

## Investigation of the power of type A personality in predicting the decision-making styles and emotional intelligence levels of football referees

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### Abstract

**Objective:** to examine the predictive power of decision-making styles and emotional intelligence levels of type A personality in football referees. **Method:** a total of 205 volunteer referees, whose active refereeing lives continue, participated in the research. A questionnaire was used as a data collection tool in the research. The questionnaire used consists of four parts: 1) Decision-Making Styles Scale; 2) Type A Personality Scale; 3) Emotional Intelligence Scale; and 4) a personal information form prepared by the researcher. The obtained data were analyzed with the SPSS package program. In addition to descriptive statistics, Pearson Moments Correlation test and regression analysis were applied. **Results and conclusion:** no significant relationship was found between the type A personality scores of football referees and emotional intelligence. A moderately positive and significant relationship was found between the emotional intelligence scores of the referees and the rational and intuitive sub-dimensions of the decision-making styles scale. Football refereeing is an important profession that includes information, communication, quick decision making and managing the match smoothly by applying the rules. For this reason, it may be beneficial to gain characteristics such as enjoying life, being positive, hopeful and optimistic, which are among the elements of type A personality and emotional intelligence. In this way, healthy decision-making will be ensured by reducing the stress they experience. As a result, it was seen that the atypical personality of the football referees predicted the decision-making styles and emotional intelligence level and explained 13% of the total variance.

**Keywords:** referee, emotional intelligence, decision making, type A personality.

## Introduction

Football, which is followed with interest all over the world and has approximately 3.5 billion followers, is the most popular branch of our age due to its psychological and physiological effects. For this reason, it is very important that football matches are concluded in accordance with certain rules and objective decisions. This, no doubt, is directly related to the referees who are responsible for the correct management of the match in all aspects. When we examine the history of football refereeing, it was determined that until 1819, matches were played without referees, team captains were also referees, and then this situation was objectionable and an external referee was appointed (Radnedge 1994). When we examine the meaning of the concept of referee, it is stated as the person who monitors the changes in the game, follows and implements the instructions, respects the principles of the refereeing institution, has physiological and psychological abilities (Epak, 2001), determines the points, and punishes those who do not comply with the rules (Şahin & Şahin, 2003). In addition, it is very important to use the authority to make quick and sudden decisions in football refereeing (Ekblom, 1994), because making the right decision in the right place and time during the game will not only affect the match positively, and wrong decisions can negatively affect the athlete, the fan and the outcome of the game (Leveau, 2010). Kneeland (2001) pointed out that time and process must be applied correctly in order to make a useful or effective decision.

For refereeing, it is important that the referee has personality traits such as consistency, harmony, determination, balance, honesty, decision-making and trust (Weinberg & Richardson 1990). Personality trait is one of the factors that negatively affect decision-making styles. For example, individuals with type A personality traits tend to experience more stress, being aggressive, angry, competitive, and perceiving even ordinary events as stressful (Lelord & Andre 1996). A referee with such characteristics cannot play a healthy game. Because his stress level is high, they cannot use his ability to make quick and correct decisions. At the same time, the most important mental feature or ability known to be linked to the concept of stress is emotional intelligence, which refers to the capacity to motivate oneself, to control mental abilities, to move on without obstacles, to empathize and to reason with emotional signals, and the capacity of emotion to develop thought (Goleman, 2004; Mayer & Salovey, 2007). According to the "trait model" put forward by Baron, all non-cognitive characteristics that enable the individual to successfully overcome different situations in his life are expressed as emotional intelligence (Lyusin, 2006). It is also stated that emotional intelligence can be used to predict the experience of traumatic stress (Hunt & Evans 2004).

In line with this information, our study aimed to examine the effect of type A personality of football referees on decision-making styles and emotional intelligence levels, according to classifications and some variables.

## Method

*Research model:* It was designed according to the quantitative research model, and descriptive and relational scanning methods were used, aiming to reveal the current situation (Büyüköztürk et al., 2012; Karasar, 2016).

