

## Elite Female Football Coaches' Experiences and Reflections in a Male-Dominated Environment: The Case of Ghana

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**Abstract :** The rationale of this study is to examine the career experiences of elite female football coaches in Ghana. More importantly, it focus on their motives, the challenges of football coaching and their experiences along their career paths. The study draws from literature on female coaches in football to understand their experiences and reflections in their chosen careers. The findings of the study relied on in-depth semi-structured interviews with five elite female football coaches aged between 28 and 50 years. Participants' responses reveal that both intrinsic and extrinsic motives drive them into football coaching including learning experiences from abroad, a strong desire to break the gendered hegemony of coaching in Ghana, serving as role models, enjoyment, satisfaction and passion for their chosen careers. Results indicate that they encountered sociocultural, organisational, personal and interpersonal challenges. Also, they experience gender stereotyping, limited career mobility, sexism and marginalisation, which prevent them from becoming elite coaches. The study provides useful data for stakeholders including Ghana Football Association (GFA) to use effective strategies (e.g., special incentives for women coaches) to attract and retain women in the football coaching space.

**Keywords :** elite female football coaches, career experiences, gender, motives, trajectories

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