CV, against the desire for good results by the club also in the long run. (ISL3N)

The above quote takes into account that managerial changes appear frequently, but not always because the manager is sacked. Some managers also aim to move on to bigger clubs, and balancing interests between the club and the manager might therefore be an issue. Not all of the clubs represented in the current study based their operations on a long-term philosophy, but rather changed philosophy depending on the manager's ideas. When these clubs developed cultures of frequent managerial turnover or changes in ownerships, this led to certain organisational reactions. From a support staff point of view, it was hard to build for the future without a long-term vision and continuity. Firstly, because changes makes the support staffs jobs insecure. If the owner would like to sell, he might make the organization slimmer in order to make the overall costs look low. Moreover, when the new manager arrives, he might evaluate the need based on his personal ideas of what is needed. When it comes to organisational development, frequent changes in leadership did not seem to be the ideal prescription:

Clearly the last two-three seasons, there has not been no clear progression of the department. It has just reacted to change. (IS7E)

The unpredictability that follows managerial related to job insecurity and discontinuity for staff members, seemed to have a demotivating effect, as further explained in the following quote:

From all departments' point of views it's very much a case where there is a chance that everything can change. Waiting for the new person to come in and that's when the direction starts and then build up relationship again. (IS7E)

The negative effects caused by lack of continuity in work, within the context of professional football management, has previously been a subject of investigation by researchers (e.g., Arnulf et al., 2011; Bridgewater, 2010). The current findings suggests that continuity and clarity in work is needed for organisational development. To overcome the challenge of managerial shifts on continuity, some clubs seem to base their operations on organisational values rather than managerial ideas. For example, a League Two club based their operations on values embedded in the local community of the town, claiming that they would rather relegate than compromise with these values. Therefore the choice of manager should fit to the club values and local expectations of how to behave and how to play football. Other clubs, as exemplified by the previous quote, changed their philosophy every time a new manager arrived, meaning that the club sustainability and values relies on the manager's durability and ideas. These two different approaches to leadership might be recognized in the literature as functional leadership (club driven approach) or transformational leadership (manager driven approach) (McMahon, 2007). Both approaches are likely to work in professional league football clubs. Yet, the awareness among senior managers regarding their club approach and the club needs is crucial to recruit the right managerial profiles. Likewise, the manager needs to consider personal abilities towards the organisational culture of the club before signing. As such, personal and cultural awareness in the recruitment phase among managers (Isberg, 2003) and senior stakeholders might reduce the risk of frequent managerial changes and thus loss of continuity in work. Clubs that possess a culture of sacking managers (Arnulf et al., 2011), as addressed by the former Leeds United manager, Uwe Rössler (Winehouse, 2015), might therefore lack awareness around their own leadership.

3.3.3.2 Internal and external support (or lack of)

The internal and external support, or lack of support, involved dimensions dealing with the decreased support internally (1) and the increased support from manager associations (2) in the termination phase. These are further outlined and explained in the following table and text.

Table 3.12: Internal and external support (or lack of) in the termination phase.

1 st order themes	2 nd order themes	General dimensions
Support falling apart internally due to lack of success (n=4) External pressures makes leaders feel they have to decide (n=3) Club leaders don't know how to approach sackings (n=1)	Support is falling apart due to lack of performance (n=5)	Decreased support internally
Lack of basis for cooperation (n=3) Loyalty to the manager or the club? (n=1)	Club and manager wants to go different ways (n=3)	
	Legal services to deal with employment issues (n=1) Pay for medical premiums (n=1) Assistance help to end the employment relationship (n=1)	Increased support from manager associations

The dimension of *decreased support to the manager internally*, referred to the lack of successful performances and the disagreements that might appear between the club and the manager regarding further directions of the club. When results are lacking, the support seems to fall apart at different organisational levels. According to stakeholders working close with players, the players will never be a homogenous group in such situations. Some will support the manager, while others will strongly disagree, and the discussion will go on within the group. Among support staff level, there might arise an intrapersonal conflict regarding whether their loyalty should follow the manager or the club. When the performances steep and everyone in the club is suffering, the situation seem to have a massive influence on the internal working relationships:

It's a matter of time if it's gonna happen [manager getting sacked], because I've seen exactly the set behaviors in people (...) They're [support staff] like 50 % one, and then one of the certain where any creature goes. This week we just felt that. (IS1E)

The quote describes a situation in which the internal support of an EPL-manager is falling apart. The support from club leaders also depends on the manager's ability to create performances. Despite every possible external factor to blame and although these are true, the club is still dependent on the manager to succeed, as further elaborated in the below quote:

What happens in almost every case is that you don't deliver. And you might ask, what's the reason for that? Which might be several factors, and often complex. You reach a point where we ask ourselves if this is the right person. Does he add energy to the organisation and enthusiasm every day, or do we fall with the rest? (ISL3N)

External pressures might also make leaders feel they have to decide, perhaps at an earlier stage than they would like to. Media and fans were viewed as enormously strong stakeholders in that respect, as explained below:

If the media has decided, you are, in nine out of ten cases, done. You've got no chance. (ISL3N)

The club leaders feel uncomfortable with the media pressure, but they are also feel uncomfortable in getting into a position where they have to get rid of the manager. Although they do not like it, it is still a responsibility that they have got. An external stakeholder experienced in dealing with such cases, describes how the club leaders might feel it is hard to find the right approach:

What often makes this difficult is that they don't know how they can approach it. They

are just not happy with the HC. And they know about the results, but results compared to what? (EL2N)

The above finding suggests that clearly defined performance criteria in the manager's contract might be useful for both the club leaders and the manager in term of justifying the decision of ending the working relationship. This is similar to Murphy's (2002) findings regarding how such agreements might be a part of the recruitment process. The performance criteria is important for the manager's consideration of whether he should take the job or not, and likewise for the employer to evaluate whether the manager has performed sufficiently related to the contract criteria (Murphy, 2002).

Bad results are not always the reason why clubs and managers want to go separate ways. The basis for cooperation might lack if the manager is not interested in operating in line with the club values. Although such requirements are not present in all clubs, it might be seen as crucial for further cooperation in others, as rationalized in the below example:

They've [owners] have made a considerable amount of money from working in T [the town] and they are absolutely clear that this is their way of putting money back into the community and say thank you. They will not allow their reputation to be hurt by having a manager at seen inappropriate around the town. I will almost go so far and say: They prefer to lose a couple of games, and the manager won't get sacked. If the manager did anything inappropriate in the community, he get sacked. (ISL3E)

The current finding relates to previous research within team sport that holds cultural awareness as one of the keys to succeed as a manager (Isberg, 2003). Moreover, it highlights the importance of making a thorough process in the recruitment phase of the managerial cycle. Not only to limit the risk of a mismatch between managers and club regarding type of leadership approach, but also to make sure that the values that the approach builds upon are

on the same page.

The second and final general dimension related to the *increased support from manager associations* in the termination phase. The main area of support seemed to be legal services to deal with employment issues. The issue was viewed as important because of the frequent turnover among managers. One of the challenges in the associations meeting with managers that had got sacked, was to take the emotion out of it, as exemplified below:

They are angry. They're disappointed. Their wives are disappointed, u'know, and that can be a massive pressure. You get home, and your wife says, you tell him about...u'know. We say this is not about emotion, it's about me trying to get the best deal I can for you, and that's what we tend to do. (EL2E)

Additionally the association might pay for medical premiums for a period of time if needed, because the first thing the club does after the sack is to cancel all the manager's benefits. In some cases, the association might also recommend and assistance help to end the manager's employment relationship. This happens in phases where the senior managers in the clubs inflict a massive violation of trust above the manager, by for example buying players to the first team without involving the manager although the first team affairs relies on the manager. The main point is to get in early when support is falling apart internally, to end the employment relationship in the best way possible, as explained in the following quote:

It's often about being early in to make it clear to the club how things are working, like, if you are going to get rid of the person, these are the consequences. Then we help the coaches out. (EL2N)

3.3.4 Discussion

The aim of Study Two was to examine the managerial cycle in light of the key-stakeholder views upon the presence and quality of managerial training, development and support. The study looked to broaden and add depth to areas that the managers viewed as important for carrying out their role by examining those areas from the perspectives of people who are seen (in Study One) to have a great impact on their ability to manage. The experience of key-stakeholders on the current topic seem relatively untouched (Noblet & Gifford, 2002), and there has recently been called for an extension of the existing research (at semi-professional levels) to professional levels of football (Molan et al., 2016). It has also been suggested that multiple theoretical approaches should underpin the research in order to understand effective leadership in the complex role of professional football (Molan et al., 2016). The theoretical framework for the study is adapted to findings emerging from inductive content analysis. The approach, which is recommended within existential leadership research (Fusco et al., 2015), aims to heighten the awareness and deepen the understanding of the contextual issues that leaders face. It also aims to capture the complexity of the issue. For these reasons, the research question should be best met by an open minded approach rather than pre-developed standards of any specific theory. An in depth understanding of the specific context of professional football management is needed to give directions to manager related issues (Gammelsæter, 2013), such as: what kind of training increase the possibilities for successful management; what is the basis for enabling effective support, or; what managerial skills are needed to keep track with developments and minimize the risk for getting the sack?

The findings related to the recruitment phase of the managerial cycle indicated a mismatch between the content of the UEFA Pro – programme and the actual role related needs for the manager, exemplified by how the term ‘practice’ was used. While UEFA use the term ‘practice’ as time on the pitch, the Norwegian FA representative did not find

practice on the pitch at UEFA Pro programme particularly relevant, because it was already taken care of in the UEFA A and B programmes. As such the mandatory share of on-pitch activities (coaching), was conducted at the expense of the training related to the off-pitch responsibilities related to the role. The call for a focus on a wider range of managerial expertise is supported by researchers (Carter, 2006; Gilmore, 2009; Kelly & Waddington, 2006). Managerial training was not viewed as a sufficient preparation on its own. Internal stakeholders seemed to prefer managers that possessed an understanding related to club-operations, man management and development. Yet, the approach to leadership between clubs seemed to differ, which had an impact on the kind of candidates they looked for. Some clubs needed a manager who could come in with a clear philosophy and change the culture, which is an approach recognized as transactional leadership in the literature (McMahon, 2007). Others aimed to hire managers that could adopt to the existing club culture, which relates to a functional leadership approach (McMahon, 2007). Given that organisational efficiency takes time to build, and that managers are statistically replaced quite frequently, the latter recruiting managers that fit into the existing club culture should be the better option. This does not mean that every club will profit by doing so, but rather that the awareness and considerations of the clubs leadership approach should be central in the recruitment of a new manager to increase the possibility organisational efficiency in the long term. As such, the finding adds some relevant information to the so far limited knowledge of what might be considered as an effective or ineffective manager for the club in the recruitment process (Arnulf et al., 2011).

The findings related to the employment phase of the managerial cycle circled around the meaning of trust and shared understanding to allow the communication needed to enable effective support and development within the club. To enable delivering support to the manager, the work needed to be based upon a clear idea that could be recognized by everyone

involved. The manager or the club, depending on the present leadership approach, could define this idea, or philosophy. The two approaches identified, might be recognized in the literature as transactional (manager driven) and functional (club driven) leadership (McMahon, 2007). The manager might therefore need the skills to interact with key-stakeholders regarding internal changes, involving the development of a shared understanding with the senior management as the basis for club evolvement. Equally, an understanding of, and interest in, the support staff's work is needed to make use of their capacities. Keeping the number of staff down at a manageable level was suggested in that respect combined with delegation of responsibilities. This is in line with autonomy-supportive coaching principles (Deci & Ryan, 2002), which implies that managers should possess the related understanding and skills.

The ability to track and follow changes was also expected as a managerial skill, referring to the manager's ability to provide self-directed learning (Nelson et al., 2006). Self-directed learning will most likely require skills of critical thinking to be effective, to consider the need and quality when handling new information. Such sorting of information is important for the manager's ability to respond to change. Being responsive to change is previously referred to as a critical skill for managers to avoid getting superficialities in work (Mintzberg, 1973). Superficiality in work, will subsequently make it hard to maintain shared understandings and effective communication internally (Mintzberg, 1973). Lack of shared understandings means decreased trust and thereby reduced ability to enable integrated communication internally, which subsequently means poor conditions regarding building longitudinal, holistic strategies into work (Grigorescu & Lupo, 2015). Loops of problems caused by the inability to keep track with developments, seemed to peak in periods with bad results due to the pressure to perform. This pressure is triggered by the European tradition of promoting open leagues and win maximizing (Dejonghe & Van Opstal, 2010), in a system

that is not allowing all to win even if all improves (Gammelsæter, 2013). The capacity to work effectively might be weakened in periods of poor results, because the lack of receptivity in the manager might lead to a breakdown of the support services. In England, a confidential helpline is established to enable the possibility for the manager to speak freely about problems. Of preventive initiatives, there is a mentoring service building up to support young manager with off-pitch issues. The main challenge of making mentoring service work, is the distrust embedded in the British culture, as previously emphasized by researchers (Kelly, 2008a; Kelly & Harris, 2010). This distrust involves that the manager might suspect that the mentor might be after his job. The current study suggests that mutual trust is needed between managers and support staff to enable effective support, and that is also needed for forward-thinking dialogues with the internal (club) senior management. Based on the overall findings regarding the employment phase, the current suggestion would be to strive for building trust and understandings between people as a basis for efficient communication and thus increased performances. Previous literature suggests that there is a comprehensive resistance towards academia (Carter, 2006; Kelly, 2008a) and distrust between the manager and the senior management (Kelly & Harris, 2010). Clubs that operate in line with this description, will struggle to build effective working environments due to their limited knowledge and lack of integrated communication. Yet, the current findings suggests that some English clubs are moving toward a more knowledge oriented approach, although internal stakeholders might possess different values and understandings and thereby prevent a fruitful cooperation.

The findings related to the termination phase draw upon internal approaches and responses to managerial changes and the external stakeholder's support of managers in the process of being sacked. The previous literature in the field has primarily discussed managerial changes based on statistics confirming that there is a culture of frequent

managerial changes in the industry (e.g., Arnulf et al., 2011; Bridgewater, 2010). Yet, a few studies have touched upon managers (Kelly & Harris, 2010) and managerial candidates (Morrow, 2014) views upon getting the sack. Regarding internal key-stakeholder views, the only contribution to the current topic seems to be a quote in Molan's (2016) research on semi-professional football that indicates that frequent managerial changes might lead to a culture of distrust between the manager and board members. This means that the information, especially regarding internal stakeholder views on the influence of managerial turnover, should extend the existing knowledge of the topic. First of all, when a manager get sacked, he might learn from the experience because that would make him reflect around what happened and what could have been integrated within his role to avoid it. This helps the manager developing strategies when (or if) he returns to a managerial position. These strategies might be to bring your own staff to enable an understanding and processes to develop faster. Secondly, the football manager might realise that his job is depending on his senior managers, which is in line with previous experience based literature (Ferguson & Moritz, 2015). For the support staff, frequent managerial changes seemed to impair their ability to support the manager sufficiently. This related to the need for time to develop a shared understanding of how to work and what to look for. From a support-staff point of view, a rhythm of just reacting to changes felt impaired both development and the joy of work. According to previous literature, a culture of frequent changes of personnel is not compatible with building performance cultures (Arnulf et al., 2011; Gilson et al., 2001), because of the lack of continuity in work. Awareness among leaders and managers of what might reduce the risk for losing such continuity is therefore important. For example by being aware of what kind of manager would fit into the culture and leadership approach possessed by the club.

3.3.5 Conclusions

Having skills in critical thinking and self-directed learning (Nelson et al., 2006), seem expected by CEO's that managers possess before entering the position. This argues for a university education as a better preparation for the role rather than the traditional programmes. Across the phases of the managerial cycle, certain issues seemed to be present that should impact on our understanding of working within the particular context of professional league football. This involves that both the manager and the club evaluate the leadership approach of the club related to the leadership qualities of the manager. Awareness at personal and cultural levels (Isberg, 2003; Nesti, 2010), and competence within the field of leadership (Fletcher & Arnold, 2011; McMahon, 2007), are ingredients for such understanding. From there, a managerial consistency (Mintzberg, 1973), involving a clear philosophy (Isberg, 2003; Relvas et al., 2010), is needed to enable the trust, relationships and shared understanding among internal stakeholders. Shared understandings and trust allow communication that might enable evolvement of the club through interactions with senior managers and precise services from support staff. To maintain managerial consistency, the manager needs to adapt to both internal and external developments (Mintzberg, 1973), which is certainly an issue within a rapidly changing industry such as professional football. If the manager lacks or loses receptivity in work, he also may lack or lose managerial consistency, and the internal support collapses. The pressure arising in periods of poor results might elicit and expedite the process of managerial sacking. The ways pressures and leadership issues might develop and change over time within the professional football context, is further explored in Study Three.

Chapter 4 - Longitudinal case studies of the managerial cycle (recruitment, employment, termination): Managers' perspectives

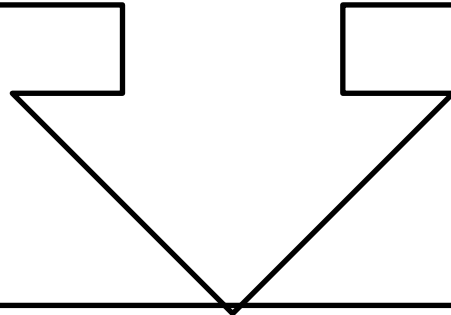
Chapter 3: Study Two; Investigating the internal and external stakeholder views on the efficiency of managerial training, development and support in the managerial cycle in England and Norway.

Specific aims: To examine the managerial cycle by bringing in the internal and external key stakeholder views on the training, development and support of managers.

Methodology: Semi-structured interviews were carried out with 21 internal (n=18) and external (n=3) key-stakeholders. Content analysis procedures were employed to create lower order themes, higher order themes and general dimensions.

Findings: The findings gave insights in senior management experiences regarding recruitment and dismissals. Frequent changes of managers detracted the support staff's ability to work professionally and longitudinally. When the pressure on the manager is too high, his receptivity to support is reduced. Managers are expected to take care of their own and their team's development without any directed support.

Implications: Managers and senior stakeholders need to stay united regarding the overall idea of what to do and how, to reduce resistance in processes. If this is not agreed in the recruitment phase, the problem might continue into the employment phase and eventually, the termination phase. Clubs and managers that not are aware their own values, are not likely to know which manager or club would be a fit. Managers should be prepared for the ability to adapt to rapid changes before taking charge.



Chapter 4: Study Three; A longitudinal case study of the managerial cycle (recruitment, employment & termination): Managers' perspectives.

