

Examining the Fear of Happiness Among Football Referees by Specific Variables

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Abstract

The aim of the present study is to determine the fears of happiness of football referees working in the Turkish Super League and 1st League. The study group consists of 23 chief referees, 36 Super League assisting referees, 8 Class A referees, and 48 Class A assisting referees (115 football referees in total). As data collection instrument, the Fear of Happiness Scale that has been developed by Joshanloo (2013) in order to determine the beliefs that happiness would cause certain negative/bad consequences was used. The study on scale's adaptation to Turkish language and its reliability/validity was carried out by Demirci, Ekşi, Dinçer, and Kardaş (2016). In analyzing the data, the descriptive statistics, independent samples t-test, and one-way variance analysis (ANOVA) tests were used. The statistical significance level was set to be $p < 0.05$. At the end of the study, it was determined that the Fear of Happiness scores by the marital status were found to be statistically significantly different in favor of single referees.

Keywords: Referee, Fear of happiness, Football

1. Introduction

The football is an endurance sport, in which the players put their performances forward in different directions and time periods during the 90-minute timeframe. Football is one of the most popular branches of sports today (Stolen, 2005). Together with the players and the game, also the referees play significant role in the interest in football and increase the popularity. The

football referees showed significant development in recent years, and they improved their competences that any referee should have.

The behaviors and attitudes such as adhering to own decisions, crisis management, self-reliance, and taking pleasure in job are important for referees (Mckeon, 2003). However, the most important responsibility of the referee is to direct and manage the players in the most accurate direction and rules during the game. For this reason, the one having the best knowledge of rules is the referee (Collina, 2004).

The referee should present his/her character and exhibit a brave, fair, and deciduous attitude during the game. He/she should focus on strong foresight, extensive evaluation capacity, and developing attitudes and behaviors against unexpected events. He/she should manage every game with the same sensitivity and seriousness and exhibit a gentlemen-like attitude towards players, technical team, and management because, during the game, the referee is not an ordinary person but the person, who is kept in the sight and determine the fate of the game. Under any negative event that may occur during the game, the referee is responsible for protecting and not misusing the trust and value given to him/her and his/her job (Epak, 1997).

The mood, happiness, and professional pleasures and reactions of referees are very important for the game. The term “*pleasure*” is a concept derived from positive psychology. For the referees, this term refers to the whole of referees’ interest in their profession and their emotions such as happiness, positive energy, and positive excitement (Karacam & Pultur, 2018). The referees, who are one of the most important components of football, influence the game, players, and followers through their positive or negative decisions (Göksel, 2016). At this point, the personality and professional pleasure of referees play an important role. Not only for the refereeing profession but for any profession, the pleasure triggers job and life satisfaction (Hoy, 2011). The job satisfaction is defined as the energetic and happy mood arising from the person’s job and experiences, whereas the life satisfaction refers to feeling good in general (Lent et al., 2011).

Pleasure is defined as approaching the life with excitement and happiness, not behaving unwillingly in our activities, feeling in an adventure full of excitement, and feeling oneself vigorous and positive (Park, 2010). From the aspect of the profession, the most important point distinguishing pleasure from job satisfaction is that it includes vigorousness and energy. The vigorousness is related with happiness, positive energy, interest, and many other positive emotions. Happiness is related with many positive feelings including interest and enthusiasm (Weinstein, 2009). As stated by Weinberg and Richardson in their study on the characteristics of a good referee, the successful referees emphasized that they take pleasure from their job and profession and that being a good referee relies upon focusing on own job and working hard and accurately. Besides that, if the referee takes less pleasure from his/her job, then it would cause loss of motivation and professional sacrifice in practice (Ekmekci, 2011). Motivation and pleasure would bring happiness and success with them. Improving and maintaining the pleasure taken from the job would make it easier to achieve the desired level by increasing the professional satisfaction and productivity. For this reason, the level of happiness and pleasure

taken by referees from their jobs is important for their personal development and professional competence.