*Research group:* A total of 205 volunteer referees from FIFA, upper class, regional and provincial referees who continue their active refereeing lives constitute our sample group. Easily accessible case sampling technique was used (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018).

*Collection of data:* Survey method was used as data collection tool. The questionnaires were administered to the participants by the researchers.

*Demographic form:* In order to collect the demographic information of the referees, a form consisting of variables such as age, education, gender, education level, classification, income level, referee year, classification year was prepared by the researcher.

*Decision Making Styles Scale:* The scale was developed by Scott and Bruce (1995). It consists of 25 items and 5 sub-dimensions. The subscales of the scale consist of rational, intuitive, dependent, spontaneous-immediate and avoidance decision-making styles. Internal consistency alpha for the entire scale was determined as .74.

*Type A Personality Scale:* The scale was developed by Batıgün and Şahin (2006). The scale consists of 25 items and 3 sub-dimensions. The lowest score obtained from the scale is 25 and the highest score is 125. The total reliability coefficient of the scale was found as  $\alpha = .83$ .

*Emotional Intelligence Scale:* The scale was developed by Lee and Kwak (2011), and it was adapted into Turkish by Kayıhan and Arslan in 2016. The scale consists of 20 items and 3 sub-dimensions. The total reliability coefficient of the scale was found as  $\alpha = .83$ .

*Analysis of data:* After the data was collected, it was analyzed with the SPSS program. As a result of the analyses, descriptive statistics are given as f and % distribution. In addition to descriptive statistics, the normality structure of the distributions was examined by skewness and kurtosis tests. As a result of encountering normal distribution structures, a parametric test decision was taken. In line with these results, Pearson Moments Correlation test and multiple regression analysis were applied.

## Findings

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics-frequency and percentage values.

	Category	f	%
<b>Gender</b>	Male	42	20,5
	Woman	163	79,5
<b>Age</b>	18-21	24	11,7
	22-25	63	30,7
	26-29	44	21,5
	30 and above	74	36,1
<b>Education</b>	University	170	82,9
	Graduate	35	17,1
<b>Income level</b>	2000 and below	46	22,4
	2001-3000	28	13,7
	3001-4000	40	19,5
	4001 and above	91	44,4
<b>Classification</b>	FIFA Referee	16	7,8
	FIFA assistant referee	14	6,8
	Senior class referee	15	7,3
	Senior assistant class referee	17	8,3
	Classification referee	21	10,2
	Classification Ass. Referee	17	8,3
	Regional referee	24	11,7
	Regional assistant referee	35	17,1
	Provincial referee	46	22,4
<b>Classification year</b>	1-3	110	53,7
	4-6	42	20,5
	7-9	18	8,8
	10 and above	35	17,1
<b>Referee year</b>	1-5	88	42,9
	6-10	54	26,3
	11-15	26	12,7
	16 and above	37	18
<b>Total</b>		205	100

When we look at the socio-demographic characteristics of the football referees participating in the research, there are a total of 205 participants, 163 of whom are women and 42% of whom are men. 170 of the participants have a university level and 35% have a postgraduate education level. 24 people in the age range of 18-21, 63 in the age range of 22-25, 44 in the age range of 26-29, 74 in the age range of 30 and above participated in the research. While 46 of the participants have an income of 2000 TL<sup>1</sup> and below, 28 have an income of 2001-3000 TL, 40 have an income of 3001-4000 TL, and 91 have an income of 4001 and above. While 16 of the participants are FIFA referees, 14 are FIFA assistant referees, 15 are upper classification referees, 17 are upper classification assistant referees, 21 are classification referees, 17 are classification assistant referees, 24 are

<sup>1</sup> Turkish Lira, official currency of the country.

regional referees, 35 are regional assistant referees, 46 are the provincial referee consists of participants. It consists of 88 referees who have been referees for 1-5 years, 54 for 6-10 years, 26 for 11-15 years, and 37 for 16 or more years.

**Table 2.** Correlation Analysis between referees' Type A personalities, decision-making styles and emotional intelligence levels (n=205).