Specific aim: To examine the lived experiences of managers throughout the managerial cycle (recruitment, employment & termination). In addition the study also includes news articles, TV-interviews, observing games, and occasionally observation of trainings to broaden the contextual understanding.

Methodology: Longitudinal case studies of managerial experience within two different clubs (Norwegian and English). More specifically, four managers were regularly interviewed during various phases of the managerial cycle. Ethnographic principles were employed.

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of Study Three is to examine the lived experiences within the role of a manager throughout the managerial cycle. The model has been developed on the basis of key findings in Study One (managers), and examined in Study Two (key stakeholders), and in that sense, both inform the current study. The model has not changed subsequently to the examination in Study Two, but the knowledge of what is going on within the various phases of the cycle from different perspective has given the researcher a broader and deeper understanding as to which areas and/or topics require further examination in Study Three. Despite this, an open approach was still needed to stay receptive to any themes and trends, not least to capture the notions of cultural, organisational and personal changes across time; such as the managers' abilities to develop himself, or shape the club, and how they make use of various forms of support (e.g., psycho-social, financial and legal) across the managerial cycle.

To date, no empirical studies have explored how the manager's day-to-day existence, and/or lived experiences, might change over time in respect to internal and external challenges within the context of professional league football. Current literature suggests that managerial perceptions are not always in tune with the key-stakeholders (Ferguson & Moritz, 2015; Kelly & Harris, 2010; Kristiansen, Murphy, et al., 2012), and that relationships might change over time and situations (Konter, 2012; Nesti, 2010). However, the current study examines both of these suggestions with a view to providing clarity and insight to this field, with respect to obtaining unique and novel contextual understandings that may improve the basis for related training, support and advisory services. As previously argued, accurate descriptions are needed to better understand what the manager's role 'actually' is, what present football management 'actually' entails (Morrow, 2014), and an in depth understanding of the 'actual' specific context of professional football management. Such contextual understanding is required to inform current and future training, and subsequently

support the managers in appropriate ways (Gammelsæter, 2013). In that sense, the information from Study Three should have the capacity to extend our understanding of the findings emerging from Study One, Study Two, and the existing literature. These insights might be beneficial for both the managers and the key internal and external stakeholders in how to increase the potential to operate more efficiently at personal, organisational and cultural levels within the clubs.

Study Three seeks to investigate the nature of the managerial experience across time within the various phases of the managerial cycle (recruitment, employment and termination) in England and Norway (figure 4.1) from a day-to day ‘lived’ managerial perspective.

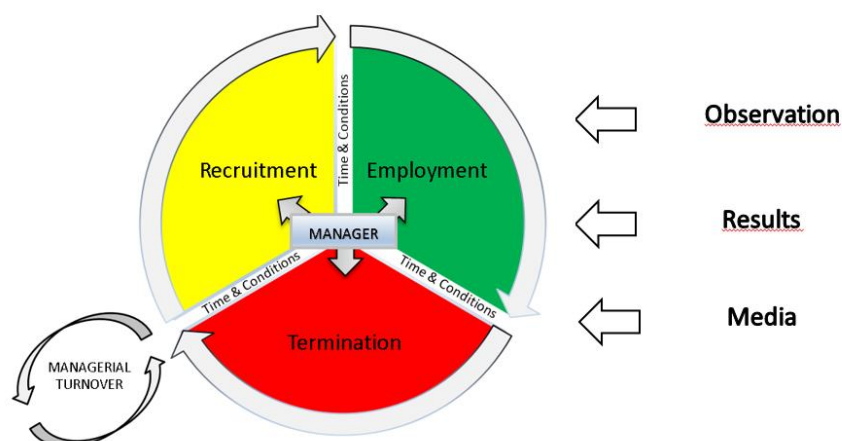


Figure 4.1: Managerial views on the various phases of the managerial cycle across time.

The participating managers in Study Three represented the main source of information to the study. Yet, as the above model displays, observations (games, trainings, facilities, people), results (games, tables), and media news did all inform the interview schedules along. This allowed the focus to develop and changed along with the lived managerial experience across time and conditions.

4.2 Methodology

Similar to Study One and Two, a qualitative position was adopted to broaden the understanding of the specific context (Hoepfl, 1997) with respect to how the managerial experience(s) might change over the various phases of the managerial cycle. Four managers (n=4) within two different professional football clubs (Case Study One and Two) were interviewed frequently over the course of the season, or parts of the season. The relatively high number of managers in Case One (n=3) is explained by managerial changes within the respective season. The interviews were carried out in a semi-structured manner in relation to the managers' movements through the stages of the managerial cycle. Ethnographical principles were used, due to the researcher's ability watch trainings, games, read news and to some extent engage with people internally to the organisation. For example, in one of the clubs the author was invited to meet support staff and even follow the players on through the tunnel on the match day. A narrative style of representation was employed to better articulate how managers create meaning across phases in their work and lives. As such, the data should add the richness and detail needed to embody further meanings and cultural understandings that operate in the 'real world', from a manager's lived experience and perspective (Denzin, 1997).

4.2.1 Participants

Managers ($42,8 \pm 3,2$ years; mean \pm SD) from two different clubs were frequently interviewed over the course of the season, or parts of the season. More specifically, Case study One included three different managers (n=3) over nine months in one Norwegian Premier League club. Case study Two included one League One caretaker manager (n=1), subsequently appointed as the manager, over four months during his first experience of being in charge of the first team. The managers were chosen opportunistically, meaning that the first author had to take the opportunities when they appeared. This refers to the difficulty of

access for outsiders in this hard to reach population, and the even harder exercise to get access over time in a context where time is already a shortage. The choice of clubs aligns to the overall aim of the thesis and reflects the experiences of managers from both English and Norwegian professional football leagues. The table below provides a description of each participant that might help to ease the readers understanding of the narratives. Names and club details are coded or hidden due to commitments of confidentiality.

Table 4.1: Participant information related to pseudonym, level, title, experience and nationality.

Case	Manager	Level	Title	Years manag	Clubs manag	Nationality
One	John	Norwegian PL	Head Coach	2	1	NOR
	Martin	Norwegian PL	Caretaker	0	1	NOR
	Peter	Norwegian PL	Manager	4	2	NOR
Two	Charlie	English L1	Caretaker/Manager	0	1	ENG

As the above table reveals, the participants were all at early stages of their career in terms of first team managerial experience in professional league football. However, all of the participants possessed significant experience as professionals in various related roles, such as players, assistant coaches, coaches for reserve teams, and coaches for age-specific teams. Case study One involved all of the three phases of the managerial cycle (i.e., recruitment, employment, termination), due to managerial changes that took place, whereas the caretaker manager in Case study Two was appointed as the manager after he successfully guided the team to promotion in the Championship. All of the participants are considered as public persons, due to the significant media attention related to their role, and therefore the author refrains from presenting further personal details about the participants with respect to confidentiality. Each participant is introduced with reference to their personality, identity and role-related motivation to enable the reader a sense of who these managers are, and a sense of the rationale behind their decisions.

4.2.2 Interview Schedule

As previously noted, interviewing is considered as one of the most common and most powerful techniques used when the intention is to understand our fellow human beings, and the most commonly used interview type is face-to-face verbal interchange (Fontana & Frey, 1994). Similar to Study One and Two, semi-structured interviews were carried out in Study Three by using open-ended questioning to successfully capture the participants' experiences (Dale, 1996). The initial interviews were deductively developed and guided by procedures employed in 2.2.2 Interview Schedule (Study One), which was informed by similar studies (e.g. Biddle et al., 2001; Côté et al., 1995; Gilmore, 2009; Olusoga & Butt, 2009; Olusoga et al., 2010; Relvas, 2010; Scanland et al., 1989), and further customized to the managerial cycle. This model was developed on the basis of the Study One findings and examined by key-stakeholders in Study Two. As such, the model was used in Study Three as a framework to keep track of the phase the manager faced at any time (i.e., recruitment, employment, and/or termination), and to relate questions to previous findings as similar themes emerged. The researcher reviewed interviews, observed games and training, read the media reporting of the club and manager to inform the areas to question for the following interviews. This enabled the researcher to observe the changes (e.g., injuries, media issues, performance and results) from the outside, and then approach the managerial perspectives retrospectively. Therefore, each of the follow-up interview schedules were uniquely differentiated, which is consistent with longitudinal qualitative research. The repetitive nature of the interview approach enabled the managers to bring additional information into issues as they developed or lacked clarity.

4.2.3 Interview Procedure

The interviews were carried out at club arenas (offices /canteen), training grounds, and once at a hotel. In cases where it was not possible to meet in person, phone interviews were

conducted. The researcher prepared for the initial interviews by studying the manager's or head coach's history and thereby emphasised areas of particular relevance in relation to the phases of the managerial cycle. The first author sent participant information sheets and consent forms to the participants ahead of the interview. For participants in Norway, letters of recommendation from the Norwegian FA and the Norwegian Football Coach Association were attached. In cases where that was not possible, the managers read the sheet and approved just before the interview. The researcher made sure that the managers/head coaches had read and understood the information before the consent forms were signed. The initial interviews were carried out on the basis of the overall sections similar to Study One (background information, current and future challenges, how to deal, managerial skills and qualities), with a special focus on the various phases of the managerial cycle Model (i.e., recruitment, employment, termination). Normally, the following agreement with the managers included one interview every month with the ability to meet more frequently if something extraordinary happened. The semi-structured and open-ended nature of the questions, enabled the respondents to express their views freely with the ability to probe any emerging areas of particular relevance or interest (Faulker & Sparkes, 1999). All of the interviews were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim. Each interview lasted for 15 – 45 minutes. The interviews conducted in Norwegian were translated to English subsequently to the interview, as the first step in the data processing.

4.2.4 Data Analysis and Representation

The objective of the analysis was to better understand how the managerial experience(s) related to the training, development and support within the various phases of the managerial cycle (recruitment, employment, and termination) and how this fluctuated over time. Study Three concerns the managerial descriptions, who they are, how they feel with respect to the situational context, and how this subsequently influences their decision-making. The results

and discussions are brought closely together to ensure the connectivity and synthesis to the participant's voice and story, rather than categorize a total set of data into themes and dimensions. Study Three involves features of ethnographic research. In that sense, it has a strong emphasis on exploring a social phenomenon, the data has not been coded at the point of data collection, the investigation involves a small number of cases, and the data analysis involves explicit interpretations of the functions and meanings of human action in the form of verbal descriptions and explanations (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994; Silverman, 2001). Yet, the use of regular interviews rather than being fully field-based, argues that Study Three consists case studies based on ethnographical principles rather being ethnographies. In terms of the interviews and transcriptions, the procedural guidelines are similar to a range of previous studies (e.g. Biddle et al., 2001; Côté et al., 1995; Relvas et al., 2010; Scanland et al., 1989). The discussions are, however, more concerned about the managers' successive narratives rather than developing common themes and dimensions that might emerge from the data set. As such, the data in Study Three extends the findings from Study One and Two, through analysis and synthesis that seek to create meaning from the managers' experiences.

4.3 Case Study One

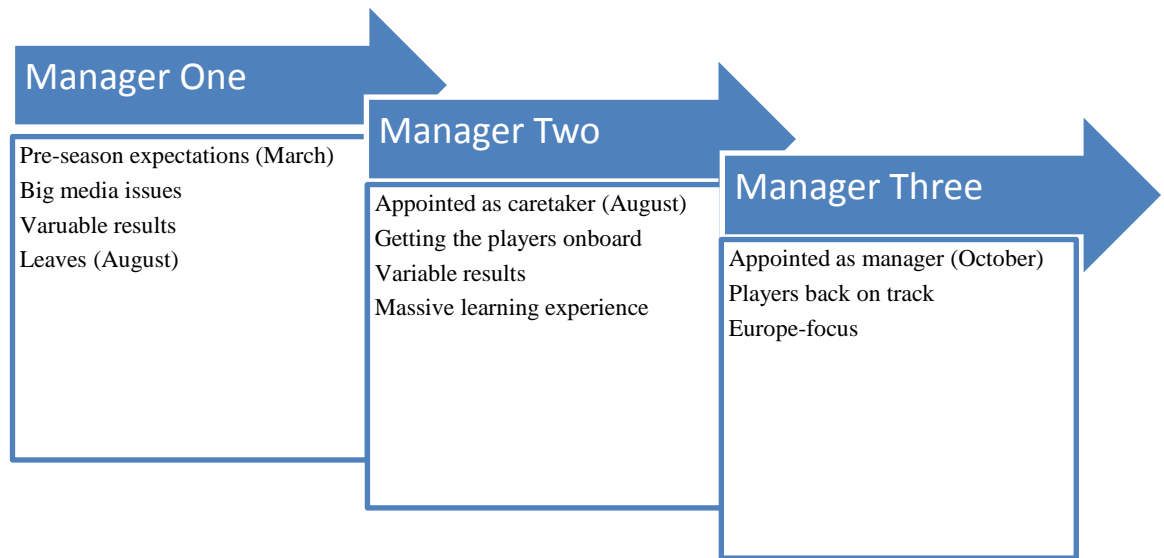


Figure 4.2: Timeline of events in Case One across stages of season.

4.3.1 Manager One (John)

John had been the manager of the club for just over a year when the first interview took place. Most of the information concerning John's second season is therefore considered as belonging to the employment phase of the managerial cycle. The reader might feel that not the full story of John comes through, which refers to John's need to withhold information retrospectively to his departure in the middle of the season. Yet, his experiences with the sport-related work is still present.

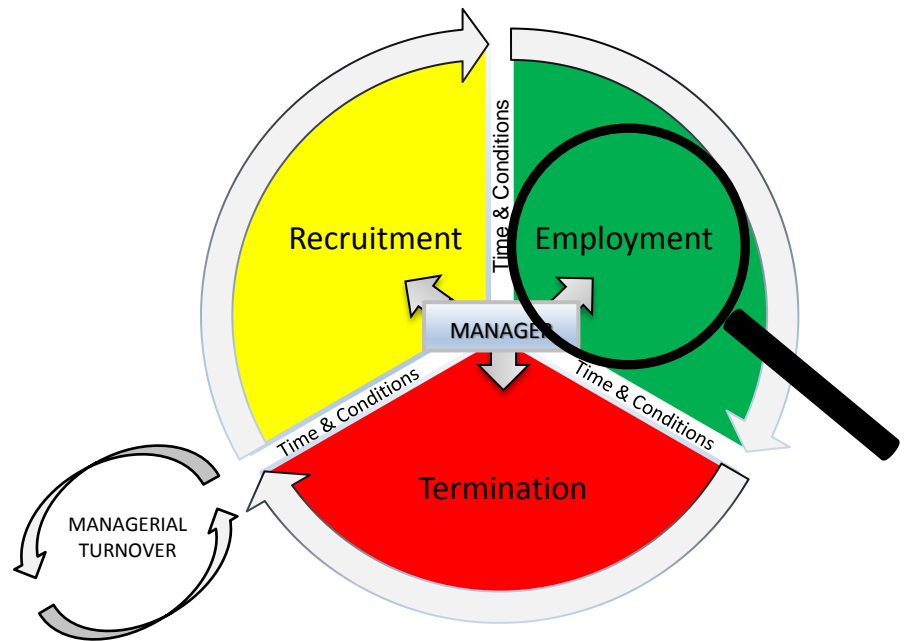


Figure 4.2: Investigating the employment phase as experienced by a Norwegian top manager.

Football had always been his ‘thing’ for John. Initially through the joy of playing football, and gradually through the social part of being in a team. Becoming a coach was never a clear objective until the last years of his playing career. After he retired as a footballer, John was educated as a teacher of the following reasons:

Working with people has sort of always been....so I mean, the Teacher profession, as I have actually have carried out for a couple of years. That is also a great prerequisite, I feel, to become a coach: That I enjoy working with people.

He felt like being in a big classroom as a football coach. The main difference was the egos, which were much bigger among football players. Gradually the organisational interest developed. When listening to John talking about his attraction to the role of a football manager, the link towards what is recognized in the literature around identity and intrinsic motivation came across (Deci & Ryan, 2002; Gilson et al., 2001). Football, which seemed to be a significant part of Johns life, has often shown to have a profound impact on personal identity (Chadwick, 2013). This, combined with a personal drive of working with people, is

likely to trigger the seek for stimulation and personal development (Deci & Ryan, 2002) within teaching, coaching and subsequently leadership areas within the context of professional football. While the teacher specific role that he discussed was more about the players, he perceived the leadership and organisational management challenges a bit different. His approach was to be involving towards support staff and to use his natural authority (Potrac, Jones, & Armour, 2002), rather than being authoritarian. As such, he allowed skilled people to keep going within their professions as much as possible, rather than limit them or hold them back. This kind of autonomy-supportive management approach is recommended by researchers when building motivational climates (Deci & Ryan, 2002; Mageau & Vallerand, 2003). By observing John's team in some of the trainings, the staff and players seemed to adapt his style of delegating responsibilities. John mostly observed the technical parts, which were taken care of by his coaching staff, and took charge when it came to tactical preparations. The increasing size of football organisations has also underlined the need for the manager to delegate more widely and empower the people around them (Ferguson & Moritz, 2015). The players had a great degree of freedom framed within an overall idea of playing philosophy and behavior. As such, players had certain freedom in how they played (football philosophy), and contributed in discussions of on-pitch matters, but also in processes of how the team was going to act (perform), operate and look like off the pitch; such as how to face social media and to draw the limits concerning privacy within a team. As such, John's managerial approach might be characterized as autonomy-supportive. Encouraging under-ordinates to take initiative and offer them choice is previously shown to be a beneficial strategy (Hodge et al., 2014; Høigaard et al., 2008), as long as the people involved feel the confidence to deal with it. Lack of familiarity with the concept, for example due to different cultural backgrounds among the involved, might challenge the implementation of autonomy-supportive climates in professional football

teams (Oltedal, 2012, in transcripts). In the current context, the coaching staff seemed used to taking responsibility in the extension of John's philosophy. Although the players also were involved to some extent, there are reasons to believe that the players were differently prepared to take such responsibility. This refers to their different stages of career (age), different nationalities (cultural differences), their personal engagement, and the relatively high turnover among players in professional football clubs. In that respect, building cultures that involve building autonomy-supportive learning environments in professional football might be ideal for developing player and team performances, but not always easy to implement and maintain. This issue, previously discussed by the Swedish top manager Sven-Göran Ericsson (Oltedal, 2012, in transcripts), which was also highlighted by some of the managers in the current Study One, suggests that Scandinavian players and managers are better prepared for autonomy-supportive management than for example English players. This might refer back to political and cultural traditions in the respective countries (Gammelsæter, 2016). For example, the leadership approach English football culture has previously been described as heavily influenced by working class attitudes, involving authoritarian management approaches which undermines the empowerment of support staff and players (Carter, 2006; Kelly, 2008a; Parker, 2001). Such autonomy-undermining cultures are not likely to prepare people for taking responsibility, nor develop the qualities needed to do so. Therefore both players and managers might struggle to adapt to new training cultures, depending on what they are brought up with. Different individual attitudes among players might cause additional complications to the task of getting everyone to follow the same managerial idea of working.