Not only the decrease in professional pleasure but also the fear of happiness increases the pressure on the individual and it may decrease the motivation. In studies carried out on the fear of happiness, it has been emphasized that Western societies have a strong fear of living the happiness, whereas the Central Asia societies have a strong fear of belonging, sociocultural differences, and social harmony and that the feeling of happiness creates a negative cognitive strength and fear (Suh, 2000). Moreover, in Eastern cultures, it is also widely believed that happiness and joy would bring negative consequences. In our society, it has been historically believed that one would cry after having fun and laughing a lot. These beliefs are named “fear of happiness” in the literature. In Indian, Japanese, and Chinese cultures, as in many other cultures, it has been accepted that happiness would bring unhappiness and cause pain and misery. For instance, in Indian culture, it is argued that the happiness would be experienced only by the young children and babies and the unmarried young girls, whereas it is believed in China that the happiness would bring misery and the winds would change; thus, it has been widely accepted that the feeling of happiness should never dominate the personality and the happiness is undesirable (Bryant, 2007; Eid, 2001).

As in other societies, it was also observed in a study, which has been carried out in Iran on the university students having similar characteristics, that there are negative reactions to happiness. Some of the students were found to have fear of happiness. The Fear of Happiness Scale was developed for this purpose. The fear of happiness refers to the belief that happiness would bring unpleasing events and consequences. In previous studies, it was also determined that this belief is dominant mainly in Eastern societies (Joshanloo, 2012, 2013).

The importance of the study; The referees are under pressure due to their profession and they have to make quick decisions, the fact that the referees have fear of happiness affects their quick decisions.

This fear, which has been observed in every culture from past to present, influences not only the social life and communications of a person but also his/her professional competence and happiness. In parallel with the studies in literature, it was aimed to examine the fear of happiness among the referees, besides the vigorousness and professional pleasure.

2. Method

2.1 Research Model

The quantitative research model was adopted in the present study. Among the quantitative research patterns, the descriptive research model was used (Karasar, 2002).

2.2 Purpose of Research

In the present study, it was aimed to determine the fear of happiness among the football referees working in the Turkish Super League and 1st League.

2.3 Research Method

The universe of this study consists of Super League and Class A (top class referees, regional league referees) football referees working in Turkey in Season 2018-2019, whereas the sample consists of 23 Super League chief referees, 36 Super League assisting referees, 8 Class A referees, and 48 Class A assisting referees (115 referees in total).

2.4 Data Collection Tool

In order to beliefs about if being happy would cause some bad/negative consequences, Joshanloo (2013) has developed the Fear of Happiness Scale (FHS). The scale consists of 5 items and scored using 7-grade (1= I totally disagree, 7= I totally agree) rating system.

The total score varies between 7 and 35 points; it is assumed that the higher the point is, the higher the fear of happiness becomes. The adaptation of this scale to the Turkish language, as well as the reliability and validity study, was performed by Demirci et al. (2016).

2.5 Statistical Analysis

In this study, in which the survey was used as data collection tool, the data obtained from the answers of participants were digitized using a graded scale. The analysis of data was performed using a statistical program, which has been generally accepted in social sciences. Descriptive statistics, independent two-group t-test, and one-way variance analysis (ANOVA) tests were used in analyses.

3. Results

Table 1. t-Test Results of the participating referees' fear of happiness scores by marital status variable

Scale	Marital Status	N	Mean	SD	t	p
Fear of Happiness	Single	21	25.2857	12.34935	1.245	.045
	Married	94	10.0000	5.85488		

In Table 1, the fear of happiness scale scores of referees participating in this study were analyzed for the marital status variable by using the t-Test, and it was determined that there was a statistically significant difference in favor of single referees ($P < 0.05$).

Table 2. ANOVA (One-Way Variance Analysis) results of the participating referees' fear of happiness scores by age variable

Scale	Age	N	Mean	SD	F	P
Fear of Happiness	25-30	11	11.4545	5.95590	1.462	.236
	30-35	45	11.3778	6.54109		
	≥ 36	59	9.4915	5.48155		

As seen in Table 2, the ANOVA test was performed on the fear of happiness scale scores of the participating referees for the age variable, and it was determined that there was no statistically significant difference in the variable “age”.