Scale sub-dimension		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Type A Personality <sup>1</sup>	r	1						
	p							
Emotional Intelligence <sup>2</sup>	r	-,034	1					
	p	,633						
Rational <sup>3</sup>	r	,022	,548**	1				
	p	,756	,000					
Intuitive <sup>4</sup>	r	,060	,499**	,414**	1			
	p	,389	,000	,000				
Addicted <sup>5</sup>	r	,145*	-,019	,073	,168*	1		
	p	,039	,792	,298	,016			
Avoidance <sup>6</sup>	r	,251**	-,246**	-,242**	-,071	,373**	1	
	p	,000	,000	,000	,313	,000		
Spontaneous Instantaneous <sup>7</sup>	r	,327**	,113	,056	,260**	,168*	,328**	1
	p	,000	,107	,429	,000	,016	,000	

\*p<0.05 \*\*p<0.01.

The relationship between type A personalities, decision-making styles and emotional intelligence levels of the referees participating in the research is given in Table 2. According to the results of the correlation analysis, a moderate positive and significant relationship was detected between the football referees' type A personality scores and the avoidance and spontaneous subscales. Additionally, a significant and positive relationship was detected between type A personality scores and the dependent sub-dimension. A moderate positive and significant relationship was found between the referees' emotional intelligence scores and the rational and intuitive sub-dimensions. At the same time, a negative relationship was detected with the avoidance subscale. While a moderate positive and significant relationship was observed between the sub-dimensions of the decision making scale, spontaneous momentary and avoidance, and intuitive sub-dimensions, a negative relationship was found between rational and avoidance sub-dimensions. A medium-level positive and significant relationship was found between the intuitive sub-dimension and the rational sub-dimension, and a low-level positive and significant relationship with the dependent sub-dimension.

**Table 3.** Comparison of the effects of referees' type A personalities on their decision-making styles and emotional intelligence (n=205).

Scale sub-dimension	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	p
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Emotional intelligence	-,052	,066	-,068	-,790	,430
Rational	,397	,408	,080	,972	,332
Intuitive	-,022	,285	-,006	-,076	,940
Addicted	,098	,198	,036	,495	,621
Avoidance	,363	,194	,149	1,871	,063
Spontaneous	,754	,200	,277	3,766	,000
Instantaneous					
<b>R=,370a</b>	<b>R2=0,137</b>		<b>F=5,234</b>		<b>p=,000<sup>b</sup></b>

a. Dependent Variable: type A Personality.

When Table 3 is examined, the model created between the decision-making styles of type A personality and emotional intelligence presents a significant relationship ( $R=,370$   $R^2=,137$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). It can be stated that 13% of the total variance related to type A personality is explained by the emotional intelligence and decision-making styles of the referees.

## Discussion and conclusion

Football is a popular sport with the largest number of spectators in the world. Considering the athletes, managers, coaches and fans in the football industry, referees' emotional states, stress and decision-making ability in the football environment also become important. Football refereeing is undoubtedly one of the difficult professions. The difficulties of the profession are that the rules of the game must be enforced in the middle of the battle between two teams, which is a football match; It is performed in front of excited spectators who do not know the rules of football; There is a lot of pressure from the media, among others. At the same time, referees' decision-making styles are associated with emotional intelligence and personality traits. In other words, the importance of intelligence and cognitive abilities is emphasized as well as psychological and moral elements in decision making (Karamanlioğlu & Basim, 2022).

In line with this information, in our study, the power of type A personality of football referees to predict their decision-making styles and emotional intelligence levels will be discussed with the literature. In this study, which was conducted to determine the power of football referees' personality to predict their decision-making and emotional intelligence, a moderate positive and significant relationship was found between the type A personality score of football referees and the avoidance and spontaneous moment sub-dimensions of the decision-making styles scale. In addition, a low-level significant and positive relationship was detected between type A personality scores and the dependent sub-dimension. When the data obtained is evaluated, we can state that the emotional state experienced by the referee with type A personality will affect their decision-

