

A Scrutiny on the Burnout Levels of Fencing Referees

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to measure and interpret the burnout levels of the fencing referees who act in the fencing contests in our country as referees actively. The study group is constituted by the 60 referees with varying refereeing levels taking place on the Certified Referees List 2018 of the Turkish fencing Federation. The Maslach Burnout Inventory developed by Maslach and Jackson (10) and adapted into Turkish conducting a study on its reliability and validity by Ergin (6) was used in this study conducted on the basis of the survey model. In the evaluation of the data and determination of the calculated values, SPSS 16.0 statistics package program was used. The data was summarized by providing the percentages, averages, and standard deviations. As the data distributed normally, an independent group t test was used for the pairwise cluster comparisons and One way Variance Analysis (ANOVA) was used for the multiple cluster comparisons. Tukey HSD multiple comparison test was conducted to determine the significant differences as a result of the ANOVA. The scale reliability coefficient was calculated as .82 and significance level was taken into account as 0.05 in this study. In conclusion, it was observed that the variables of ages, income and education statuses, sportsperson ship background, and material revenues obtained from acting as referees did not differentiate statistically and statistically significant differences were determined in terms of the variables of refereeing experience period, refereeing level, and the number of the annually received assignments, in the personal success subcategory.

Keywords: Sport, Fencing, Referee, Burnout

INTRODUCTION

Particularly in recent years, there are many psychological factors that negatively affect human life. Burnout, which has been frequently observed in many different occupational groups recently, is one of these psychological factors and its first appearance as a concept refers the 1970s. The concept of burnout was first introduced by Freudenbergler to describe a situation characterized by fatigue; disappointment and quitting work seen among volunteer healthcare workers and was later developed by Maslach and Jackson (8). Maslach and Leiter; In their book titled "The Truth About Burnout", while questioning what really causes burnout, they suggested that the issue appears to be a problem arising from individual characters and

behaviors at first glance in the shadow of the traditional mind and emphasized that their study suggested the opposite. Although eliminating individual problems in the traditional pattern or getting rid of the element that creates these problems is seen as the only method to eliminate burnout, it has revealed that the issue is entirely related to the social environment worked within. Therefore, believing that in order to prevent burnout, it is necessary to examine the structure and operation of the workplace, and the dimensions of people's interaction with each other, they expressed the view that the further away from the humanitarian factors in the workplace, the more burnout will be caused (11).

The Burnout; When the literature is examined, is frequently encountered circumstance as a very common situation in stressful work environments. Sports matches, in which the winner and the loser are in the same environment, can be seen as an environment where intense stress and emotions are experienced, not only athletes but also many people such as coaches, managers and referees are affected by this stress and emotions. Referees and other officials involved in sports matches are a particularly important part of competitive sports not only because of the effects on the behavior of the players and the results of the game, but also because they ensure that the competitions are conducted safely according to certain rules (5). However, referees must deal with conflicts arising from criticism from players, coaches and even team managers. They are almost always physically and verbally attacked by players, coaches and impatient supporters, who create an environment of fear of making mistakes during the game. Too many referees must deal with a stressful professional and social life. Moreover, they live under high levels of stress due to poor social appreciation of their profession (2). Especially in branches that require quick interpretation and decision-making of actions like fencing, this stress, together with external factors, can affect the referees significantly.

Although there are very few scientific studies on fencing, it is sufficient to understand the features of the branch. Fencing is a versatile combat sport that requires quite a high level of specific abilities, where physical as well as psychological competence is particularly important, and has a dynamic structure depending on the actions of competing athletes (13). Due to the fact that the fencing branch has a versatile structure, many elements that fencing referees will consider within the scope of their responsibilities come across during the competition. When the literature is examined, it is possible to find many studies on burnout, while the number of peer-focused studies seems to be quite insufficient. In this study, the level of burnout of fencing referees who actively work as referees in fencing competitions

and its relationship with some variables are tried to be interpreted.