To establish and maintain effective working environments, the related knowledge held by the manager to develop such an environment, and the ability and eager to update himself in the aim to maintain the quality of it, are suggested as crucial (Mintzberg, 1973).

John's background as a teacher substantiates his potential for creating learning environments. His self-development as a Head Coach was mostly taken care of by largely watching international football and more recently by using mental coaching services. Both these forms of development are described in the literature as self-directed and informal (Nelson et al., 2006). Experiences through informal learning allows a personal feel of management to develop, which might help to fulfill the day-to-day role and responsibilities (Sage 1989).

4.3.1.1 The Entrance

The club recruited John after the former manager left to another club. His profile suited the club's overall strategy of developing young, talented players for further sale. The arguments behind his decision are explained in the following quote:

My thought and my decision was made out of my impressions of the club, like tidiness, sporting preconditions, financial conditions in terms of growth opportunities, that it was possible to make new steps, like the basics needed to get success. Before I arrived, my feeling around the decision was that it was a club that had done much right the last few years, but yet there existed a potential for growth.

He addressed this intention immediately when he arrived the club, and the board shared and facilitated his view.

4.4.1.2 The preface of season

After a successful first season, an obvious challenge was to keep players and support-staff motivated for more success. Therefore, the club addressed an ambition to qualify in a European tournament. John explains the rationale behind this move:

It is a quite experienced playing squad, despite they are quite young. They are not

even near to be reclined, satisfied or happy. U'know, happy so far, but there are massive ambitions in most of them and they want to progress out from the club.

The club allowed John to largely choose his own support staff and bring in new players within the budgets and wage structure, and John saw the importance and kept loyal to it. The main challenges would be that some key players had left, and one was long term injured. When talking about club guidelines, the restrictions seemed to rely on budgets that were set by the club, but few restrictions in how he managed the budgets. Yet, the expectations in how the money was used would probably rely on the shared understanding of the overall strategies of the club. As such, the leadership approach of the club is hard to categorize. The power and freedom embedded in John's role resonates with transformational leadership, allowing the manager to choose the individuals that he believes can follow and contribute to the overall organisational objectives (McMahon, 2007). Yet, the clubs recruitment of a manager based on an overall club vision which is closer to a functional approach to leadership (McMahon, 2007), makes the current leadership approach look like a synthesis of both approaches.

One of the secrets of creating an ambitious team was rooted in the player recruitment. Young national players that had progressed quite well, with the potential for further developments, were targeted. The considerations were comprehensive, but clear:

I know the players. Not only as players, but personally. So I know how they reflect. I know about their training culture, which they bring into our group, what kind of drive they bring in.

The player selection was a lot about the players' personality and what they represented. A big name or a nice CV could not beat youthful vitality and training culture. The club supported this view, partly because the previous manager was concerned about the

same issue, which was actually one of the reasons why he was selected as a Head Coach in the first place.

The first crux he had to overcome the upcoming season was the player situation forward on the pitch. One key player was sold, a second one did not extend his contract and a third was injured. The challenge was to recreate three players that set the tone the previous season. John held that it is very individual how long a process of developing a new set of offensive players to perform. He thought it was more about getting the relations between the players behind them to work. Despite the uncertainty, he viewed it as an exciting kind of challenge to get familiar with the two new offensive players that had just arrived at the club. He was not worried, but excited at whether they would perform immediately. Nor was he concerned about how the first games of the season would turn out, but he could feel the excitement building up:

I'm not afraid to get badly out or such. I'm not thinking of that. I'm not, but I guess this feeling is similar to every coach after a pre-season with ups and downs. Then it's getting serious, and you are actually not too sure, sort of. You don't know exactly how it turns out.

4.3.1.3 Start of season

Three games into the season; three good performances and two good experiences of the team confirmed that the good work in the pre-season had paid off. John addressed to his players that they should not forget the bottom of the performance although they were beaten, but it was harder to get the message across to media and supporters. Quite a few externals thought it was a complete disaster, but it was important to stay focussed internally:

It becomes easily like that. In my opinion it is my job, or our job, to communicate the right things [performance related processes rather than focusing on results]

internally. I have been concerned about that we have been stayed focused on that, nothing else.

This helped the players to stay controlled, calm and being able to make sense of what they were doing in the next two games, which they won fully deserved. Although the new players had performed well, John thought it was a bit too early to determine whether the team was as good up front as the previous season. The focus forward would be more about getting everything settled in every phase of the game. When thinking of the situation of changes in the team in the wake of John's accounts of player injuries and sales, the local community seemed to walk straight into the trap of unrealistic expectations. The challenge of high expectations is well known in professional football, and relates to the massive external interest in the game (Lonsdale, 2004), the modern idea of using rankings and results (Guttmann, 1978), and a European system that will not allow all to win (Dejonghe & Van Opstal, 2010), even if all improve their performances (Gammelsæter, 2013).

Another issue had also developed massively in the media the recent week. Given the scale and proportions of the media attention of the issue, John retrospectively felt that he should have prepared the senior management of the club in a better way:

I do understand to a certain extent that it would be good for them [senior management] to know when this cracked. I chose to bring this on because I got an e-mail in the morning that a journalist had found out. Then it is better to go out with the overall story.

Although the media issues drained energy, confused the focus, and turned and dragged him in the situation, it went quiet as fast as it came. A tight match program was coming up. John saw it as a good opportunity to offer all players time on the pitch. John explained that his approach to the players that lacked playing time had so far been via one-

to-one talks in a clear, fair and honest way. Although de-selection was not received with favour among the players, he thought that their predisposition to follow his thoughts depended on their personalities and 'size of egos'. However, he hoped that the club got payed off for the range of the squad in the up-coming period. Unfortunately, one more player was exposed to a long-term injury. However, John kept his belief in the team's possibilities to perform well, but started to look forward to the up-coming July transfer window.

4.3.1.4 Close to half played season

There had been 'ups and downs' in a busy period in which the club was supposed to make use of the range of the squad. John explained the variable results by mediocre performances individually and collectively. It was a bit about margins as well. The levels of expectations in media and supporters regarding both performance and result still felt far too excessive. Defeats still triggered an atmosphere of crisis externally, but internally the club seemed able to handle it:

I feel we pretty much have kept calm internally, and that we have managed to come back after these two blows. Good performances and results afterwards.

Although the team scored goals, they needed to play as a unit. The team was very different to last year, which was significantly about the offensive players, but also about the individual performances defensively. Except from a bit more focus on getting tighter in the defense, there were no specific changes in the training. Close to half-played season, they had almost two points in average, as they supposed to.

4.3.1.5 Mid-season (and termination)

The number of games increased significantly: Cup-games, Euro-qualifiers and league games. Although not all results did match the expectations, the ambition of qualifying for a European group play seemed promising. The overall results were visibly good and bad.

Within a frustrating period, John kept a good relation to his players and sporting staff. There were, of course, disappointment of losing points in unlucky ways in the league, but the Europe-qualifiers qualifiers gave John a real ‘go’ again and kept the players on their toes.

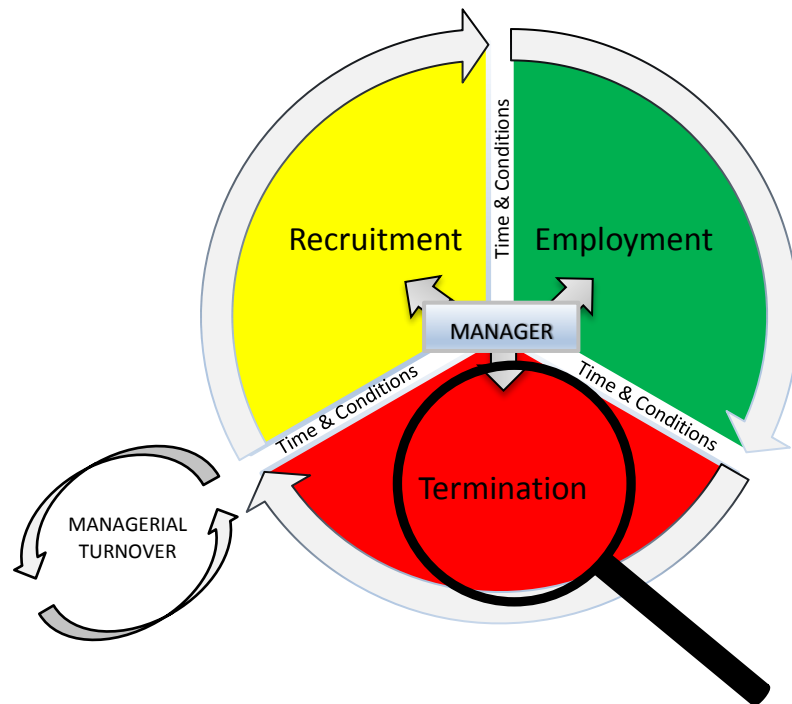


Figure 4.3: The termination phase of the managerial cycle.

Despite the intensity in the trainings, John was asked to leave his position at this point. His information related to his leave (termination phase), is taken out of the theses due his need for a confidential handling of the information. The reason for restricting this information can be understood in light of the considerable publicity and interest in professional football. As such, a re-opening of the actual case in media was not desired by John and the club. Therefore, only the sport-related matters are visible for the reader in the descriptions regarding Johns work, despite that the author was able to make interviews both prior to and after the point of termination. Yet, the following section will bring some more substance to the situation based on the caretaker manager’s experience.

4.3.2 Manager Two (Martin)

When considering the descriptions offered by the Study One participants, the current situation of hiring an internal member of the coaching staff to take care of the managerial position on a temporary basis after the manager leaves is a quite common entrance to their first managerial experience in professional league football. Holding a caretaker position often involves something un-clarified, given that a new manager might arrive, or the caretaker might be promoted to the manager's position at a permanent basis. Martin's contribution as a caretaker manager is considered to belong to the employment phase of the managerial cycle, given that he was clearly informed by the senior stakeholders that the occupation was only temporary.

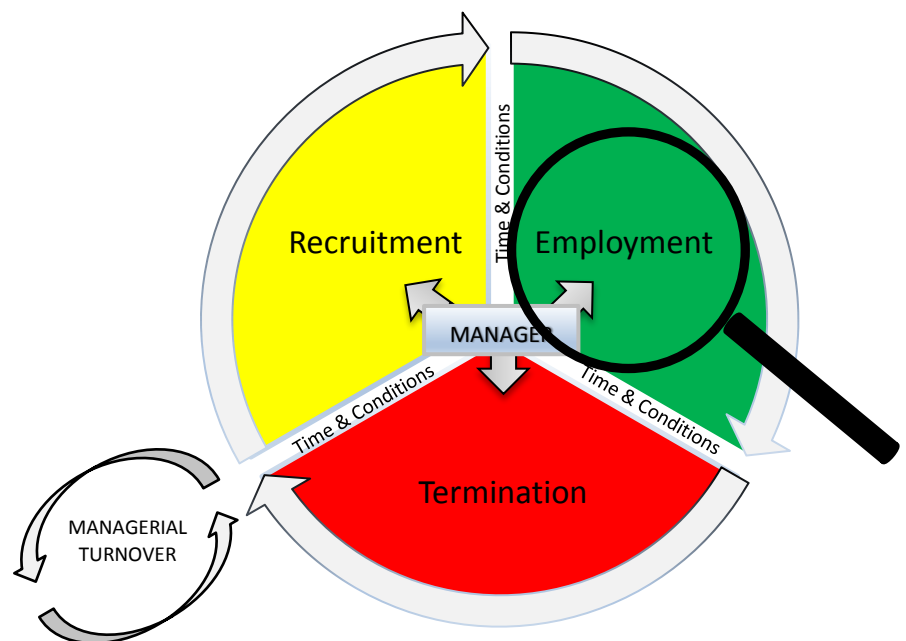


Figure 4.4: Investigating the lived experiences of a caretaker manager.

Based on information from Study One and Study Two, not all (if any) first time managers are sufficiently prepared for the role when entering the position. This might for

example relate to age, educational shortcomings, role-awareness and leadership skills. Martin was not yet formally qualified for the role, because he was still following the UEFA Pro License training programme. Nor had he experienced being a manager at a fully professional level. Martin had been the first team coach and a trusted person in the club for years, and experienced as a coach. In that respect, managerial experience at the highest national level was probably the right next step for his development as a professional. He described himself as a local boy. So far he had been a player, leader and a coach, until was offered the role as a caretaker manager that Thursday. As a player he perceived himself as ambitious, verbal and responsible. The captain. When he found himself being too slow to take the final step as a professional, he left his ambitions just to enjoy playing. He experienced that his edge came back when he went into lower league coaching, triggered by the titillating feeling of being in charge and the ability to influence strategies and behaviours on and off the pitch. Back to thinking football. The recent years, he had switched between the roles of being an assistant coach and a player developer in the club.

4.3.2.1 Final stages of the season

Martin felt the need to talk to John and Paul (John's assistant manager) if they were all right, before he replied to the question. He used that Thursday to overthink the situation. Then he made his decision based on his long serving position as the clubs representative and due to the career-building value of the offer. Due to family matters he had kept himself away from various career opportunities, but this time he was triggered:

Everyone was so tuned on that training. Paul [assistant coach], John, myself, and Oscar [keeper coach]. It was a fantastic training. I was called into a meeting after. That was the first...I did never get any signals before that. I got the question, and the message that they [manager and assistant coach] had to leave, whether I would take the job as a caretaker. Immediately, when I got the question, it triggered me. When I

got the opportunity in this club, I didn't feel like saying no.

Martin recognized that the mental part of being fully prepared at all times was different in his new role. This difference was also addressed by several managers in Study One and by key stakeholders in Study Two, given that the increased responsibility, and thus the expectations, toward both senior stakeholders and support staff. Martin was the one to set the on-pitch focus of work to inform the staff operations. He had to take care of the team, the squad and to be more forward thinking relating to the games coming up. In general, there were more processes to overthink. Such processes tend to become more effective along with experience (Ferguson & Moritz, 2015). Another difference about taking the step up, in which the efficiency seems to develop over time and through experience (Ferguson & Moritz, 2015), was the job that nobody can see: The decision-making. Martin's new experiences seemed to give him deeper insights:

If you aim to be the best assistant coach in the world, you should possess the experience of being a Head Coach. I can see that now. Before you become the boss you won't be able to understand the role at the needed level. There are so much circulating around a professional football club. You've got a squad of 25 individualists that you are supposed to make work as a unit, in which half of them are not happy. You've got the forces around the club which feels totally different when you are the boss. You need to experience it, to feel it physically and mentally.

The force around the club that Martin felt less prepared for, was how to approach media. Although media handling was a part of the UEFA-Pro module he currently followed. He felt confident with the on-pitch activities. Other new elements, such as dealing with the board and the senior management, were not big issues because he already knew these persons

pretty well.

Honestly, there has been so many games that I have not had time to reflect on the off-pitch elements. My focus has been at the football, because things have changed so rapidly. If I could wish for something different to the process, it would be that the Christmas Eve [the change] didn't come as a surprise.

Martin thought he would benefit from the ability to prepare himself better for the role before taking charge. Due to the frequency of games and the short-term nature of a caretaker position, his focus was narrowed down to football. If his position was permanent, the off-pitch elements would have been more prioritized. However, he did not consider being in a temporary role as a problem. The senior stakeholders had been clear and open related to that, before he accepted.

Martin was a firm believer that one success factor of his personal progression within the club, related to be open minded towards new ideas, impulses and people. In Study One, being open for new impulses was considered as a strength, and a necessity for self-development and for maintaining a performance climate. To improve the efficiency of these developments, the managers need the ability to evaluate the quality of their sources. In Study One, this was seen in relation to the lack of time for up-dates. Study Two displayed an expectation among senior stakeholders that their managers were expected to deal with self-development and team-development without any active support from the club, except through budgets. Given that the formal education of managers only to a small extent emphasizes training in self-directed learning and critical thinking, the managers are actually left by themselves at this matter. As such, Martin's open minded and flexible attitude toward learning seemed to be a good start in terms of his potential for developing within the role. When he worked in the academy, he travelled frequently to foreign clubs to bring in new

ideas and views on how various operations could be integrated into working practices. In the previous years, he had mainly learned from the managers that he had worked closely with. These close relationships developed because he did not talk about how it used to be unless they asked him, and payed huge interest in learning from the ideas they brought in.

I adapt quite quickly, get quickly into it [new managerial ideas]. I've been curious. Asked. Why? Why not this way? Been digging. Being challenging towards them. If you challenge in a way that make them feel that you are supportive, you will get challenging questions back? From that you get the dialogue and everyday communication. So, I believe my personal development has been from this.

General mental ability is found to be the most valid predictor when hiring employees without previous role related experience, because it indicates future performance and job related learning (Schmidt & Hunter, 1998). Being fast learners was also mentioned by Study Two participants as an important quality. As such, Martin seemed to be in a good place, given that his approach to learning seemed similar to a Scandinavian approach to coaching (Stelter, 2002), which involves asking questions to trigger reflections, rather than telling people what to do. This bear witness to a self-awareness around the learning process, and a humbleness towards new knowledge, which in the literature are recognized as keys to successful management (Isberg, 2003), and, given the rapid changes that takes place within professional football (Lonsdale, 2004), to keep track with environmental developments (Mintzberg, 1973). Study Two suggested that senior stakeholders expect that the manager possess the ability to self-develop, because they give the managers the responsibility to develop the team and play without any other support than offering staff and budgets. Martin's main source of learning can be considered as informal (Nelson et al., 2006), which relates to experience based and self-initiated learning, rather than planned and organized by

others. The following quote did initially give the impression that Martin was not too receptive towards knowledge from people outside football, which would be considered as a weakness from self-development perspective. However it might also indicate that he was critical to his sources of learning, which would be considered as a strength (Paul & Elder, 2013):

We've had mental trainers in the club, but that's not really me. Whether that helps me...? I might have to work a bit with myself on that. I'm more into the football specific when it comes to self-development, rather than the leadership related to be honest.