making. When the relevant literature is examined, although there is no other study that deals with the decision-making styles and emotional intelligence levels of referees' type A personalities, we can say that we have obtained data that will contribute to the field. Of course, different dynamics have an impact on personality traits. These are the biological and cultural factors in which people grow up, family, society, friend groups, etc. (Tokat et al., 2013), mass media and the situation of using or not benefiting from these tools (Erdoğan, 1994), perception, habits, mindsets and wishes (Günel, 2010). When the research findings are evaluated, no significant relationship was found between referees' emotional intelligence levels and type A personality. When this result is evaluated within the scope of the relevant literature, type A personality is not a feature that completely defines a complex multidimensional person, since behavioral traits are one of hundreds of features that shape personality (Eniseler, 2007). For this reason, no relationship has been found between emotional intelligence and personality. Shulman and Kendiover (2006) emphasized that the trait model of emotional intelligence is not the same as personality and that, unlike personality, it can explain 1-6% of the variance in health status. They stated that emotional intelligence detects low levels of emotional stress. They stated that more meaningful results would be determined in subsequent studies with larger sample groups.

A moderate positive and significant relationship was detected between the referees' emotional intelligence scores and the rational and intuitive sub-dimensions of the decision-making styles scale. At the same time, a negative relationship was detected with the avoidance subscale. When this data is evaluated, we can say that emotional intelligence affects the rational and intuitive sub-dimensions of decision-making. At the same time, we can state that the effect of avoidance sub-dimension decreases as emotional intelligence increases. While a moderate positive and significant relationship was observed between the sub-dimensions of the decision making scale, spontaneous momentary and avoidance, and intuitive sub-dimensions, a negative relationship was found between rational and avoidance sub-dimensions.

A medium-level positive and significant relationship was found between the intuitive sub-dimension and the rational sub-dimension, and a low-level positive and significant relationship with the dependent sub-dimension. According to the research data, it was determined that 13% of the total variance related to type A personality was explained by the emotional intelligence and decision-making styles of the referees. When these results are evaluated, it can be stated that type A personality does not affect emotional intelligence. It can also be said that emotional intelligence and type A personality affect decision-making styles. In order for referees to make the right decisions, emotional intelligence can reduce the stress they experience and ensure impartial management of sports competitions. There are studies in the relevant literature that support this suggestion. In the study conducted by researchers Guillen and Feltz (2011) on referee competence, it is stated that stress weakens referees' focus of attention and reduces their performance. Nazarudin et al. (2014) conducted with Rugby referees, it is stated that referees are constantly under pressure as they are frequently exposed to criticism as a result of the decisions they make,

and as a result, they experience anxiety, stress and loss of confidence. It has been determined that these negative emotions affecting mental health are directly related to quitting refereeing, loss of attention, low job satisfaction and low performance. For this reason, future studies on type A personality, emotional intelligence and decision-making styles are thought to be extremely important and necessary. In conclusion, while no significant relationship was observed between referees' emotional intelligence and type A personality, a significant relationship was found between the decision-making styles sub-dimensions. It can also be stated that type A personality predicts emotional intelligence and decision-making styles. When the results obtained from the research and other studies in the literature are examined, it is seen that there is a significant negative relationship between type A personality and emotional intelligence and decision-making styles. As a result, it is thought that the increase in the type A personality traits of the referees will negatively affect their emotional intelligence and decision-making styles, and activities that improve these skills will increase the referees' ability to manage the competition.

### *Suggestions*

- Referees with type A personality traits may have negative consequences if they fulfill their responsibilities that require attention, such as acting quickly, making the right decisions, and observing more than one point during the match. For this reason, it may be recommended that referees with type A personality traits be given support in time and stress management.
- The Central Referee Board of the Turkish Football Federation should conduct the necessary psychological tests for the referees taking part in the competitions to determine their emotional state, and training courses that will improve their decision-making skills and provide psychological support can be organized.
- Considering that emotional intelligence is a concept that can be developed later, it is thought that referees should develop these aspects individually in order to increase their professional competence. In terms of generalizability of the results of the study, comparative studies can be planned with different branch referees and larger sample groups.

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