METHOD

The relevant scale consists of 22 items and is 5-point Likert type. It consists of three sub-dimensions: Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization and Personal Success. Moreover, while the data were collected with the Maslach Burnout Scale, some personal information of the referees who participated in the study were also collected. These are age, education level, income status, duration, and level of arbitration experience.

Research group is consisting of 60 candidate, Provincial, National and International referees actively involved in competitions and Turkey Fencing Federation as of the date 2018 05/31, listed in the 2018 referees list for visas. The scale forms were distributed by giving the necessary explanations by the researcher to the volunteer participants. In the evaluation of the data and determination of the calculated values, SPSS 16.0 statistics package program was used. The data was summarized by providing the percentages, averages, and standard deviations. Whether the data showed normal distribution or not was checked with Kurtosis - Skewness Coefficient range, and it was determined that the data were normally distributed, since the range did not exceed the values of +2.0 and -2.0. As the data distributed normally, an independent group t test was used for the pairwise cluster comparisons and One way Variance Analysis (ANOVA) was used for the multiple cluster comparisons. Tukey HSD multiple comparison test was conducted to determine the significant differences as a result of the ANOVA. The scale reliability coefficient was calculated as .82 and significance level was taken into account as 0.05 in this study. For this study, approval was obtained from the non-invasive ethics committee of the Selçuk University Faculty of Sport Sciences, under number 123 and resolution number 61.

FINDINGS

Table 1. Distribution of Personal Information of the Referees Participating in the Research

Variables		f	%
Age	22 Years and Below	30	50,0
	23 Years and Over	30	50,0
	Total	60	100,0
Education Status	High School and Below	21	35,0
	Undergraduate and Higher	39	65,0
	Total	60	100,0
Income Level	1500 TL and Below	29	48,3
	1501 TL and Over	31	51,7
	Total	60	100,0
Referee Year	1-3 Years	27	45,0
	4 Years and Over	33	55,0
	Total	60	100,0
Refereeing Level	Candidate Referee	16	26,7
	Provincial Referee	18	30,0
	National and International Referee	26	43,3
	Total	60	100,0
The Average Referee Duty In One Year	1-3	25	41,7
	4 and Over	35	58,3
	Total	60	100,0
Athlete History	6 Years and Below	23	38,3
	7 Years and Over	37	61,7
	Total	60	100,0

When Table 1. is examined, 65% (n = 39) the referees participating in the research have a bachelor's degree and above, and 55% (n = 33) of them have 4 years or more of a referee history. When the athlete history of the participants before or during the refereeing was examined, it was observed that 61.7% (n = 37) had a athlete history of 7 years or more.

Table 2. Maslach Burnout Scale Mean Scores t Test Results of Referees Participating in the Study According to the Age Variable

	Age	N	X	Ss	Sd	t	P
Emotional Exhaustion	22 Years and Below	30	1,914	0,587	58	0,770	0,444
	23 Years and Over	30	2,040	0,675			
Desensitization	22 Years and Below	30	2,026	0,663	58	0,713	0,479
	23 Years and Over	30	2,166	0,845			
Personal Success	22 Years and Below	30	3,554	0,737	58	0,970	0,336
	23 Years and Over	30	3,729	0,658			

When Table 2 is examined, a statistically significant difference was not found in all sub-dimensions as a result of examining the Maslach Burnout Scale Mean Scores of the fencing referees participating in the study according to the age variable

Table 3. Maslach Burnout Scale Mean Scores t Test Results of Referees Participating in the Study According to the Education Status Variable

	Education Status	N	X	Ss	Sd	t	P
Emotional Exhaustion	High School and Below	30	1,867	0,449	58	1,129	0,326
	Undergraduate and Higher	30	2,037	0,707			
Desensitization	High School and Below	30	2,171	0,636	58	0,602	0,579
	Undergraduate and Higher	30	2,056	0,819			
Personal Success	High School and Below	30	3,476	0,685	58	1,363	0,180
	Undergraduate and Higher	30	3,730	0,698			

When Table 3 is examined, a statistically significant difference was not found in all sub-dimensions as a result of examining the Maslach Burnout Scale Mean Scores of the fencing referees participating in the study according to the education status variable.

