

Optimizing Football Performance through the Integration of Tactical Skills Training of Student-Athletes in Beijing, China



He Qize

Emilio Aguinaldo College, Manila, Philippines

ABSTRACT: The study utilized a quantitative comparative-correlational research design to examine the relationship between tactical skills training and football player performance. The study focused on students with professional expertise and experience to assess the impact of tactical skills training on football players' performance. The study used a census sampling approach due to the limited availability of instructors and mentors at the selected university. This method ensured diverse viewpoints and mitigated sampling errors by enumerating the entire population. The researcher took 50 sample respondents. The research instrument was a structured questionnaire that measured the assessment and performance level of football players' tactical skills training. The study found a slight inverse relationship between tactical skills training assessments and actual football player performance, with a mean score of 3.098, suggesting that high training scores do not necessarily lead to superior performance, but other factors also play a crucial role.

KEYWORDS: tactical skills training, football player performance, professional expertise and experience, performance assessment, student-athletes

1. INTRODUCTION

The surge in football popularity in China can be attributed to its ambitious aspirations of attaining global superpower status. China is reforming its football youth training system to create a seamless talent development channel. The reform focuses on a unified competition system, merging school and U-series competitions. This will create a four-level youth sports event system, transcending regional and academic boundaries, and aiding in understanding football player performance attributes and physical tests. (Liu, 2021).

Tactical understanding in football is a burgeoning area of research. Tactical skills refer to a player's ability to understand and adapt to changing game environments. This aligns with the work of Clemente et al. (2021), who noted that players' decision-making abilities, tactical adaptability, and communication significantly influenced match outcomes.

The importance of tactics in soccer is highlighted by Da Costa et al. (2021), who claim that they should be viewed as a complex and emergent process involving a variety of factors including players' cognitive capacities, specialized knowledge, and the external environment. The tactical training regimen for football involves four principles: conscious purposiveness, antagonism, foreseeability, and crypticity. Conscious purposiveness involves aligning player actions with strategic objectives, while antagonism aims to gain advantages over adversaries. Foreseeability involves anticipating game changes and implementing strategies to adapt. Crypticity involves using technical maneuvers to confound opponents and maintain secrecy. These principles are crucial for optimal football training and performance improvement. (Li and Zhang, 2018)

The present study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of tactical skills in the context of football. Specifically, it sought to shed light on the significance of these skills in enhancing overall performance among football players. The acquisition of a comprehensive understanding of this topic will undoubtedly yield valuable insights for coaches, trainers, and players within the Chinese context.

Research Questions

1. What is assessment of tactical skills training of football players in terms of:
 - 1.1. conscious purposiveness;
 - 1.2. antagonism;
 - 1.3. foreseeability; and
 - 1.4. crypticity?

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2. What is the level of performance of the football players in terms of:
 - 2.1. power;
 - 2.2. flexibility;
 - 2.3. strength;
 - 2.4. speed;
 - 2.5. agility?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the assessment of tactical skills training of football players and the performance of the football players?

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study utilized a quantitative comparative-correlational research design to examine the relationship between tactical skills training and football player performance.

The study focused on students with professional expertise and experience to assess the impact of tactical skills training on football players' performance.

The study used a census sampling approach due to the limited availability of instructors and mentors at the selected university. This method ensured diverse viewpoints and mitigated sampling errors by enumerating the entire population. The researcher took 40 sample respondents. The research instrument was a structured questionnaire that measured the assessment and performance level of football players' tactical skills training. The first section targeted four sub-constructs of tactical skills training, while the second section assessed football players' performance level.