The first psychological issue Martin had to deal with in his new role, was grief processing in coaches and players in the wake of the former manager's departure. Given that Martin initially described the players as tuned on in John's last training, the reactions among the players when he left might indicate that the decision made by the senior management was detached from the views held by the team. The following quotation confirms that the change of manager was also experienced as unexpected among the coaching staff. When comparing John's support from sporting staff and players, and the actual decision by the senior stakeholders to end the working relationship, the present discrepancy between internal evaluations indicates a lack of integrated communications within the club. In the literature, integrated communication is described as a fundamental condition for effective organisational development (Grigorescu & Lupo, 2015). Integrated communication is previously suggested to be largely ignored in small and medium sized businesses (Grigorescu & Lupo, 2015), which usually are the categories in which professional football clubs belong to (Gammelsæter & Senaux, 2011).

It [John's leave] came as a shock on both the coaching staff and the players, and I

think that was perhaps a bit underestimated by the senior management.

The shock led to a lack of focus among the players, although the schedule did not allow any time for processing. Therefore, the next challenge was to get the group back to the usual training routines. This group of players were used to winning football games. Yet, currently they faced a season with variable results, which, from Martin's view, seemed to affect the team in a negative way. Therefore he approached the following training sessions with the intention to bring back the intensity, smile and joy. Martin's approach was to start rotating players in games, to involve those who had felt left out. Not as a critique to previous decisions, but he aimed for the benefit in the other end. Based on previous experiences, he knew that rotations might fail in the short term, but could be very beneficial in the long term related to a group cohesion and team development.

Positivism established in the wake of success in the European games as he had involved the players in what they wanted to get out of these games:

We had some choices: To that we get some decent results and performances out of it, or to, with the risk of failure, give the shit and go for gold.

Along with the players, he decided to give the latter alternative a go and be as good as they could be. This involved a cocky way of playing when the team had the ball, and it allowing the players to take risk and challenge themselves. They felt the risk was worth taking, despite the risk of getting a knock. To make it, they had to be brave. Such involvement (e.g., Høigaard et al., 2008) and challenging (Weiner, 1972) of players, is previously found to motivate and facilitate learning given that the involvement and challenge is within the reach of their capacities. This seemed to work in the current situation as well, as the players succeeded to buy further into the implemented attitude in the up-coming

games. They seemed enthusiastic about it.

4.4.2.2 End of season

Although the club was still competing in Europe, the thoughts around the insufficient outcome seemed to irritate:

If we had made it [playing counter football] in the crucial period against X (club) away and Y (club) away, we might have been there [top layers of table]. Which is terribly irritating. If we had made four of those six points, we would have probably made it [next year's Euro qualifiers].

Despite the irritations, he learned from these mistakes. That was probably what these last months had been about: Learning. For example, he had learned that in a relatively small professional football club, there was no point in calling anyone a Head Coach anymore. The rationale behind his reflection related to the number of things to administrate, such as the playing squad, player transactions, and conversations with people across levels within the organisational structure and media:

In the beginning I was on my own. It was totally Texas [referring to the Wild West]. I didn't realize, but when I got Tim and Lucas [coaching staff] in I became more forward thinking along with the club. I believe that the coaching on the pitch will fade out, given that you've not got a sporting director to take care of these things.

First and foremost, Tim and Lucas made a difference for Martin by taking some of the work off his shoulders. His new coaches took responsibility for the training sessions, although he was present in the planning and at the pitch to observe and oversee. They were able to handle their new roles immediately, because they were former players in the club and current coaches at the reserve team. Given that Martin had a caretaker position, an internal

restructuring of roles at a short term-perspective was probably the only realistic option. Not at least because the manager needs staff that trust him (Kelly & Harris, 2010) to operate effectively (Grigorescu & Lupo, 2015). He was not able to see everyone if he did everything by himself. 'Everyone' included the relations to players, but also to other persons internally to the club, which he felt were important. The benefit was to bring people together as a unit.

People tell me: 'Remember that the ones outside team that are the most important'.

I'm not there. One should never forget that the ones who play are the most important.

In my view. The eleven who are going to perform. They are as important to talk to as number 13 and 14, 15 and 16.

Martin also learned that communication might be very beneficial, but there were also limits. Communicating clearly was more important than the quantity, combined with consistency in what was said and done. For example, he communicated to the players that they would get the opportunity next time according to his three games plan:

The players need to trust me. That I consist of massive wood. If they don't, you will lose them. That's what it is about.

This way of communicating required a lot of overthinking and planning from Martin's side. To make it harmonize, the planning was based on building scenarios around the up-coming challenges. This meant long days of work. The use of time and mental workload was completely different to his previous roles and experiences. As the new manager arrived the club, he felt better prepared for his new intended role as an assistant manager:

I am more aware of the processes that goes on in the mind of a manager. How much he thinks and mulling around team selections and squad, which makes it easier to

understand these things. To be Head Coach at a lower level, as I have previously been, is not comparable related to a top national club.

His new understanding made him more capable of reading a manager when he needs a day off and to support him by unloading him when needed. He viewed the initiative to give the manager some breathing space as a needed form of support, because the manager feels the responsibility all the time. Another advantage of his new understanding, was his improved abilities to customize training sessions to team selections.

I understand now how difficult it is, even to choose number 18 in a club with maybe about 25-26 players. To give informed inputs on this... I think the majority would base their inputs related to their own role, like: 'Let's bring this young player on, because it's good for the club and local community'. It might be, but it's not always the right thing to do in relation to the composition of the squad. It might do something with the older player being excluded from the squad, and subsequently it does something with the manager to do so. You need to balance it. These are tough choices. To be aware of these mechanisms in an integrated way, I believe is important.

4.3.3 Manager Three (Peter)

Peter, who was also a participant in Study One, arrived the club for the second time after a period out of work. He had previously left the club to the fortune of a club in a bigger European league. When he was sacked by that club, he moved back to Norway. Peter's current engagement is placed within the employment phase of the managerial cycle.

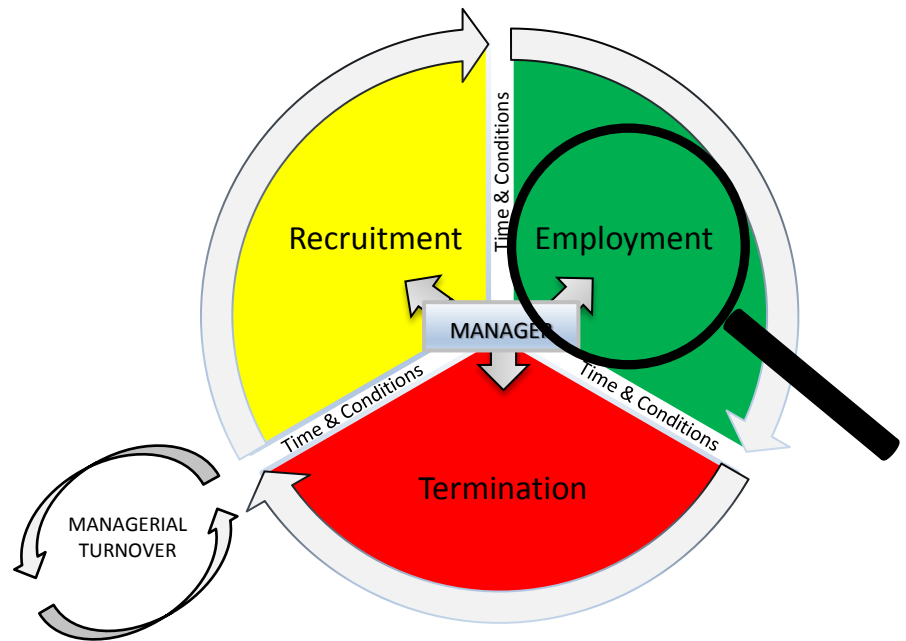


Figure 4.5: Investigating the experience of taking charge as the third manager within the same season.

Peter took the job based on an agreement to work close to where he lived with his family, previously good experiences from the club and he was triggered by the by the team's bad performances lately to get them back on track. He felt the Euro-games were interesting, and thought he could bring in the little extra to make the team more confident in their offensive play. Martin and Peter had kept in touch even before he arrived, and Peter wanted to come in and help. His first impression was that the players struggled to perform at the level of their capacity.

I felt that I arrived at a bit satisfied gang, but luckily they don't dare to do it to me [laughing].

He explained the increased efforts by the players in training as a typical fear-based reaction occurring when a new manager comes in. He did not work explicitly to achieve this reaction. This might rather refer to psychological stress in the players triggered by being anxious of not being selected, and for some players by the possibility to make a good impression on the new manager. It might also refer to what Carlo Ancelotti describes as quiet

leadership (Ancelotti, Brady, & Forde, 2016), meaning that the demands upon the players are so clear that the manager does not need to tell them what to do, but rather not picking them if they do not work with dedication in training. In his case, the players already knew that he would not accept any nonsense.

I know most of them. I think they know I am not happy about a situation where the players are half on.

Peter had changed massively as a manager over the last couple of years due to his experience from managing at a higher competitive level abroad, that he had changed his support staff, and not least from the experience of a bad trip in his last club. By using Martin (the former caretaker manager) as his assistant, Peter was able to be more authentic, referring to greater flexibility in the distribution of responsibilities than he was used to. Previously he left the planning of trainings mostly to his assistant. He was more ‘hands on’ now, which facilitated his influence on the work with the players on the ground. These coaching skills had developed through working as a coach with players in an age specific the last year. Previously he was shaped and influenced by others as a manager, but he realized that the world was continuously changing and that he needed to change along. When he was asked about his reason for taking charge in the club, he referred to the joy of seeing players develop and have success. This was similar to how he answered as a participant in Study One, but his personal ambition as a manager had changed, as explained below:

My driver or motivation is still to see people get out in the Europe. It makes me happy, very happy. Last time, I knew that I was going there [to a bigger league as a manager] at some point. But I don't have that as a target any more. I've been there, and I recognize that it is another world.

The cultural awareness when going abroad as a manager is addressed in the literature

as one of the keys for a successful entrance to the club (Isberg, 2003; Oltedal, 2012, in transcripts). Peter's authenticity in work, seemed to develop in relation to his personal awareness, which is suggested to be another key for successful management (Isberg, 2003). He also recognized that he was getting older, by talking about his players as 'kids', and he seemed more calm and clear around his own values as a manager, referring to the joy of contribute to players' success. His development towards a more authentic manager, which for him involved being more hands on in the planning and performing of training, might reflect a phase in which the manager is searching to develop and establish his personal style. Given his relatively limited experience within the role, it is reasonable to believe that this kind of shaping is a natural part of the role development and represents an important development of his ability to get his ideas across to the people around him in a clearer and more consistent way. The importance of consistency regarding ideas and role performance as a manager has been previously highlighted within and outside of sport (Isberg, 2003; Mintzberg, 1973). Being aware of who you are as a person and a manager (identity), should ease the challenge to communicate clearly in terms of what you expect from others. From a support staff perspective in Study Two, a clear idea or philosophy was seen as key to enable and establish effective support. Peter's bad experience from his former club might have triggered some reflections around his identity as a football manager:

You've got an owner that decides who to buy, who you should play...well, we were not a match at all. Quite easily. I talked to X [owner of Peter's current club, during his first stay] three times during three seasons, and three times in one day with Y [owner in previous club]. So I wasn't myself. I come here to be myself. I'm much more myself now, with Martin, and I am allowed to take charge.

He felt no need to bring any new staff members into the club, because he already

knew the people present and he trusted them. Trust is suggested to be a key to enable transparent communication, which is needed for developing organisational efficiency (Grigorescu & Lupo, 2015). Peter aimed to continue selling players and to make more attention around the club in the media. In regards to getting the best players in, he felt that he could do a better job than other ‘names’:

There are still a lot of young lads out there that have seen me play football in X [top European club] and want to be my player...well, I'm not “high” on myself, but this is the fact.

Given the freedom of player movement between clubs (Lonsdale, 2004), Peter’s thoughts around attracting seemed reasonable. Players sales will continue to be a concern in smaller national leagues in Europe, because they cannot afford to keep their most talented players (Dejonghe & Van Opstal, 2010). In a free-agency market, players can walk away for nothing in the end of their contract (Lonsdale, 2004). This might explain the club’s interest in selling players, which seemed to be a good match along with Peter’s cleverness in getting new talents in and eager to see players go abroad.

4.4 Case Study Two

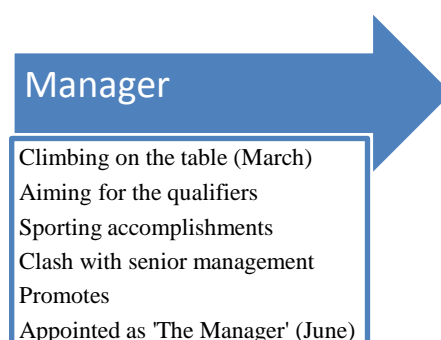


Figure 4.3: Timeline of events in Case Two across stages of season.

4.4.1 The Caretaker (Charlie)

Charlie was a young caretaker manager and former player of his current club. He had already completed the UEFA Pro-license although he did not yet formally need it. He had also both a bachelor's and master's degree in sports coaching, which according to previous manager-related literature is quite atypical within the English context (Carter, 2006; Kelly, 2008a). His academic background was something he did not speak loudly about. He wanted to be recognized for how he worked rather than what he had accomplished in the future. Charlie's caretaking position, which developed into a permanent managerial position at the club following the period of data collection, involved both the phases of recruitment and employment.

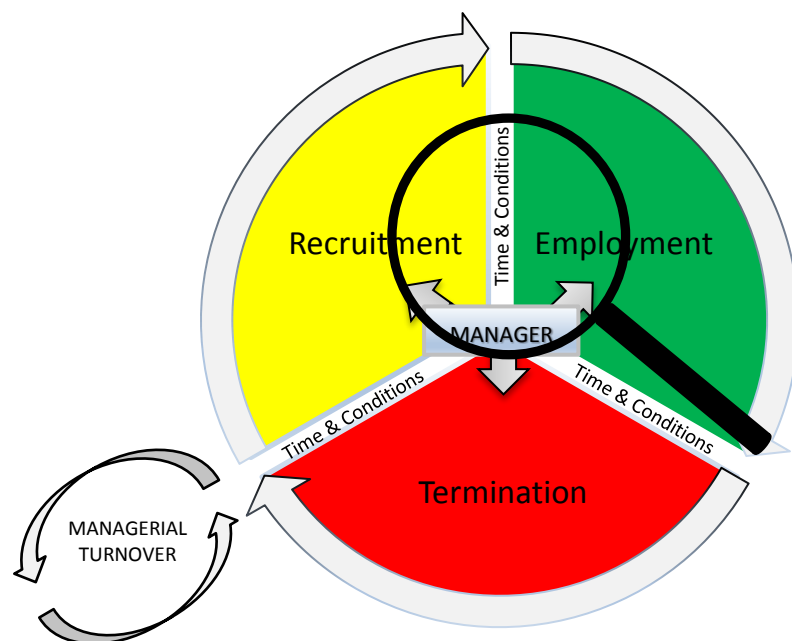


Figure 4.6: Being on the journey from a caretaker to a manager.

They were flying at the moment, the League One club that only months ago had discussed how to avoid relegation. Charlie had until recently been coaching the U-21's and partly the first team players. When the previous manager left to the benefit of another club after half-

played season, he was appointed as a caretaker manager. He used to offer the manager advice or any support he needed and work with the players. Now, he was the one who had to pick the team, set the training programme and being judged by it. Initially, he did not actually want to be a manager. The U-18's was his dream job; to develop young players. Yet, the quality of that work was informed by the budgets. As time went by, and he started to work with the U-21's, he increasingly thought that the club could do so much better, but he was not in a position to do much about it until he reached his current position as a caretaker manager. The power following the managerial position enabled him to inform the training philosophy and culture significantly. As a previous player and coach in the club he was familiar with the values of working hard for each other as a team, which had been embedded in the club and local community from far back in time. In the previous mining town, the attitude was about relying on each other, making things together that would not be possible alone and hard work. These values were reflected in the people's expectations to the performances of the pitch: Creating things offensively together, and support each other in the defensive work. All through hard work. In this way the club could achieve more with less financial resources.

4.4.1.1 Taking charge

The changes Charlie wanted to implement when taking charge was not too comprehensive compared to the regime of the previous manager. It was more about how the messages were given to make young players take responsibility. He did that by giving them a bit more freedom, rather than be as controlling. He would not be on top of them all the time anyway so they had to learn how to learn, rather than being told what to do.

They know what should be done, so I have left them to it. To give them that freedom to prepare in their own way and get about learning their game in their own way. I'm not gonna force them to do it, but when they come back and they wonder why they

are not playing...well, their got their chance to shine.

Charlie's approach of giving players freedom to prepare and learn, resonates with existential psychology terms that promote personal choice and personal responsibility (Nesti, 2004). In that term, the expectations to the players actually grew higher than previously, because he wanted them to do more themselves. Unlike previous descriptions of British managers as largely authoritarian (Kelly, 2008a), Charlie's approach to his players can be recognized in the literature as autonomy-supportive (Deci & Ryan, 2002). He brought expectation into everyone's work, including the members of his support staff:

It's like someone who say they can't play in the two in mid-field, so you only have them playing as three. Whereas if you're gonna learn them to play with two, you gotta play them in two. If you keep making poor decisions and you're not responsible: Alright then, let's give them the chance to practice that. That has probably been the biggest punch of change I've made.

Clear consistent messages and a lot of honesty was needed to operationalise this change, preferably in a way that gave the players the understanding that he cared. For example, by giving them a fair chance to make up for their mistakes, and if a player was told that something was not good enough, he stood behind them and worked with them after training to their knowledge and benefit. Working properly with talents and not at least recognizing them, was seen as important, as highlighted in the following quote:

A football club's gotta be good at recognizing talent. We do it with players, but we don't do it with the staff. We have lost a lot of good talent from this football club because we haven't recognized good talented coaches and support staff and professionals within it. You always think that you can get a better one from someone else, but you can't.

Charlie's views of competence as a valuable resource, might be recognized from knowledge based economy which suggests that knowledge is likely to be the most valuable resource of all (Whittington, 2001). Knowledge-based value is hard to replace for various reasons; most valuable knowledge is tacit (unlikely to imitate), it resides in the heads of lower ranking staff and it is dynamic and unpredictable. Further, knowledge is hard to trade because the receiver cannot know its value before it is actually used, and it is often highly immobile because it is embedded in culture and organisational routines (Whittington, 2001). As such, Charlie's view that talented coaches are not easy to replace makes sense.