Table 4. Maslach Burnout Scale Mean Scores t Test Results of Referees Participating in the Study According to the Income Level Variable

	Income Level	N	X	Ss	Sd	t	P
Emotional Exhaustion	1500 TL and Below	30	1,996	0,667	58	0,217	0,830
	1501 TL and Over	30	1,960	0,604			
Desensitization	1500 TL and Below	30	2,124	0,727	58	0,271	0,788
	1501 TL and Over	30	2,071	0,794			
Personal Success	1500 TL and Below	30	3,560	0,743	58	0,870	0,390
	1501 TL and Over	30	3,717	0,656			

When Table 4 is examined, a statistically significant difference was not found in all sub-dimensions as a result of examining the Maslach Burnout Scale Mean Scores of the fencing referees participating in the study according to the income level variable.

Table 5. Maslach Burnout Scale Mean Scores t Test Results of Referees Participating in the Study According to the Referee Year Variable

	Referee Year	N	X	Ss	Sd	t	P
Emotional Exhaustion	1-3 Years	30	1,843	0,509	58	1,555	0,137
	4 Years and Over	30	2,087	0,703			
Desensitization	1-3 Years	30	2,044	0,779	58	0,480	0,634
	4 Years and Over	30	2,139	0,747			
Personal Success	1-3 Years	30	3,310	0,706	58	3,656	0,001*
	4 Years and Over	30	3,912	0,570			

*p < 0,05

When Table 5 is examined, Maslach Burnout Inventory Score Average of fencing referee participating in the survey, examination by the years of being referee variable results, emotional exhaustion and depersonalization dimensions in a statistically meaningful differences were not detected in Personal Success sub-scale 4 years and more in favor of referees with experience statistically significant difference has been detected.

Table 6. Maslach Burnout Scale Mean Scores t Test Results of Referees Participating in the Study According to the Average Referee Duty in One Year Variable

	The average referee duty in one year	N	X	Ss	Sd	t	P
Emotional Exhaustion	1-3	30	1,840	0,579	58	1,473	0,154
	4 and Over	30	2,076	0,655			
Desensitization	1-3	30	2,024	0,757	58	0,626	0,534
	4 and Over	30	2,148	0,762			
Personal Success	1-3	30	3,255	0,603	58	4,108	0,000*
	4 and Over	30	3,917	0,633			

*p < 0,05

When Table 6 is examined, Maslach Burnout Inventory Score Average of fencing referee participating in the survey, examination by average assignment in 1-year variable results, emotional exhaustion and depersonalization dimensions in a statistically meaningful differences were not detected in Personal Success sub-scale 4 years and over in favor of referees with experience statistically significant difference has been detected.

Table 7. Maslach Burnout Scale Mean Scores t Test Results of Referees Participating in the Study According to the Athlete History Variable

	Athlete History	N	X	Ss	Sd	t	P
Emotional Exhaustion	6 Year and Below	30	1,917	0,641	58	0,577	0,569
	7 Year and Over	30	2,015	0,630			
Desensitization	6 Year and Below	30	2,034	0,847	58	0,496	0,637
	7 Year and Over	30	2,135	0,704			
Personal Success	6 Year and Below	30	3,429	0,661	58	1,920	0,063
	7 Year and Over	30	3,773	0,697			

When Table 7 is examined, a statistically significant difference was not found in all sub-dimensions as a result of examining the Maslach Burnout Scale Mean Scores of the fencing referees participating in the study according to the athlete history variable.