Table 3. ANOVA (One-Way Variance Analysis) results of the participating referees' fear of happiness scores by educational status variable

Scale	Educational Status	N	Ort.	Ss.	F	P
Fear of Happiness	High-School	3	9.3333	5.85947	.056	.982
	Associate Degree	6	10.1667	7.65289		
	Bachelor's Degree	77	10.3766	5.98472		
	Postgraduate Degree	29	10.6897	5.95881		

In Table 3, the ANOVA test was performed on the fear of happiness scale scores of the participating referees for the “educational status” variable, and it was determined that there was no statistically significant difference in this variable.

Table 4. ANOVA (One-Way Variance Analysis) results of the participating referees' fear of happiness scores by “years of refereeing” variable

Scale	Years of Refereeing	N	Mean	SD	F	P
Fear of Happiness	1-3 years	13	10.2308	4.91857	.586	.625
	4-6 years	10	12.5000	6.57013		
	7-9 years	15	9.2667	4.72783		
	≥10 years	77	10.4026	6.31260		

As seen in Table 4, the ANOVA test was performed on the fear of happiness scale scores of the participating referees for the “years in refereeing” variable, and it was found that there was no statistically significant difference in this variable.

Table 5. ANOVA (One-Way Variance Analysis) results of the participating referees’ fear of happiness scores by “ranking in the league” variable

Scale	Ranking in the League	N	Mean	SD	F	P
Fear of Happiness	Super League	23	10.2308	3.49816	2.176	.095
	Super League Assisting Referee	36	12.5000	6.81595		
	Class A Referee	8	9.2667	3.77964		
	Class A Assisting Referee	48	10.4026	6.29406		

In Table 5, the ANOVA test was performed on the fear of happiness scale scores of the participating referees for the “ranking in the league” variable, and it was found that there was no statistically significant difference in this variable.

4. Discussion

In the present study, it was aimed to determine the fear of happiness of football referees working in the Turkish Super League and 1st League. Among the referees participating in this study, it was determined that there was a statistically significant difference between the FHS scores in favor of single referees ($P < 0.05$). This result suggests that the single referees’ fear of happiness is at a higher level of that of married referees, and it is thought that this result originates from the concerns and future expectations. In corroboration with these results, it was also reported in the study of Gilbert et al. (2014) that fear of and avoiding sadness and anger are positively related with the feat of happiness.

When the FHS scores of referees were analyzed for the variables age, educational status, years of refereeing, and ranking in the league, it was determined that there was no statistically significant difference ($P < 0.05$). Arslanoğlu et al. (2010) carried out a study on volleyball referees and they also reported that there was no statistically significant between the levels of anxiety.

One of the significant feelings of individuals, who can overcome the difficulties they had, is the happiness for being successful in coping with the problems. Moreover, there also are studies reporting that there always is a reverse relationship between the perceived stress level and wellbeing (Skok, 2006) and happiness (Schiffirin, 2010). It is thought that individuals who can cope with stressful life events can achieve a feeling of happiness.

However, these individuals may sometimes think that the happiness they’ll achieve will not last long. For this reason, they may not enjoy or express their happiness. From this aspect, it is

thought that the studies to be carried out on understanding the dynamics laying the foundation of being afraid of living and expressing the positive feelings from this aspect would be useful.

5. Conclusions

According to the present study, it was determined the football referees' fear of happiness (*i.e.*, being afraid of becoming unhappy) varies significantly depending on the marital status, whereas there was no statistically significant difference in terms of the other variables. In their study carried out by starting from the paradox if making effort for being happy, Mauss et al. (2011) reported that the value given to happiness causes being less happy when happiness is achieved. For this reason, studies on the fear of happiness might be useful. According to these results, the following suggestions can be made to both practitioners and researchers:

- ✓ Considering the fear of happiness by using different samples (referees and athletes from different branches end etc.) is believed to reveal different aspects of this concept.
- ✓ It is thought that examining the relationship of the fear of happiness with different psychological factors might be useful in order to understand it in deeper detail and to determine the effects on the lives of individuals.

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