Charlie felt comfortable with the football side of the role, but the part dealing with upper-management, such as discussions, obligated matters, recruitment, he felt could be a waste of time. It was often hard to see the outcome from it, and the time was hard to catch the time back up. His new role dealt with planning, games, watching the reserves, training, analysis, catch-ups with the owner, and meetings. Therefore time management was viewed as a massive challenge. One change compared to his previous experiences was to be the one who delegated responsibilities. Because he had been in the club for a long time, he knew how some of the staff worked already which made him comfortable to let them get on with it. Others were gradually given more responsibility additionally to their usual tasks personalized due to their particular qualities. This way of delegating made him get more out of each staff member and save time.

I knew my workload was gonna be bad this week, and this was yesterday: I asked X [member of support staff], can you take this for me today? 'Ye, no problem'. So, that's another thing I can forget about.

He chose to give them more responsibility and made their role clearer for them, because he preferred that himself when he was in their position. Potentially, delegation of

responsibilities and empowerment of staff members can increase the effectiveness of work by saving time and by motivating through involvement (Deci & Ryan, 2002). This correlations was also confirmed by support staff members in Study Two, which further suggested that clear messages from the manager was needed to respond effectively. Charlie seemed to be aware of this relation:

What am I exactly doing? What do you want from me? It's not just players who wants clear responsibilities, it is staff too.

He tried to build clarity through real unbreakable principles linked to the way of playing football. Such clarity in work has previously been considered as a success factor for developing performances in team sport (Isberg, 2001). The challenge of implementing a clear philosophy, related to his less clear future due to his interim position and the so far unclear direction of the club. The discussion of how the club should develop relied on the senior management. Charlie agreed in what they wanted, but not in how to get there.

Charlie's described his relation to the senior management as 'professionally close' because he had been a part of the club quite long. He was happy to contribute if they were seeking his opinion and valued it, but getting into arguments and debates that he knew would not get anywhere was something he considered as a waste of time. His short-term approach was to perform his responsibilities his way, although the owner sometimes wanted it a different way. To follow the owner would probably keep him in the job for a bit longer, but he would get the sack in the long run anyway if he did. That was something Charlie had picked up by being in the club and observing from a distance:

He says he [owner] doesn't [want to influence sporting affairs], but I've seen him influence previous managers who have got a lot more experience than me. So he does, and I'm very conscious that I don't wanna make decisions that I wouldn't make

just because he wants me to and I'm being stubborn.

The owner typically wanted to be informed about the team before games, and then pick it apart afterwards. In Charlie's view the sporting department had to be cleverer, by making guided decisions based on people in the club who knew what they were talking about. Just reacting to previous results had been a problem in the club previously. The level of communication between Charlie and the club owner seemed deficient, due to divergent views on how to reach the club's sporting ambitions. Integrated communication is considered as a premise for effective organisational development (Grigorescu & Lupo, 2015). In the current case, the relationship and understanding between the manager and the owner needed to develop in order to give directions to sporting and organisational progressions. The relationship between the senior club management and football managers is previously suggested to be important to stay in the position over time (Ferguson & Moritz, 2015) and to establish consistency and an efficient development of the organisation (Grigorescu & Lupo, 2015).

Despite these unclarified issues, Charlie loved what he was doing. He was mindful that this might be a consequence of winning, but he just enjoyed it as long as it lasted. He told the players at they could not get carried away by it, because they would not do any differently in training if they did not get the wins:

We wouldn't working any harder or less hard. We're doing what we think is right and we're getting wins from it. Brilliant!

His clear and consistent thoughts around training were based of a life within football as a player and a coach, but also from his training and educational background. After he had fulfilled the first levels of the formal training, he went to university to do a degree in sports coaching. He enjoyed it and found it really valuable, and enrolled further to do a masters in

sports coaching. He also did a professional culture award, which is a level five award with the FA to complement his Pro Licence. Initially he did his training and education for himself rather than for the CV. He had learned a lot from the training and education and could put it into practice, so he was glad he did it although he felt it was hard work at the time.

His master's theses dealt with understanding talents, which was his area of attraction. As he progressed he went more on psychological aspects of it and how to create environments:

It made me more aware really of everything. What I do or other coaches do in within the environments. And then you want to begin the planning. Putting it all together.

Through the work as a caretaker manager he had been able to broaden the football side of the culture, mainly by challenging people in areas they needed to develop, and by allowing and expecting them to develop skills and learn from mistakes. Charlie's main personal challenge was his relationship with senior stakeholders, which related to different interpretations of what was the "right" management approach.

4.4.1.2 Performances and different interpretations

In terms of first team success, the club had carried on winning games both in the cup and the league. Besides this success they tried to build the plans for the pre-season. Officially, Charlie was still the caretaker, but was involved in the process of negotiating and the recruitment of new players.

With one month left of the season, the senior management wanted to speak to Charlie about being the Head Coach on a permanent basis. He felt that was a confirmation of him doing a good job. Yet, he had not decided whether to stay or not. He still loved the football side of the role, but there were some drawbacks that made him doubt:

A lot of the processes and structures that are in place aren't good enough. There's a

lot of muddy water there. The owner is very hands on. Micro-manages every single decision, from top to bottom, and it's a bit of a problem.

Charlie felt he was spending all his time managing the owner rather than being the best that he could be in his job. They thought differently about things, which was actually ok. The 'issue' related more to how the owner was managing leadership aspects of the football club, such as the performance department, recruitment and the academy. He didn't feel the senior management realized that this had an impact on the set-ups, preparation and performance of the first team.

That's a real big issue for me. A real big stumbling block if they want to be the best they can be, everything like that has to be in line and complement each other.

Despite the lack of integrated communication between the sport department and the senior management, some of the foundations to build upon seemed to be in place. The drive was there, and they possessed an identity in how to be, to play and recruit. However, they lacked people in place that could be accountable from each department due to the owner's desire to micro-manage from the top. Charlie was going to discuss this problem with the senior management, but without any huge expectations:

I think he sees it as a power struggle that he is given enough power. When he is not, he has still got the final say in everything.

This controlling behaviour executed by the owner made literary no one able to make a decision. Everything had to be passed through the owner first, or decisions that were not made could be passed without anybody knowing about it. Another problem was that no one replaced Charlie when the previous manager left, which made the coaching team one person short. This placed a lot more work on the remaining staff. For Charlie, that made it harder to

focus on his main role, which was to be the Head Coach. He did not mind being one, but he needed more support staff to keep things forward. The current situation made time management worse. This made it harder to enjoy the success of the team. They just had to forget about it and move the focus to the next game. This understanding did not seem to be shared from the club's senior management.

Little did we know [coaching staff] that the following day [to a victory] they'd [senior management] arranged a parade on the balcony. So again, it contradicts what we're trying to do as a coaching team.

If Charlie was supposed to be the Head Coach, these contradictions would likely become the main focus. He was not willing to, because he should rather reflect on the team. The frequency of contact points with the senior managers made it hard to focus on the main job.

Today's been about probably ten to twelve of probably four phone calls, e-mails, text messengers, and it's about trivial issues. They didn't need to be anything to do with me.

He did not feel it was hard to tell the senior management about this misguided leadership, but they did still would not understand performance and what was needed to create performances. However, the results on the pitch had been great. A challenge in the wake of the sporting success, was dropping people for the final game. Not least because all the players were fit. Video-clips were used before the game to explain why he dropped them. He felt a bit harsh about it, but they had to know why they were not in the team, and rather try and help them to get back into the team.

That's not easy [to tell the players], but it fits with what you wanna be or what I

wanna be as a coach or a person. I'm honest and not fall them off. There are no excuses.

Another potential change related challenge was the assistant manager's consideration to go with the previous manager. Lots of different things were going off. He also felt that his salary did commensurate with the scope of the job he did at the moment.

As a caretaker coach, I am not paid as a manager. So, they've got me cheap. U'know what I mean? It is different if they pay me the money which is part of my role. Fine. But in the minute I'm obviously working and my wife still works. Five kids, so I'm gonna say no to some of them.

The value of time, as substantiated in the above quotation, made Charlie think that time should be used carefully:

It is what it is, I mean, one bit is like enjoying the football side. The other bit it's like: If I think I can make a change, I'll stay, but if I don't, I don't.

The job satisfaction was not there among the staff, because they were not given any ownership of what they were doing. The importance of being able to influence for motivation is previously suggested as needed for maintained participation (Deci & Ryan, 2002). When talking about Charlie's views on the value of time, it seems sensible that the importance of doing something considered as meaningful seemed more important than to just stay in the job.

4.4.1.3 End of season

The meeting with the owner and chairmen about Charlie's role for the next season turned into a big argument about the game they played the evening before. They won the game, but the owner still picked the team apart in front of the Chairman and CEO. Charlie

felt it was a test, or a power issue, and straight after they offered him the job, which the meeting actually was for.

He wanted to have a go at me first. It turned into a ball, so I went back at him. They offered me the job anyway and then I was walking out and said: 'I'll think about it'. And I have not spoken with him about it since.

In Charlie's view a 'yes' to become a head coach in that setting would mean that the owner 'got him' and that he would accept any kind of treatment to get the job. Therefore it seemed timely to tell them about another job that he was offered. Although he would prefer the current job, he had that card and he played it. They had asked him recently to go back to the table to negotiate, but he had told them to wait to after the final game. He felt that having two job opportunities gave him some space regarding the negotiations:

The wage will be fine anyway. That's not a problem, but if I'm giving up the security and the profile of the other job I want to know that when I'm sacked in this job, I'm gonna get some money for it.

The awareness of the insecurity that has shown to follow the managerial position (e.g., Bridgewater, 2006; Natland, 2007) seemed to be present in Charlie's mind. He would also like to clarify roles and responsibilities in the negotiations, so the Head Coach did not have to do 'everything'. He wanted to do the negotiation himself, but aimed to involve the League Managers Association to do the contract for him. The nature of the communication between Charlie and his senior management bears witness of a relation that suffers from the lack of trust. Similar relations between football managers and senior managers in British football was uncovered by Kelly & Harris (2010), questioning modern club owners' agendas in their football investments. Given that trust is suggested as needed to enable integrated communication in organisations (Grigorescu & Lupo, 2015), distrust between managerial

levels is unlikely to be to the benefit of the club.

The process of recruiting players seemed more like a gamble of taking players that were desperate to come from lower leagues. So far, they had not recruited anyone that would make the starting eleven better so far. The owner and CEO was in charge of the process and had hired some 'young lads' to help them. The club had no designated Head of Recruitment in place to structure this work. Charlie's role in the recruitment process was to talk to the players that the CEO had picked to sell in the football side of the club.

The final game was coming up. They were sitting on the bus to London after a morning training, and couldn't wait for the game to be played two days later. They felt more prepared than last time they had visited that stadium, simply because they had been there and made it before. Therefore they did not have to go through all the routines and mental preparations again. The players seemed to be full of energy and probably closer to over-excited than scared. Charlie preferred them to be a bit too aroused than flat or nervous, and the trainings had been good lately.

4.4.1.4 Preparing for next season

It couldn't have gone any better, really. It was just meant to be our day. The things that we worked on and spoke about, the players did. They were fantastic from minute one.

The season ended successfully, which meant that the income would increase along with interest and better opposition for the club for the up-coming season. They could not expect to win every game in the Championship, but they would not change the training regime, except developing the existing into higher standards. Another good news was that the owner gradually seemed to understand how Charlie worked to create performances.

He's still very hands on and he will always have the final say as long as our club is

his money. It makes it easier the fact that I agree with the strategy, so he knows that I'm not really fighting him, but we do disagree sometimes on how to do it.

The success over the last few months seemed to make the owner believe in what Charlie was doing and that he wanted him to stay. They were both fans of the club as well, which helped. In every conversation they had about football, the owner wanted more of the same, which he tried to give him anyway. Charlie's opinion and standards had not changed, so he felt that the owner started to understand him more.

I always sort of understood him and what he was asking, and felt that I could give him it, but I think he has just probably beginning to understand me now. What I'm about, really.

The development of their relationship made it easier to sign the contract as the manager for the club. He believed that if the club spent its money wisely, they could get twice as good a team given that the will to invest was present. The problems would probably appear when they stopped winning next season in a better league, but he would still follow the same plan. Charlie developed his performance model at the university, which involved a philosophy of how to play, how to implement and evaluate. All the decisions he did were with reference to the model. Initially, he prepared it to get his message across in job interviews, but as it developed he acted instinctively with the reference to it.

The good thing is what I got in my head [the model] is not only in my head now [experience]. Because I've worked on it for so long, and I'm really happy with it, it's clear in my head.

Managerial consistency, which involves appearing with clarity and clear predictability, is important to sell your ideas to people in the environments (Mintzberg,

1973). Charlie's model seemed to be a useful tool in that respect: to make things clear and as a basis for discussions. When the owner came to him, he would use that model to explain or see if he was right or wrong. The owner had bought into the model because of the results, which Charlie thought would help him next season. He seemed to gain a bit more respect since the meeting when they first tried to sign him, and the results had changed everything in his favour:

Because I walked out [from the meeting], he [the owner] knew that: 'Oh, he's not gonna take any shit'. I know what I want, I know what I'm talking about, and I was happy with that. The fact that we were winning, reinforced exactly what I've said and what I've done. He's got a product which he wanted.

Although football side of the job was down to Charlie, the recruitment was a bit 'sticky and tricky' sometimes. The senior management was clear that they wanted him to keep the group of players together, and the group performances seemed critical for the club to compensate for limited individual qualities compared to players from other teams:

We can't compete with the other championship-club's players, because anyone who has been in the championship and playing well there they're gonna be outside our price-range.

Young and hungry players were therefore targeted in the recruitment, and build upon the team performance. Charlie agreed in the strategy, because there was no room for over-spending if the club should be sustainable. They just had to do things better than any other club to close that gap.

To ensure that the club would develop further into something more consistent, Charlie would make sure that the owner and himself had regular meetings twice a week. Given that Charlie previously tried to avoid the senior management of the club, because he

felt it was a waste of time, his proactive role in organizing these meetings confirms a significant change in the relationship between the owner and himself. The current case suggests therefore that relationships to senior managers might develop for the better over time, not least in conditions where the team is winning and the manager is able to bring his ideas across. Not only the interest from the owner had changed through the period, but also the external interest had increased:

I think there's a real feel-good factor from within the town. Not just the football fans, but the town in general, because there was a lot of attention obviously some presidents to success. There has been a lot of attention on me as someone from the town next season taking over as a fan and an ex-player. I think that sort of brought a different dynamic to it with lots of people obviously in the town area know me and my family, but also people then who don't know me seem to be do now and trying to connect to me. I think the club tries to harness that and get behind that. That's a change, it's a little bit different.

His identity seemed to be a perfect fit with the club culture, and the owner loved it. Yet, along with all these the changes following his role, he felt a need to switch off. He just did not know how yet, but he would try to schedule the ability to step back now and then whether it was to train or being with the family. It was not easy given that he had not got any more support staff, but at least the salary had changed so he got paid for what he was doing.

4.5 Discussion

The purpose of Study Three was to investigate how the managerial cycle worked from a managers' perspective over time. To do so, two case studies were conducted involving managers from two professional football clubs (English and Norwegian). The findings revealed that a range of aspects changed over time within all the three phases of the

managerial cycle (recruitment, employment, termination). The following areas will be more closely discussed in the current section; sporting performances and results (1), managerial competence and learning (2), working relationships (3), sporting environments (4) and private life (5).

Regarding *sporting performances and results*, the context of professional football management often involves chasing unachievable goals while dealing with media and supporters (Nesti, 2010). In line with this, the current findings showed how fast the mood states of media, supporters and local community might change along with the results, how internal club stakeholders deal with these external pressures, and provides examples of how sporting results might contribute to the senior management evaluations regarding the manager's position in the organisation. Further, the impression that only improvement is good enough, even for the manager, seemed to apply. In previous literature, the urge to improve is recognized as embedded in the nature of sport (Gammelsæter, 2013; McDougall et al., 2015), and cultures in sacking the manager are often developed as a strategy of solving problems internally (Arnulf et al., 2011). The contribution of the current study to the existing research is to highlight how fast the expectations and mood-states might change among people that are internally or externally connected to the club when the sporting results exceed the expectations, and how hard it is for these stakeholders to compromise when the team is underperforming.

All of the Study Three participants were at quite early stages of their managerial career, which involved the need to progress in terms of role related *competence and learning*. Part of the learning was about finding their own style based on a mix of previous experiences and personal ideas. Their competence related to sporting operations seemed more developed than their ability to work closely with their senior management. The up-management challenges might as well rely on the competence among senior managers to understand the

sporting side of the business. The leadership abilities among elite sport managers have, until recently, been a blind spot among researchers (Fletcher & Wagstaff, 2009). Yet, the off-pitch abilities to the leaders involved have been highlighted as crucial to develop performances (Fletcher & Arnold, 2011), because elite athletes are influenced by their social and organisational environments (Hardy et al., 1996). The findings here suggest that lack of integrated communication between the sporting level and the senior management contradicted effective development at an organisational level in both cases. Lack of awareness and use of integrated communication, is suggested to be essential for developing organisational efficiency, and further suggested to be a common short-coming in medium sized businesses (Grigorescu & Lupo, 2015), and the current findings indicate that this might also be the case in the two professional football clubs.

To develop effective communication, there is a need to build trust into the *working relationships* (Grigorescu & Lupo, 2015). Lack of trust between managers and the senior management is previously recognized as a common challenge within British professional football culture (Kelly & Harris, 2010), and the findings within the current study resonates, to some extent, with this observation. The current study involved stages where the communication between the sporting and boardroom levels were either superficial or absent. It also sheds light on how the relationship, and thereby the communication, between the manager and senior management was developing. The current findings suggests that building up understanding and trust in senior managers might be easier when the manager possess clear ideas that are followed by sporting results. This aligns with the identification of elite environment as driven almost exclusively by performance (McDougall et al., 2015), and especially in professional football due to the publicity and the money at stake (Lonsdale, 2004; Nesti, 2010). As a consequence of great results, the owner in Case Two gradually was more convinced about Charlie's idea of how to reach their shared goals. This also means that

understanding of long-term sport related processes among senior stakeholders cannot be taken for granted. The eager to win and collect points also confess the difference between sport and traditional businesses that are concerned about making money, which is previously highlighted in the literature (Gammelsæter, 2016).