Table 8. Maslach Burnout Scale Mean Scores Anova and Tukey Test Results of Referees Participating in the Study According to the Referee Levels Variable

	Referee Levels	N	X	Ss	Sd	F	P	Tukey
Emotional Exhaustion	A Candidate Referee	16	1,694	0,400	2 5759	2,677	0,077	
	B Provincial Referee	18	1,987	0,667				
	C National and International Referee	26	2,145	0,677				
Desensitization	A Candidate Referee	16	1,925	0,656	2 57 59	0,562	0,573	
	B Provincial Referee	18	2,177	0,811				
	C National and International Referee	26	2,146	0,787				
Personal Success	A Candidate Referee	16	3,140	0,482	2 5759	7,112	0,002*	A<B A<C
	B Provincial Referee	18	3,729	0,699				
	C National and International Referee	26	3,889	0,670				

*p < 0,05

When Table 8. is examined, the result of examining the referees participating in the study according to the variable of refereeing level; While it was determined that the Personal Success perceptions of National and International Referees were higher than the Candidates and Provincial Referees in the Personal Success sub-dimension, no statistically significant difference was found between the referee levels in the Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization sub-dimensions.

CONCLUSION

As a result of the study, in respect of the Maslach Burnout Scale Mean Scores of the fencing referees actively involved in the competitions; It was determined that there was no statistically significant difference according to age, educational status, income level, sportive background variables, while statistical differences were found in the variables of the duration of experience in the refereeing profession and the refereeing rank. In general, it has been observed that the average scores of the personal achievement sub-dimension of the referees who have more experience in both sub-dimensions and if a generalization is made again, the referee levels of national and international levels are higher than the other referees. The Experience seems to be a significant factor in dealing with other negative aspects when refereeing. In the study, where Kargün et al. (9) examined the level of professional burnout of soccer referees, while no difference was found in the variables of income, age, education level, and referees with more experience in the emotionality sub-dimension, depending on the duration of the referee, had the highest score average. The findings of the aforementioned study and our study are quite similar. Again, in the study of İlkım and Güllü (7) on the wrestling referees; No statistically significant

difference was found in sub-dimensions of age, education level, sports history, and this result is similar to our study. However, different from our study, different results were found in income and experience variables. In the study, where statistically significant difference according to the duration of experience and the level of refereeing was not found, it is thought that this difference may have occurred due to the difference in the number of national and international referee participants between the two studies. In the study carried out by Yıldırım et al. (14) on the professional burnout levels of hockey referees, similar to our study, there was no difference in variables such as gender, marital status, income and education, while a statistically significant difference was found in the duration of refereeing experience variable. In the sub-dimension of insensitivity of the referees, whose years of experience ranged from 7-9 years, it was observed that the average scores were higher than the other referees, and this may be due to the fact that the new referees do not have the enthusiasm for development and professional success, depending on the experience of the hockey referees participating in the study. In the study carried out by Al-Halıq et al. (1) on Jordanian sports referees, it was found that the referees with high referee experience had lower levels of burnout than those with less experience. This result is similar to our study. Da Gama et al. (3) observed that the burnout levels of professional league referees were higher in their study, which examined the burnout levels of football referees who worked as referees in professional and amateur leagues. Again, Dağlı Ekmekçi et al. (4), in their study examining the relationship between organizational commitment and burnout on swimming referees, have observed that those who have been in refereeing for a long

time have higher burnout than those who have been referee for a shorter time. The higher level of burnout of professional league referees, who have a relatively high period of experience in refereeing, coincides with results of our study. In the study conducted by Rainey and Hardly (12) on rugby referees, it was observed that burnout levels were high due to performance anxiety focused on personal success, and this situation supports our study.

While it is possible to find a wide range of studies on athletes related to burnout in the literature, an extremely limited number of studies have been conducted on referees. For this reason, it is thought that our study will contribute to the scientific literature. However, the fact that the study was conducted only on fencing referees can be interpreted as a limitation. Despite this, the limited number of studies for fencing referees in the national and international arena increases the importance of our work.

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