The research assessed five sub-constructs of tactical skills training and player performance using eight statements on a four-point Likert scale. The structured questionnaire approach was chosen for its efficacy in gathering numerical data for statistical analysis. The validity and reliability of the research instrument were ensured through content validity, review by experts in football coaching and sports psychology, and a pilot study. The questionnaire was carefully crafted based on relevant literature and refined based on expert feedback. This allowed for nuanced responses and ensured the instrument's reliability. Results were considered statistically significant at $p < 0.05$, providing insights into the study's questions and guiding the development of a tactical skills training program.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The assessment of tactical skills training in football players is based on conscious purposiveness, antagonism, foreseeability, crypticity, and crypticity. The training environment emphasizes understanding and alignment with tactical objectives, allowing players to adapt to evolving game situations and understand their role in the team strategy. Players' ability to adjust their actions based on changing tactical goals indicates adaptability and responsiveness. The coach's effectiveness in communicating tactical goals to players is high, but there is room for improvement. Antagonism is emphasized as a strategic focus on developing individual player skills and understanding and countering opponents' tactics. Players are well-equipped to leverage their actions to exploit gaps or weaknesses in the opposition's strategies. In addition, foreseeability is a crucial aspect of the training regime, involving predicting and acting in anticipation of game situations. Players regularly practice foreseeability skills during training sessions, with a verbal interpretation of "Very High." However, there is room for incorporating more dedicated exercises to further cultivate this essential skill among players. Moreover, crypticity is also highly valued, with players frequently exercising their crypticity skills during training sessions. This skill is not only recognized but also given substantial emphasis during practice, making it harder for the opposing team to anticipate or counter maneuvers. In conclusion, tactical skills training in football players is highly effective, but there is room for improvement in communication, understanding, and integration into the tactical mindset.
2. The data assesses the performance of football players in terms of power, flexibility, strength, speed, agility, and agility. The overall mean score of 3.088 indicates a high level of power in gameplay, with a high emphasis on regular assessments. This suggests a structured approach to gauging players' power levels, identifying potential areas for improvement, and capitalizing on strengths. In terms of flexibility is also highly valued, with a high mean score of 3.65, indicating a rigorous assessment system. However, there is room for further enhancement in incorporating more diverse or intensive flexibility drills into training sessions. Strength is also highly valued, with a high mean score of 3.70, indicating a rigorous monitoring mechanism to track players' strength attributes. Thus, speed is a crucial attribute, with a high mean score of 3.77, indicating a meticulous approach to constantly monitoring and evaluating players' speed levels. The feedback mechanism from the coach regarding players' speed has a low mean score of 2.95, suggesting room for improvement in feedback dynamics. In addition, agility is a

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predominant focus in football players' training and assessment regime, with a high mean score of 3.281. Regular assessments of agility are crucial for aligning coaching strategies with players' current capabilities and progress trajectories. However, the ability of players to demonstrate high agility during games has the lowest mean score of 2.75, indicating potential for improvement. Incorporating agility exercises in training sessions further emphasizes its significance, as agility in football translates not only to physical swiftness but also to quick decision-making and adaptive strategies on the field.

3. The researcher examines the correlation between tactical skills training assessments and actual football player performance. The mean score for tactical skills training is 3.098, while the actual performance score is 3.224. The correlation coefficient is -0.051, suggesting a slight inverse relationship. However, the R-value is close to zero, indicating a weak correlation. The significance value is 0.753, indicating a null hypothesis. This suggests that a high tactical training score doesn't necessarily lead to superior on-field performance. Other factors like technical prowess, physical attributes, and mental strength also play crucial roles.

IV. CONCLUSION

The lack of a significant relationship between the assessment of tactical skills training and the actual performance of football players carries implies that a high score in tactical training does not necessarily translate to superior on-field performance. Tactical knowledge, while essential, is only one facet of a player's overall skill set. Technical prowess, physical attributes, and mental strength also play critical roles in a player's performance.

In addition, it must be emphasized that football is a complex game. While tactics are crucial, players also rely on other skills, such as physical fitness, technique, and mental resilience. A player might be tactically astute but might lag in other areas, or vice versa.

In this context, coaches might need to re-evaluate their training programs. If tactical training is not correlating with performance, then there might be a need to integrate tactical training more closely with other forms of training or to make tactical training more reflective of on-field scenarios. Moreover, every player is unique. Some players might excel tactically but not perform as well on the field due to other factors, and vice versa. Coaches should consider individualized approaches to training to cater to each player's strengths and weaknesses.

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