All of the managers utilized an autonomy-supportive approach that involved empowerment of support staff members and building accountability into players regarding their own development. Ownership to development and independence in work has previously been suggested to facilitate learning and motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2002). The efficiency of autonomy-supportive coaching seemed to depend on the player's respect for the manager and their abilities among players and support staff to adapt. The ability to adapt to autonomy supportive coaching depends on the players' ability to adapt to the approach, which refers to a Study One finding that not all player or teams are trained to be self-responsible, which might be a consideration for the manager to take before taking charge in a new club (Isberg, 2003; Oltedal, 2012, in transcripts). The use of autonomy-supportive management has previously been identified as a preferred approach among players in Norwegian elite football (Høigaard et al., 2008; Pensgaard & Roberts, 2002), whereas English football has traditionally been characterized by a more controlling managerial approach (Kelly, 2008a). The current findings state that autonomy supportive coaching was present in Norwegian and English football management as an approach to facilitate learning and development.

In terms of private life, family seemed to be the central issue for the all of the participants. Being a manager involved less time for family compared to coaching roles with less responsibility. Time management therefore became an important issue, as the participating managers tried to find some time with family, besides dealing with job related responsibilities. Little time with family was partly the reason why 'wasting time' on

unqualified opinions at work was viewed as undesired and caused frustration. Similar views have been described by Nesti (2010), in that the demands placed on family life for sporting staff in football at the highest levels are likely to cause distress (Nesti, 2004). Further, literature (e.g. Bjørnebye, 2009; Calvin, 2015; Ferguson, 2013) also suggests that the nature of the position implies certain strains with regard to privacy and family life. The current findings suggests therefore that indirect support of managers in dealing with private life and personal issues might be offered by the senior management of clubs by protecting them from exposure to unnecessary inputs at an everyday basis, thereby enabling them to use their time more efficiently.

Given that no previous studies have explored how the managers' everyday experience might change over time and conditions in the context of professional league football, the study should have the potential to broaden and deepen the existing knowledge of conditions for effective management. The participants were all at early stages of their managerial career, and seemed to still be in the process of shaping their managerial philosophy and/or skills. Therefore the results might have been different if the sample consisted of more experienced managers. In that sense, older and more experienced managers might experience changes and efficiency differently. At the same time, younger managers might be more open minded in relation to exploring new ideas and concepts. One issue that would be interesting to investigate further in light of the current results, is whether younger English managers are increasingly likely to use more autonomy-supportive approaches than the traditional dictatorial approach? If so, key-stakeholders that contribute to managerial training, development and support should enable the understanding required to meet the needs incurred.

4.6 Conclusions

The current study confirms that the everyday lived experiences of professional football managers' change over time, space and in varying occupational conditions. The changes took place at personal, interpersonal and organisational levels and contained both negative and positive effects. The learning experience seemed to be significant for new managers regarding the off-pitch (man management and up-management) dimensions of the role. They seemed familiar with the on-pitch activities, due to their background experiences as players and coaches, and all the managers approached their players and staff by using autonomy supportive coaching. The findings extend the previous research (Høigaard et al., 2008; Kelly, 2008a; Pensgaard & Roberts, 2002) within the field by stating that the understanding and use of autonomy-supportive coaching as an approach to facilitate player development and performance (Deci & Ryan, 2002) is still present among Norwegian managers, but also among English managers. Although the sample is limited, the findings indicate a shift in managerial approaches that should have implications for future training and support of professional football managers. Lack of integrated communication between the sporting staff and the senior management seemed to create distrust, with the potential to impair the overall development of the club. A clear managerial philosophy with desired results, seemed convenient in the aim to build trust and understanding in senior managers. As such, the current study indicated that integrated communication, which is found to be lacking in most small and medium sized businesses (Grigorescu & Lupo, 2015), also seems to be challenging, but still possible, to develop within the organisational culture in professional football clubs. An increased awareness within the football management culture about the importance of integrated communication for organisational development, and how to facilitate this notion, should therefore be an advantageous development to enable increased managerial efficiency within the employment phase of the cycle.

Chapter 5 - Discussion, Conclusions & Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

The aim of the thesis was to explore key factors related to the managerial cycle (recruitment, employment and termination) in English and Norwegian professional football leagues. To do so, the researcher examined literature that contributed to a better understanding of the research field, or to support the emerging discussions (e.g, Fletcher & Arnold, 2011; Gammelsæter, 2013; Mintzberg, 1973; Nesti, 2010). The chosen explorative approach is recommended within existential leadership research that aims to heighten the awareness and deepen the understanding of the contextual issues that leaders face (Fusco et al., 2015). A range of unique and novel research studies were employed to explore the research question and develop a greater critical understanding of the factors impacting today's managerial functioning within two professional football leagues. Different perspectives (managers, key stakeholders) and methods (isolated interviews, longitudinal case studies) were used to explore the managerial cycle, including the lived experiences related to challenges and adaptations, and how these might evolve over time. Chapter Five presents synthesis of the key findings from Study One, Two, and Three, and discusses these in light of related literature. Moreover, the contributions of the current research to the existing literature and implications for practice are further suggested. Limitations of the current research are identified, followed by suggestions for future research. Finally the key messages from the overall research are addressed in the conclusion.

A total of three studies were carried out to broaden and deepen the understanding of key factors related to the managerial cycle. Two of the studies interviewed managers to explore their lived 'current' and 'previous' role-related experiences (Study One), and how these might change over time (Study Three). In addition, Study Two investigated key

internal and external stakeholder views on the training, development and support of professional football league managers within the various phases of the managerial cycle in two European professional football leagues. The purpose of Study One was to explore the role and function of professional league managers in England and Norway from a manager's perspective. To do this, the objectives looked to explore the manager's perception of challenges within the role (1), the role-related skills and qualities possessed by managers (2), and the managers' perceptions of future challenges within the role (3). Information rich participants with the experience of managing within the top four levels of English football, and/or the Norwegian top division, engaged in a series of individual semi-structured interviews. The development of the interview schedules drew upon literature that has previously been used in a professional football context (e.g, Gilmore, 2009). The managerial cycle model was developed on the basis of Study One findings. In Study Two, the managerial cycle was examined by investigating internal and external stakeholders' views on the efficacy of training, development and support within its various phases. Semi-structured interviews were carried out, and the structure of the interview schedules was informed by findings from study one, and customised to the respective roles of the interviewees. Both Study One and Two used content analysis in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants lived experiences within the professional football context (Biddle et al., 2001). Study Three sought to further investigate the managerial process as a response to indications in the existing literature and findings from Study One and Two that the managerial experience might change over time. The main aim was to investigate the managers lived experiences on the various phases of the managerial cycle (recruitment, employment, termination). In that respect, two longitudinal case studies were conducted, by carrying out interviews of the managers in one Norwegian (full season) and one English (part of season) professional football club respectively. The choice of participants in Study

Three might be viewed as opportunistically in light of the limited possibilities to get access to professional football clubs and managers over time as a researcher. The matter of access also informed its methodological approach, given that an ethnographic design, involving a greater presence by the researcher inside the club, was not accepted by the participants in Case Study One (Norway), nor was it realistic to carry out in Case Study Two (England). Therefore, the case studies were based on ethnographical principles, although the data mainly was collected through regular interviews with the manager(s).

5.2 Key Findings

The overall key findings of the thesis draw upon a critical synthesis of the significant results from Study One, Two and Three, and further, discuss how these add into and extend our understanding with respect to the role and functioning of the professional football manager throughout the managerial cycle. In addition, the findings are discussed in light of the existing literature in the field, with respect to how they complement and extend our knowledge of this complex and underreported world.

The literature in the field of professional football management has developed in recent years. Autobiographies and texts with detailed role-related descriptions from successful managers are frequently distributed to the wider audience (e.g., Calvin, 2015; Ferguson & Moritz, 2015), due to the significant interest of these actors within the popular industry of professional football. However to date, only few have succeeded in getting access to professional football managers as researchers. Kelly (2008a) carried out interviews with British professional football managers (and players) to investigate their views upon the role and practice. This line of enquiry was further explored from the perspective of the relationship between managers and directors (Kelly & Harris, 2010). These studies paint a picture of British football culture as one that is built upon working class values, involving

scepticism towards academia, masculine and authoritarian management behaviours, and, to a significant extent, distrust between managers and senior stakeholders. A similar backdrop for the British professional football identity is also, until recently, drawn by other academics (Carter, 2006; Mitchell, 2016; Parker, 2001). By extension, a widespread resistance to change has been identified in British football managers (Kelly, 2008a). Although performance driven climates and cultures in English elite sport have tended to prevail in the face of resistance to change (Fletcher & Wagstaff, 2009), this has not been the case with the English football culture (Kelly, 2008a). The suggestions based on these studies points in the direction that a more liberal attitude towards professional knowledge would benefit processes of role related and organisational change. A less hostile attitude toward academia might be found in the Norwegian football, although the formal requirements are similar to the English, and the main attribution to the role of a professional manager is a former playing career (Carter, 2006). This refers to the Scandinavian tradition that the club operations are based upon democratic principles (Gammelsæter, 2016), which to a greater extent than the English tradition, facilitates expectations of involvement, and opposes autocratic leadership behaviours (Pensgaard & Roberts, 2002). To succeed as a manager, a study of Swedish sport teams managers at an international level referred to cultural and personal awareness as key factors, along with humbleness towards new knowledge and a clear philosophy (Isberg, 2003). Fletcher and Arnold (2011) confirmed and extended these findings, by emphasizing vision (philosophy), operations, people and culture as key leadership areas in elite sport. Although these areas were identified on the basis of interviews with Performance Directors' in Olympic sports, they highlighted the importance of developing knowledge and competences across organisational levels and domains of practice. These observations are also supported by Nesti (2010), on the basis of his theoretically informed practitioner reflections related to the provision of psychological support for Premier League managers.

Nesti's (2010) shared applied experience extends the knowledge from previous research by bringing depth into understandings of, for example, why identity and the deeper sense of meaning in life is important for the development of a managerial philosophy, and how stress and anxiety might be approached and dealt with by these managers. The managerial knowledge of who they are, and what they stand for (identity), was addressed as crucial for reacting and dealing with problems in a constructive way, not least in light of how failure is punished in professional football (Nesti, 2010). The current research extends the previous research by drawing a less sided picture regarding the resistance to change, the scepticism towards academia, and the masculine and authoritarian management behaviours that are suggested to dominate within the English football culture (e.g., Carter, 2006; Kelly, 2008a). Although this culture might still be dominating, it seems to be a shift towards more autonomy-supportive management in English professional football. The skillset to facilitate autonomy-supportive environments is not sufficiently developed by everyone. Yet, the intentions, and the fact that some English managers already possess University Degrees in teaching and coaching, suggests that English football may be undergoing a period of change. In the extension of this, the current research suggest that managers that possess a University Degree may be better prepared to compose, develop and maintain effective learning climates for individuals and teams. The importance of being able to learn fast within the quickly changing nature of professional football, is in line with Mintzberg's (1994) suggestion that the ability to keep track with environmental changes is crucial to keep consistency in work as a manager. In other words, a manager that is not able to change along with his environment, will be left behind and gradually struggle to be perceived as credible when facing staff and players. The importance of staying consistent as a manager aligns with Nesti's (2010) description of how important it is to appear with clarity, especially through highly pressured situations. As such, the knowledge that learning and self-development are

crucial for managerial consistency is not new. It has just not previously been a subject to research within the unique context of professional league football.

It could be argued that the present research and applied experiences partly answers the call from researchers (Chadwick, 2013; Gilmore, 2009; Kelly & Waddington, 2006) linked to the underlying personal and environmental conditions required to deal effectively with role related challenges. Another call in the literature relates to the need for a broader knowledge of managerial expertise to face the increased level of financial, marketing and administrative concerns within professional football clubs (Kelly, 2008a; Nesti, 2010). A third area of interest refers to the culture of frequent turnover of managers within the football industry, which has been highlighted as a challenge in both the English (Bridgewater, 2006) and Norwegian (Arnulf et al., 2011) professional football contexts. These three areas of research interest relate to managerial preparedness, performance and sackings. A particular focus within the current research has been to increase the awareness, and an in depth understanding of the personal and environmental conditions required to deal with the role as a professional football league manager within the managerial cycle (recruitment, employment, termination). To enable precise guidelines in this respect, an understanding based on key individual experiences from the context of professional league football was required (Gammelsæter, 2013), and the use of an inductive approach has been needed to explore this complex and unreported world (Fusco et al., 2015).

The key findings draw upon the abilities and environmental conditions needed to operate efficiently as a manager within the context of professional league football across the various phases of the managerial cycle. To extract the findings in a synthesised manner, the common threads from the Study One, Two, and Three are interwoven in the following discussion. The picture that emerged brought to light a significant complexity that the manager has to face within the role. Yet, some common elements emerged as key enablers

for effective management that were further contextualised within the managerial cycle (recruitment, employment, termination).

The key findings related to the *recruitment phase* addressed the need for a conceptual agreement between the manager and the club (1), and the importance of managerial preparedness for the role (2). The conceptual agreement related to the desired approach to leadership as perceived by the manager and the club respectively. The findings suggest that awareness in both managers and senior stakeholders (employers) around their own leadership approach will increase the possibility for a successful partnership. For example, a club that expect the manager to take charge and develop the culture based on his managerial philosophy, looks for a transformational leader. This choice should be based on a desire to change the organisational culture, because the manager will define the club values. In clubs in which the manager is expected to operate in line with the overall idea of the club, a manager holding an acceptance for the club values is required. A transformational leader is not needed when the club's desire is to move on with their existing philosophy. In this regard, it may be argued that these clubs should identify a manager that is closer to a functional leadership role, which requires that the manager is part of a joint project that is directed by the club, rather than taking an overall club responsibility. In line with the existing literature (Isberg, 2003; Nesti, 2010), the current findings suggest that awareness at personal and cultural levels are important for managers when arriving at a new club. This awareness might help defining which approach is appropriate to deal with the group of players (Oltedal, 2012, in transcripts), or to determine whether the club is a fit for the manager at all. This question can also be turned to the employers. For example, organisations may wish to explore whether a manager possess the skills needed to deal with the particular group of players, and, is the manager able to work in line with the club values? Deliberate processes on these matters may increase the possibility for a fruitful partnership, and thereby a

competitive advantage compared to clubs that fail in this important aspect of the recruitment process. The potential advantage for the clubs who make a thorough job in the recruitment phase, with the aim to facilitate organisational congruency in the employment phase, is considerable. Not least in regards of the previous suggestion that the competence among senior management in professional football is often poor (Arnulf et al., 2011).

A second expectation that managers might need to be aware of before taking charge of a managerial role, refers to the Study Two findings that employers often expect managers to update themselves with no other internal support than budgets and the support staff available. Given the complex and time consuming nature of managerial work (Kelly, 2008a), and the rapid changes within the professional football industry (Lonsdale, 2004; Nesti, 2010), managers need the ability to self-develop to meet this expectation. This brings us to the second key issue related to the recruitment phase, namely the managerial *preparedness* for the role. The preparedness issue addressed the needs related to managerial training and education (1) and the importance of managerial experience (2). Previous research indicates that most managerial learning occurs in informal settings (Bloom et al., 1998). This involves experience based knowledge, attitudes and insights that have been acquired through life-long learning processes (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974). The current findings support the view that the informal learning sources are the most used among professional football managers. Yet, the current results also addressed the importance of a different form of informal learning as important. This related to self-directed learning, meaning the ability to address the needs for your own and the teams need to develop, and the ability to select the appropriate sources of knowledge. The skill to update yourself in effective ways, and keep a humble attitude toward new knowledge, is previously described as crucial for managers with the aim to stay up-to-date (Mintzberg, 1994). The current research suggests that quality of self-directed learning differs significantly between managers. In that sense, the managers from the Norwegian top

division seemed more conscious, by being clear about which kind of information (e.g., management literature, sport science) is needed to develop themselves and the team and where to find it (e.g., expert professionals), compared to their English counterparts in this respect. The modest efforts to seek or consult external expertise and knowledge to facilitate learning and development, might reflect the work-place behaviours embedded in the football culture (Parker, 2001). This refers to Carter's (2006, p. 128) argument that the "mistrust toward the intellectual is rooted in the history of Britain's social relations". Given that the main attribute to become a manager is a former player career (Kelly, 2008a), the way players are socialized into football (Parker, 2001) is likely to have an impact on their attitudes in the future. The socialisation process is therefore suggested to have important implications for managers' attitudes towards training, education and coaching qualifications (Kelly, 2008a), and thereby on the manager's preparedness to take charge in the modern game. Unlike the majority of the English managers, most of the participating managers in Norway held an academic background. A part of the academic upbringing at Universities is the development of critical thinking skills (Elder, 2007), which in this particular context is useful for the targeting of information and evaluating the quality of it. This key managerial quality, expected by the employers, and suggested as crucial for managers inside (Isberg, 2003) and outside (Mintzberg, 1973) the sport context, seems not sufficiently prepared through the formal (UEFA-based) managerial training (Study One & Study Two). This might refer to the relatively limited time available, the number of issues involved, the approach to learning, and expectations to participants. On this basis, the suggestion can be made that an academically based managerial training programme might be more suitable to develop learning abilities. The dominance of foreign managers taking charge in English Premier League clubs, might reflect employers' attitudes in seeking something beyond the traditional background and training of an English manager. This observation means that English

managers that possess the qualities called for by the employers, should be at least as well prepared for the role as foreign managers given their knowledge of the culture and language. Indeed, it can be suggested that as long as the formal training does not provide the quality that is expected by the industry, the managers themselves need to make sure that they are sufficiently prepared.

The key findings related to the *employment* phase stressed the need for a clear philosophy and vision for effective management (1) and the importance of maintaining consistency as a manager (2). As emphasized in the recruitment findings, an agreement of the conceptual idea to follow is important to facilitate effective organisational development. Whether the culture, the manager, or a hybrid between the two informs the idea, is not the main point in this respect. The main issue for effective management is to get everyone on “the same page” and work in “the same direction”. To enable organisational effectiveness, it is recognised that integrated communication is required (Grigorescu & Lupo, 2015), meaning that the work is based on a clear and shared understanding. Integrated communication between the manager and his support staff was observed as crucial for various reasons. First, it was required to enable the support staff to respond adequately to the manager’s needs. Secondly, the shared understanding worked as a basis for discussion, involvement and development of the product, which was found motivating. Finally, through the efforts and improvements that built upon this integrated understanding, relationships, belief and trust were built. In bigger clubs, a Head of Performance could support the manager to ensure that the communication between the manager and support staff is maintained and is considered productive. In other clubs, the manager may keep the number of support staff down to enable him to get regular touch points with everyone. Given the range of professions that might be involved in a modern day professional football club, the current study suggests that it is an advantage as a manager to have some degree of technical

knowledge across these professions, to enable a basis for communication. The reality of frequent managerial turnovers was seen as a challenge to personal and organisational development by the support staff, because the processes (integrated communication, precise support) needed time to develop. This means that clubs and managers that are aware of the value of integrated organisational processes, and are able to develop these over time, should have a competitive advantage compared to clubs that are not able to build stability and predictability into their work. The managers' trust by the club's senior management did also depend on the manager's ability to nurture the relationship, and the ability of being convincing about the idea and performance. In cases where the senior management did not agree in how to develop the desired performances, the degree of trust could change depending on the results. Despite that managerial and organisational efficiency depend on these stakeholders' contributions, such stakeholder experiences have to date been relatively untouched (Noblet & Gifford, 2002). Yet, it is suggested that the competence among senior stakeholders might be poor both in professional football (Arnulf et al., 2011) and Olympic sport (Fletcher & Wagstaff, 2009). Furthermore, Fletcher and Arnold (2011) obtained Performance Director (Olympic Sport) views that highlighted vision, operations, people, and culture as keys to performance leadership. The various views obtained in the current research revealed similar key enablers to facilitate managerial and organisational effectiveness, although it adds explanations and insights in how these enablers might work in a professional football club context. As such, the contextual details that emerge in the current research, in why a clear managerial philosophy and consistent practice is important for managerial survival, seem closer to Nesti's (2010) applied experiences of providing psychological support to professional football league managers.

Whereas the section about managerial clarity referred to the importance of being consistent within the role, the following will argue for the importance of maintained

managerial consistency. The existing literature in the field argues that the manager needs to keep track with environmental developments to stay consistent (Mintzberg, 1973). The current findings support the notion that the ability to up-date yourself as a manager and to enable a maintained development of the team is truly important in professional football, given the rapid environmental changes. If the manager lacks the ability to keep track with developments, and thereby struggles to manage with clarity and consistency, this is likely to prevent the support staff from working with precision. According to Mintzberg (1973), loops of problems might occur as a consequence when the manager is prevented from keeping track with change. According to the current findings, this might happen due to challenges related to time management, as a consequence of poor learning skills, or as a consequence of high levels of performance pressure.

The culture of sacking managers is well highlighted in the existing literature (Bridgewater, 2006; Natland, 2007), suggesting that the low average tenure is partly caused by self-reinforcing cultures developed in clubs, as a strategy for solving problems internally (Arnulf et al., 2011). Therefore, the need to explore what is really going on within the *termination* phase, and what can possibly be made to avoid managerial sackings has been of interest in the current research. The importance of building sustainability to establish effective working conditions within professional football clubs has already been highlighted. The importance of clear and consistent management is also emphasized. According to senior managers in Study Two, the sackings often come as a consequence of poor results, or due to conflicting views on how to shape the club for the future. The distrust that might take place between managers and senior stakeholders has previously been investigated from a manager's perspective by Kelly and Harris (2010). The Study One and Study Three findings share the view that the managers often feel unfairly treated in these situations. These feelings might be understood in light of literature that deals with goal and need thwarting (Deci &

Ryan, 2002; Lazarus, 1991). Again, the experiences made by internal key stakeholders on the topic, adds further substance to how the challenge can be met and understood. Based on the need for consistency among the members of support staff in periods where the results are lacking, the managers need to stick to their plan. “In order to demonstrate leadership skills in the toughest of times, it is essential that managers know who they are and what they stand for” (Nesti, 2010, p. 89). If not, this contributes to confusion among staff and a lack of direction in their efforts. Further, strong relations to the senior management seemed to help the manager to keep the job for a little longer in periods of poor results, which highlights the importance of maintaining relationships with these key senior stakeholders. Patience among senior staff increases the likeliness of getting the time needed to changing negative trends. Yet, if the results remain poor, and the pressure forces the manager to leave his plan, the trust internally is likely to break down. In these particular situations, it might be right to replace the manager. Given that the manager’s philosophy ideally is strongly related to the manager’s identity and deeper sense of meaning in life (Nesti, 2010), walking away from this overall idea means that the basis for a future of effective managerial and organisational work within the particular club disappears.

5.2 Practical Implications

The practical implications that are outlined in the following section shed light on the needs related to the training, development and support across the various phases of the managerial cycle. The implications are directed to internal (including the manager) and external stakeholders to facilitate managerial and organisational effectiveness within the context of professional league football.

5.2.1 Internal Implications on Managerial Recruitment

One might assume that the process of managerial recruitment involves expectations and desires for a fruitful relationship between the manager and the club. To increase the likeliness for a fruitful partnership, there are considerations to make both by the manager and the employers (senior management). The manager needs to consider whether his personal values, leadership style, skillset and philosophy fits into the particular club. These considerations require a personal awareness towards himself as a manager (who am I), and cultural awareness related to the club profile and history (who am I dealing with). Conversely, the employers need to evaluate the profile and capacity of the manager in light of the club values, approach to leadership and the required skillset. Such evaluations demand an understanding of the organisational culture and requirements, and an informed perspective of which kind of managerial profile would align to the club. Other elements that should be clarified, agreed on, and included in the contract before signing are the specific goals related to the managerial responsibilities. A common understanding of how these goals can be reached should be part of the groundwork in the recruitment process, because conflicts between the short-term expectations among employers, and the occasional need for using long-term processes among managers reaching their goals have shown to be present in the industry. It is contended that by ignoring this issue, a possible source of conflict might follow through to the employment, and potentially expedite, directly or indirectly, the termination of the working relationship. As such, goals and responsibilities should be specified in the contract based upon common interests and understandings. Regarding legislative-related issues to the contract, both the English and Norwegian managers' associations offer, and recommend, support for their members, given the frequency of managerial turnover in the industry.

5.2.2 External Implications related to Recruitment

To prepare managers for efficient handling within the role, two areas seemed particularly important in preparing for the role demands. These related to the skill of critical thinking and the understanding across professions. It is suggested that managers who lack the skill of critical thinking, will not be adequately prepared to face the needs for self-development and team development within the rapidly changing industry of professional league football. This skill involves the ability to effectively target sources of information that are useful for development at any time. The preparation of critical thinking skills seems better prepared among managers that possess some form of University, or academic background. The current findings suggest that the formal UEFA-based training qualification appears insufficient in respect of preparing the managers ability to facilitate effective learning. On the basis of the current implication, an evaluation of the current requirements to the formal managerial preparations for the role is needed, grounded in UEFA's responsibility to give managers a fair chance to adapt into an already vulnerable position.

Another important topic is the need to possess an understanding across professional domains to enable the manager to communicate with different internal stakeholders. Although the content of the UEFA Pro-license already emphasizes this importance, the current implication will rather be a reminder of this importance. A manager that lack these skills will not get the most out the capacity of his staff, due to the limitations in the ability to communicate across professional domains.

5.2.6 External implications on the Termination phase

Given the high turnover of managers in professional league football, the managers' organisations should continue to support managers in shaping contracts that might help them to define responsibilities and face regularities. They might also help mentoring managers to leave their position in situations where the contract is defaulted by the employer in a clearly

violated way. For example, if the owner of a club recruit players without involving the manager when this is the manager's responsibility. To decrease the likeliness to fail immediately as a young and/or inexperienced manager, the managers need to develop their awareness around themselves as individuals and what defines them as managers and why. It is believed that this process is fundamental for the development of a managerial philosophy. Without this awareness, it is hard for the manager to evaluate whether a club is a "good" or "bad" fit, and the manager will struggle to convince the players and support staff, and thereby decrease the likeliness to perform effectively in the role.

5.2.3 Internal implications to the Employment phase

As stressed in the implications to recruitment, the need for a shared conceptual understanding between the manager and the senior management is key for establishing effective club operations. Firstly, a shared idea and agreement related to how to operate to reduce friction between leaders and make them pull in the same direction is vital. Secondly, when the manager signals his needs based on a clear idea, the precision of the support staff's work will increase. To fully make use of the support staff, the manager needs to understand their responses. This requires that the manager possesses the technical knowledge needed, or that someone who possesses these skills helps the manager to read their signals. A Performance Director or a Head of Performance might for example cover this, which are roles that increasingly are growing in the game. The needs might differ between clubs and conditions, depending on the number and competences of the people involved. The issue is relevant in every professional club, but especially the bigger clubs that are increasingly growing in staff.

To face the needs and processes of change, the manager requires the ability to learn and facilitate learning in others. The learning needs to be effective, due to the time pressures related to the role and the observation that the environments are rapidly changing. As such,

it is suggested that the manager needs to possess the pedagogical skills to create effective learning environments and the ability to target the information needed to feed these environments. Clubs that have managers that are not prepared for this task are likely to be left behind in comparison with rival clubs. This ability is key to keep consistency in the management of the club. Consistency in work, which refers to the compliance between the overall idea/philosophy and the related actions and operations, depends on the manager's ability and time to update. Senior stakeholders might support their managers by not misusing the manager's time (e.g., trivial phone-calls and e-mails), and by not interfering with the manager's responsibilities. Young managers might benefit from using a mentor to structure their use of time.

5.2.4 External implications to the Employment phase

To improve the awareness and skills related to time management and learning, managers might benefit from using external sources of knowledge, such as books, practitioners, or experts, to better inform the on-going work. Mentoring or coaching might also be useful for the manager that wants to implement more long-term processes of any kind, depending on the needs. These mentors should be chosen by, or in the agreement with, the manager himself.

5.2.5 Internal implications to the Termination phase

The managerial sackings are often related to poor results, and sometimes to disagreements regarding the direction of the club (strategy). One of the problems that triggers strong (negative) emotions in the manager is the sudden, and less personal and humanistic way of terminating the managers contract, which often is by an SMS (text message), or a short meeting after the decision is already made. The senior stakeholder(s) might support the

manager by offering such feedback at an early stage in what is considered as a negative trend. By involvement at an early stage, the manager might be more likely to leave the club based on an understanding and agreement (if the problem it is not likely to be solved), or it might give the manager the opportunity to turn the undesired tendency around.

The main question related to managerial sackings is; at which point is it fair to sack the manager? After a period of poor results, the pressure usually increases externally (e.g., media, fans), and internally (e.g., senior management, owner) to the club on the manager to get points. Significant pressure might cause that the manager is no longer able to hang on to his principles, and thereby not able to follow the usual processes of dialogue and development internally. When the manager lose consistency, this leads to confusion and distrust among the support staff. At the point when the manager walks away from his overall idea, it may be considered as the right decision to replace him. Otherwise, it would be unfair to sack a manager that sticks to the overall plan and is able to operationalise the daily processes internally. In that case it could be argued that the club should primarily support him and thereby ease the pressure.

The recommendations to senior stakeholders within clubs that have developed cultures in sacking managers (Arnulf et al., 2011), would be to increase the awareness related to the club culture leadership approach, to inform the needs prior to the recruitment process. If the recruitment process fails it is suggested that this may lead to implications in the employment phase, which is then likely to cause another termination.

5.2.6 Implications for sport psychologists

Sport psychologists might facilitate consistency and performance at individual, organisational and cultural levels by using the current research information in their applied work. At an individual level, they might help the manager to increase the awareness and understanding of his or her personal values and passions as a basis for

building a clear and consistent philosophy. The sport psychologist might also support the manager in how to build effective learning environments through involvement and delegation of responsibilities. Further, the he or she might help the manager, if needed, to target and consider the quality of information that the manager can use to develop himself, his staff, and/or his players. The research information from the current study can be utilized to support the manager in the toughest of times to ensure that he hangs on to his principles. Another topic would be to challenge managers to reflect upon their attitudes and communication with internal stakeholders to increase popularity, and to lift the working atmosphere and quality of support. Finally, in terms of stress management, the current information might indicate which kind of stressors the manager is likely to face within the role depending on competence, age, league level, and club size. As such, it is also possible, based on the current findings, to consider whether an approach based on behaviouristic and cognitive principles (e.g. Lazarus, 1991) or a holistic approach (Selye, 1978) to stress and coping would be beneficial to the situations or contexts respectively.

At a team-level, the needs for sport psychological assistance depend on the matureness, competence and individuals involved. The sport psychologist might contribute by organising and lead group processes adjusted to the actual need. As a basis, facilitate processes to increase the group awareness seem useful: Who are we as a group and why? What are we aiming for? How do we get there? Group process that deal with such questions might contribute to develop clear and shared conceptual understandings. A shared idea of the team project will increase the likeliness for effective communication and precise support, which is important for further team development, confidence and performance.

At a cultural level, the sport psychologist might support managers that are not sufficiently aware of the meaning of club culture on the expectations of quality standards and philosophy of play. For example, if the expectations and attitudes embedded in the local community are to work proactively and hard as a unit, a manager that emphasize defensive control and counter-attacks might face reluctance even if he win games. To avoid a mismatch between the manager and the club in the recruitment phase, a sport psychologist that is familiar with the leadership of professional football might mentor managers in how to increase the likeliness of getting the right fit, and subsequently increase the likeliness of achieving continuity in work.

Finally, sport psychologists might support the organisations (clubs) themselves by increasing the awareness regarding their recruitment of managers with the intention to increase the likeliness of successfully match club needs with managerial capacity and profile. The frequent managerial changes that characterize the football culture, that are contradicted by the argument that it takes time to develop robust performance cultures (Arnulf et al., 2011), argue for the investment in competence within this area as a provident action for the club. The sport psychologist could be a most useful discussion partner when it comes to facilitating communication that strengthen the employer-manager relationships, and regarding the evaluation of employer considerations that deal with termination of working relationships.

5.4 Limitations of Research

The participants of the current research were limited to the contexts of English and Norwegian professional league football, which means that the findings are not necessarily equally relevant for other National leagues, competitive levels or sports. Moreover, the findings are based on a selection of participants across leagues, rather than the full populations, which means that club stakeholders that might not feel familiar with every

finding. From a researcher's perspective, those responsible for the formal training of managers from both the FA (England) and UEFA should preferably be included as participants in Study Two. However, in this respect UEFA rejected the invitation to participate, although people internally to UEFA were helpful in forwarding the invitation to the right person. In the case of the (English) FA, the process of reaching the responsible person through contacts unfortunately broke down. This limited the researcher's ability to obtain in depth information from these external stakeholders with respect to views around existing and future managerial training. Another limitation considering the selection of participants refers to the exclusion of media, fans and players as key stakeholders. The decision related to the indirect nature of fans' and media's influence on the managers work. Moreover, the decision was informed by the managers' emphasize in Study One regarding the importance of support from staff and senior stakeholders' for enabling effective integrated processes internally in the club. As such, Study Two focused on the off-pitch elements within the managerial cycle, rather than the on-pitch coaching. Even though players are important stakeholders for the managerial performance (given that the manager gets results through them), the players' views on the professional football manager in England and Norway are, to some extent, already explored (e.g., Høigaard et al., 2008; Kelly, 2008a; Pensgaard & Roberts, 2002). The same counts for on-pitch related coaching (e.g., Høigaard et al., 2008; Potrac et al., 2002). Yet, the study of how the organisational culture and climate in elite sport, and how the staff and the environment are managed, have until recently been a blind spot in our understanding of organisational functioning in elite sport (Fletcher & Wagstaff, 2009).

In terms of methodology, and more specifically data analysis, the critique of content analysis relates to the loss of context that takes place in the development of general dimensions (Mason, 2002). Although using verbatim quotes to highlight specific findings

can reduce this, the analysis process and the choice of quotes are still very much dependent on the personal biography of the researcher. In this regard, it might be useful to read the full interview transcripts. Yet, given the public interest related to professional football managers and their stories, publishing the transcripts would not be in line with signed agreements relating to confidentiality. In Study Three, the initial desire was to conduct a fully immersed ethnographic enquiry by following managers from a day-to-day perspective across situations and over time. However, these requests were denied by the managers, mainly due to a feeling of inappropriateness of having a researcher present in every situation. This means that there is still potential to obtain more information rich and in-depth data in the future.

5.5 Strengths in researcher and research team

Despite the notion that professional football gives no easy access for researchers (e.g. Kelly, 2008a), the network of contacts inside English and Norwegian clubs developed over the years by the research team was useful in the process of recruiting participants. Given the scepticism embedded in the culture towards academia, some of the participants stressed the importance that the interviewer was able to understand the sport language and context. The author's 15 years of applied experience in coaching teams and individuals across competitive levels, along with ten years of teaching sport management, might have helped in that respect.

5.6 Future Research

The value of research that explores the relevance of organisational functioning in competitive elite sport (e.g., Fletcher & Arnold, 2011; Isberg, 2003) has been of great value for the current work. The same counts for theoretically informed practitioner reflections (e.g., Nesti, 2010). More exploratory, and ethnographical studies across sports, organisations and countries in Europe, would be helpful in the development of a more fundamental and in depth understanding of what is going on inside elite sports organisations. It would also guide

the needs related to preparation and support of sport leaders with the aim to build organisational functioning in competitive sport. For example, if a manager intends to migrate to a foreign European league, he needs information of which cultural differences to be aware and prepare for, in addition to the knowledge he already possess. To contribute to a deeper understandings within off-pitch managerial areas that are crucial to build performance, the researcher needs to dive into the real context and dig into the key topics that have emerged from the literature, such as the meaning of passion and identity, which might broaden the horizons for those involved. Researchers in this field have a responsibility to make the research meaningful for practitioners. To follow that responsibility, interactions and information exchange between these environments are provided. In relation to current field of research, this would mean engaging and cooperating with researchers that share the passion for developing the area of leadership within sport organisations, and make the information accessible and useful for sport. Within a professional football context, there is a need to further investigate how club owners' understandings related to organisational development and decision paths. This call is based on precious (Arnulf et al., 2011; Kelly & Harris, 2010) and current (Study One, Two, and Three) research, related to experiences of employers, and especially club owners, regarding their competence and use of power. Further, these stakeholders' views on which skills and qualities are needed to manage a top level club would extend our understandings of, for example, why the number of English managers in the Premier League has decreased in recent years. Ambitious managers need information of what and how to prepare for elite level demands, and a sense of what type of employers would be a better fit than others. Owners' views upon these matters would shed further light on what is needed by "*new school*" managers in the context of elite level professional football. By assuming that all of club owners aim for sporting success, their impression of which approaches are more efficient than others in terms of allowing

managerial and organisational effectiveness, would be of great interest. In this regard, the researchers' responsibility would, again, be to process this information and translate it for use by practitioners (e.g., owners, senior managers, owners, sport psychologists).

5.6 Conclusion

The present thesis explored the managerial cycle of professional football league managers in English and Norwegian context. More explicitly, this focused on the training, development and support of managers throughout the recruitment, employment and termination phases. Three original studies were carried out to obtain different perspectives in this regard. The initial study obtained a managerial perspective, and identified the support staff as important for the manager to develop and maintain a competitive team, and the senior management as important for effective work. Further, holding a Higher Education/University, or related academic background (often within coaching or teaching), seemed to enable the manager to accelerate the learning processes (both individually and for others). Study One findings shaped the content of the managerial cycle model, and informed the direction of Study Two that specifically focused on off-pitch managerial issues. In this regard, Study Two examined the managerial cycle from an internal (support staff, senior management) and external (FA, LMA) stakeholder perspective. Finally, Study Three continued the investigation into the managerial cycle, and its related phases, but with a specific focus on understanding managers lived experiences as these were shaped and influenced across time, space and within different unique contextual environmental and cultural conditions.

The overall key messages from the three studies relates to the uniqueness of managing within the professional football *context*, the *case* of operating within a professional football club, and the *role* requirements for being an effective manager. Given the popularity of the game, the significant amounts of money involved, the passionate figures attracted, and the rapidly changing nature of the game, it is unsurprising that professional football managers are subjects to intense academic and popular debate. Their position, often as celebrities, or even superstars, means that their awareness around themselves and the special context in which they exist, or chose to enter, is important to further understand. The power following the position has the capacity to change lives, as working bosses or role models, which entails a responsibility for performing the role well. This responsibility needs to be shared by the senior stakeholders that recruit them, to facilitate the potential for a successful working relationship. A responsible recruitment process should lead to a shared understanding and agreement around an overall conceptual idea of the club and its related operations. Clarity of what to do and how, works as a basis for meaningful and directed interactions between the manager and the support staff, with consequently increase the job effectiveness and satisfaction. It is more important that the overall idea (also called philosophy) is clear, than who decides it. Both managers and clubs have different approaches and requirements in that respect, which argues that the coherency and alignment between the manager and the club is important to reach consensus. As such, there is no magic or universal formula of the perfect manager, or the perfect club. Every manager is different, which also is the case for the clubs. Yet, the ability to stay consistent as a manager across situations and conditions, and over time, is crucial to perform the role effectively. This is not always easy in the face of the rapidly changing football landscape and a time consuming occupation. Managers need to be fast learners, keep track with changes and maintain consistency in work. Senior managers can help by ensuring a conceptual agreement

in the recruitment phase, by allowing the manager to work longitudinally within his responsibilities in the employment phase, and by supporting the manager in periods in which results are lacking, or this is organisational uncertainty. It may not be considered reasonable, nor sensible, to sack a manager after a period of poor results, as long as the manager follow the conceptual idea and operates with consistency. The support staff is also dependent on managerial stability to enable effective support and processes of development. Yet, if the manager loses receptivity and/or respect, and leaves the overall conceptual idea as a consequence to pressure, support staff will struggle to follow him. In such cases, trust breaks down internally and it will be fair to let the manager go.

The findings of the research contend that the modern day professional football manager needs the ability of critical thinking to adapt effectively to organisational and cultural change, and that the senior management also expect them to take care of their own, and their team's development. In light of the current data and related literature, the formal managerial UEFA-based training seems insufficient in preparing future managers in this respect. If the aim is to optimize managerial and organisational preparedness and effectiveness, there is no room for mistrust to the intellectual (Carter, 2006; Kelly, 2008a), distrust between the managers and the senior management (Kelly & Harris, 2010), resistance to change (Carter, 2006; Kelly, 2008a), and authoritarianism in their approach to management (Carter, 2006; Kelly, 2008a; Parker, 2001), which has previously been discovered in British football culture. As such, the currently decreasing number of English managers in Premier League clubs might present a very real and important warning that something else, other than, or in addition to, a former playing experience is needed.

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Appendices

Appendix A - Informed consent form

LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY CONSENT FORM



Title of Project:

Exploring the role and function of professional Football League Managers in England and Norway

Liverpool John Moores University / School of Sports & Exercise Sciences

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information provided for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily. ☐
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and that this will not affect my legal rights. ☐
3. I understand that any personal information collected during the study will be anonymised and remain confidential. ☐
4. I agree to take part in the above study. ☐
5. I understand that the interview will be audio recorded and I am happy to proceed. ☐
6. I understand that parts of our conversation may be used verbatim in future publications or presentations but that such quotes will be anonymised. ☐

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Name of Researcher

Date

Signature

Appendix B - Participant information Study One



Title: Exploring the role and function of professional Football League Managers in England and Norway

Researcher: Kjell Marius Herskedal (PhD-student)

Supervisors: Dr Martin Littlewood, Dr Mark Nesti, Dr Dave Richardson, School of Sports & Exercise Sciences

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it involves. Please take time to read the following information. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide if you are willing to participate.

1. What is the purpose of the study?

You are being invited to participate in the study as we are interested in elite football managers/head coaches' perceptions of their role in shaping the culture of professional football (e.g. training environments, club culture). The research will offer a great insight into manager's challenges and coping at different levels and from different cultural perspectives. The results of study will enable a range of key industry stakeholders, managers, future managers, football educational teachers, and researchers in the area to better understand the challenges football managers face, how they cope, but also what can be done to better prepare the coach for his role and prepare the role for the manager.

2. Why have I been asked to take part?

You have been asked because you are (or have lately been) professionally involved in a European professional football club. We currently intend to gather first-hand information with respect to the managers' influence on shaping organisational culture, environment and working practices within the club, and as such your input is vital for us to develop a comprehensive and information-rich basis for the project.

3. Do I have to take part?

No, it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do you will be given this information sheet and asked to sign a consent form. You are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. A decision to withdraw will not affect your rights/any future treatment/service you receive.

4. What will happen to me if I take part?

If you take part you will be contacted for an interview. The interview is expected to last for about 30-45 minutes and will be taped.

5. Are there risks or benefits involved?

The interview provides the opportunity to talk freely about the described topic. Parts of our conversation may be used verbatim in future publications or presentations but that such quotes will be anonymised.

6. Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

Your confidentiality will be maintained in the study as potential references (as names, club names) will not be revealed. The large number of interviewees will make it impossible to identify individual statements.

Contact Details of Researcher

Dr Martin Littlewood, Dr Mark Nesti and Dr David Richardson
Football Exchange, School of Sport and Exercise Sciences, Faculty of Science
Liverpool John Moores University, Tom Reilly Building, Byrom Street, Liverpool, L3 3AF.

Kjell Marius Herskedal, PhD, School of Sport and Exercise Sciences
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phone: (+47) 41 44 13 98

Appendix C - Participant information Study Two



Title: Exploring the role and function of professional Football League Managers in England and Norway

Researcher: Kjell Marius Herskedal (PhD-student)

Supervisors: Dr Martin Littlewood, Dr Mark Nesti, Dr Dave Richardson, School of Sports & Exercise Sciences

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it involves. Please take time to read the following information. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide if you are willing to participate.

1. What is the purpose of the study?

You are being invited to participate in the study as we are interested to obtain views of multi-agency/stakeholders of football clubs to further explore the role and function of the professional Football Manager (e.g. training environments, organization, culture). The research will offer a greater insight into manager's challenges and coping at different levels and from different cultural perspectives. The results of the study will enable a range of key industry stakeholders, managers, future managers, football educational teachers, and researchers in the area to better understand the challenges football managers face, how they cope, but also what can be done to better prepare the manager for his role and prepare the role for the manager.

2. Why have I been asked to take part?

You have been asked because you are involved (internally and/or externally) in English and/or Norwegian professional elite football. We currently intend to gather first-hand information with respect to managers' working conditions, development and practice, and as such your input is vital for us to develop a comprehensive and information-rich basis for the project.

3. Do I have to take part?

No, it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do, you will be asked to sign a consent form. You are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. A decision to withdraw will not affect your rights/any future treatment/service you receive.

4. What will happen to me if I take part?

If you take part, you will be contacted for an interview. The interview is expected to last for about 30-45 minutes and will be taped.

5. Are there risks or benefits involved?

The interview provides the opportunity to talk freely about the described topic. Parts of our conversation may be used verbatim in future publications or presentations but that such quotes will be anonymised. Your confidentiality will be maintained in the study as potential references (as names, club name) will not be revealed.

Contact Details of Researcher

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Appendix D - Interview schedule Study One



Liverpool John Moores University
The Football Exchange
School of Sport and Exercise Sciences
Tom Reilly Building
Liverpool L3 3AF

Interview elements study 1: managers/head coaches:

1. Introduction & Background information

- ✓ Who am I... (shortly)
- ✓ Importance and explanations about this interview (expected time, aims, interview structure and reinforce confidentiality).
- ✓ How the respondent arrived the club
- ✓ Background information (previous playing, previous roles, coaching etc...)
- ✓ Current role and responsibilities

2. Nature and type of challenges within the role of manager (Kelly, 2008; Kelly & Harris, 2010; Gammelsæter, 2010)

- ✓ Can you please outline the type of challenges that you currently experience within the role of a manager? (internal V external, macro V micro)
 - **The following are sources of the challenges:**
 - Board (goals, targets, strategies)
 - CEO (goals, targets, strategies)
 - Chairman (goals, targets, strategies)
 - Owners (goals, targets, strategies)
 - Performance (own aspirations/external aspirations; survival, relegation, promotion, 3points!!!)
 - Agents
 - Players (selection, deselection, progression of youth, views of players)
 - Staff
 - Finance
 - Fans
 - Player development & progression from youth
 - Media
 - Personal (family)
 - What about yourself as a source of stress (internal reasons/ external reasons)?
- ✓ Have you **experienced** any of these before and if so how have or do you manage/cope with these? How has that helped you now?
- ✓ How have these **changed over time** (why, factors driving change)
- ✓ What are the **effects** of these challenges on you and others?
- ✓ What influence do you think the culture of football and the (specific) club culture has upon the nature of these challenges?

3. Specific skills and experience the respondent has possessed

- ✓ What makes you unique as a manager?
- ✓ How does that affect the club (players, staff, organization...) and outside the club (media handling, fans popularity, club popularity)?
- ✓ What are your views about the importance of formal education for you and your role?

4. Future challenges as a manager

- ✓ What are the future directions of your work within the club (e.g. goals, strategies, owner's opinions)?
- ✓ Is the club (squad quality, staff, economy, player development) prepared to meet those (performance, follow strategies)?
- ✓ Are you prepared?

5. End of interview

- ✓ Clarification and appreciation of their time and knowledge

Ref: Gilmore's (2009) set of interview items, Relvas' (2010) introduction and end of interview, and the key elements of the study of professional managers in elite European football.

Appendix E - Interview schedule Study Two



Liverpool John Moores University
The Football Exchange
School of Sport and Exercise Sciences
Tom Reilly Building
Liverpool L3 3AF

Interview elements study 2: Chairmen

1. Introduction & Background information

- ✓ Who am I... (shortly)
- ✓ Importance and explanations about this interview (expected time, aims, interview structure and reinforce confidentiality)
- ✓ How the respondent arrived the club/position/role
- ✓ Background information (previous playing experience, previous roles, etc...)
- ✓ Current role and responsibilities

2. Current contextual issues (Kelly, 2008; Kelly & Harris, 2010; Horn et al., 2011, Gammelsæter, 2013)

- ✓ Cultural level
 - Club identity
 - Community
 - Expectations
 - Values
- ✓ Organisational level
 - Structures
 - People
 - Communication
 - Goals, targets, strategies
 - Finance, infrastructure
- ✓ Personal/personnel level
 - Expectations
 - Composition
- ✓ What are the **effects** of these issues on you and others?
- ✓ What influence do you think the culture of football has upon the nature of these challenges?

3. The Manager – perceptions concerning the role and function

- ✓ What are your perceptions of the role and function of the current manager?
- ✓ How would you describe your manager as a leader (compared to former managers and club needs)?
- ✓ How does that affect the club (players, staff, organization...) and outside the club (media handling, fans popularity, club popularity)?
- ✓ What is your relation to the current manager (why)?
- ✓ If you should recruit a new manager. Who would be involved in the process, and what would you look for?
- ✓ Would this be reflected in the Managers working contract?
- ✓ How is the experience of sacking managers? What happens?

4. Future challenges

- ✓ What are the future directions within the club (e.g. goals, strategies, owner's opinions)?
- ✓ What knowledge is required to shape the strategic direction of the club?
- ✓ Is the manager prepared to meet those?
- ✓ Is the club (sporting quality, staff, economy, development) prepared (performance, follow strategies)?
- ✓ How do you normally prepare managers and staff to meet strategic objectives?
- ✓ How would you describe the Manager's importance for the future plans of the club?

5. End of interview

- ✓ Clarification and appreciation of their time and knowledge

Ref: Gilmore's (2009) set of interview items, Relvas' (2010) introduction and end of interview, and the key elements emerging from Study One linked to the Chairman.

Appendix F - Interview schedule Study Three



Liverpool John Moores University
The Football Exchange
School of Sport and Exercise Sciences
Tom Reilly Building
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Interview-elements Study Three (final): Longitudinal – Head Coach

1. Contract (S1 & S2)

- ✓ First impression vs. later and current impression of the club
 - Orderliness
 - Realism of initial beliefs regarding further growth (of club) the club with respect to e.g. size and salary policies?
 - People told you there was too much to lose in taking charge of this club: To what extent was this a qualified advice in your perspective?

2. Development and preparedness (S1 & S2)

- ✓ In which areas and have you developed as a Head Coach the last two seasons?
 - Human treatment (squad & staff)
 - Media
 - Local community
 - Managing upwards
- ✓ In which phases have you learned more than others?
- ✓ Any support from the club and others in terms of dealing with upcoming challenges?
- ✓ Which kind of additional support (if any) would be useful in your perspective? Why?
- ✓ Which areas would you be more aware of if you sign up with a club again? Why?
- ✓ What would be your message to young, inexperienced managers taking charge?
- ✓ Are these (key) topics taken sufficiently care of by the FA and the LMA (training)?

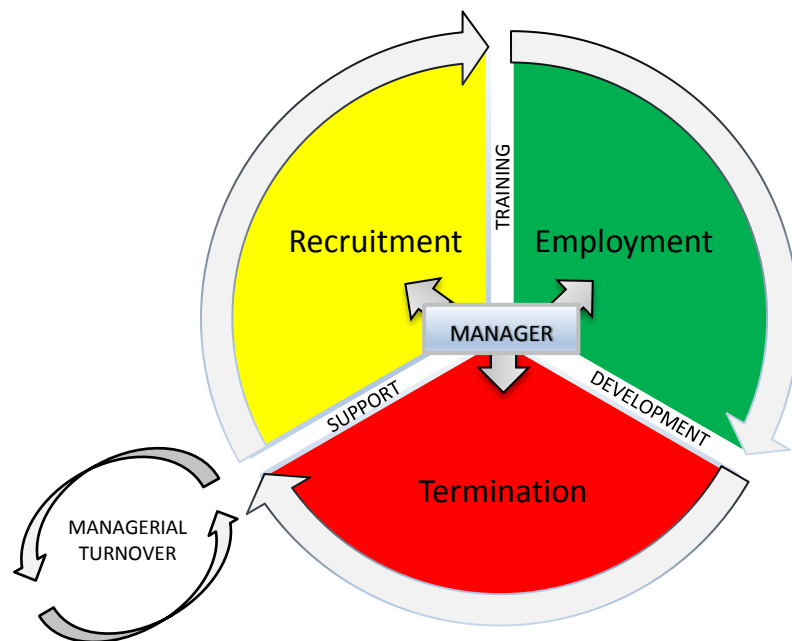
3. The dismissal (S1 & S2)

- ✓ You were dismissed. What happened?
- ✓ Any ideas of why?
- ✓ How did you react?
- ✓ Did the contact, communication or relations to the Director, Chairmen, Board, change through the season? If so: When and why?
- ✓ Was this the dismissal in line with the contract or any other agreements?
- ✓ How did the processes go after the sack?
 - Technically
 - Practically
 - Financially
 - Support
 - The human aspect (relations within club)
 - Yourself and family

4. Additional comments

- ✓ Any further or additional comments of importance?
- ✓ Thank you, good luck, take care.
- ✓ OK if I follow the new Head Coach? (Explain the importance)

Ref: Based on S1, S2 and S3 (previous interviews) findings related to primarily to the termination phase of the managerial cycle.



Appendix G - Recommendation Norwegian FA



2. jan. 2013

Til deltakere i forskningsprosjektet omkring managers (innbefatter også hovedtreners) mestring i rollen og innflytelse på klubben.

Norges Fotballforbund er kjent med at Liverpool John Moores University i samarbeid med i Molde skal gjennomføre et forskningsprosjekt rettet mot profesjonelle eliteklubber i Europa. Fokus knyttes til utfordringer innenfor managerrollen og mestring av disse utfordringene. En vil også se på hvordan manager påvirker klubben (treningsklima, organisasjon, kultur). Målgruppene er primært managere, spillere og klubbansatte, men også andre sentrale aktører i og rundt klubben kan være aktuelle.

Deltakelse er frivillig, men vi vil sterkt anmode våre medlemmer om å stille opp (primært intervjuer) dersom en blir kontaktet. Informasjonen som innhentes vil behandles konfidensielt.

Resultater av studiene vil gjøre managere, lærere i fotballutdanning, forskere og andre interessenter i bedre stand til å forstå hva som kan gjøres for bedre forberede manager for rollen, men også hvordan en kan forberede rollen for manager. I tillegg vil relevant informasjon om hvordan dagens europeiske elitemanagere mestrer sine aktuelle utfordringer gi ny og forhåpentligvis nyttig kunnskap til aktive managere.

På forhånd takk!

Med sportslig hilsen
Norges Fotballforbund



Norges Fotballforbund

Alf Hansen
Breddefotballsjeff

Appendix H - Recommendation Norwegian Football Coach Association



10. Jan. 2013

Dear participants in the research project about manager's (also including head coaches') coping within the role and shaping of the club.

Liverpool John Mores University will conduct a research project directed towards professional elite clubs in Europe. The project will focus the challenges within the role of a manager and how they cope with these challenges, and how the manager shapes the club (motivational climate, organization, culture). The target groups are primarily managers, head coaches, players and club staff, but also other key stakeholders inside and outside the club may be appropriate. The Norwegian Football Coach Association (NFT) is positive to the project and wishes to contribute to the progress.

Participation is voluntary, but we would strongly recommend our members to attend (interviews primarily) if contacted. The information obtained will be treated confidentially.

The results of the studies will enable a range of key industry stakeholders, managers, future managers, football educational teachers, and researchers in the area to better understand the challenges football managers face, how they cope, but also what can be done to better prepare the coach for his role and prepare the role for the manager. Information about how European elite managers cope with their current challenges may also be helpful to managers and head coaches with the desire to improve own related skills.

Thank you in advance!

Best regards
Norwegian Football Coach Association

Teddy Moen
General Manager, NFT