

## Success expectancy and life satisfaction in athletic referees

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### Abstract

The article will present the results of research on the relationship between hope for success and life satisfaction in volleyball and football referees. The study involved 214 referees (104 from volleyball and 110 from football). In the presented study, the Hope for Success Questionnaire (KNS; Łaguna, Trzebiński, Zięba, 2005) and the Life Satisfaction Scale (SWLS; Juczyński, 2009) were used. The results of this study indicated that there are positive correlations between hope for success and life satisfaction in both group of volleyball and football referees. Additional analyzes also showed that there was a positive relationship between hope for success, willpower and life satisfaction in the group of female referees. Similarly, in the group of men, positive correlations were found between hope for success, the ability to find solutions, and willpower, and life satisfaction. The results of the research indicate the role of hope for success in the sense of life satisfaction. In the study group - sports referees, this topic seems to be particularly important and deserves further analysis.

Key words: Life satisfaction, Well-being; hope for success; sports referee

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### Introduction

Currently, in order to attract the attention from people all over the world, sport is no longer only sports competition and good entertainment but also a great deal of sponsorship money.

Engaging more and more financial outlays means the increase in requirements for the referees due to the fact that their decisions may ultimately affect the result of the match [1, 2]. Therefore, bearing in mind that referees take responsibility, it is required that they make correct and right decision because their actions and mistakes determine who won and who lost the match.

Nowadays, many factors contribute to the optimal work of an arbitrator. There is no doubt that the mental aspect is also important and the hope for success and life satisfaction may be protective factors against pressure imposed on referees. Despite the important role played by judges, very little research has been done to assess their role in a psychological context.

### Hope for success

In the mid-nineties, Charles Richard Snyder developed the concept of hope, understood as the belief in having the competence to succeed [3]. According to him, hope is a cognitive motivational process, which is an element accompanying a specific decision-making situation and a concrete action. Snyder emphasizes that hope for success consists of two aspects: agency (willpower) and pathway (ability to find solutions). Agency defined as a belief in one's own effectiveness, the possibility of implementing the adopted plan and reaching the intended goal. It is also connected with the person's conviction that he can initiate the pursuit of a goal and persevere despite the emerging obstacles. The second component of hope for success concerns perceiving oneself as an individual who is capable and resourceful to create and find effective

solutions (one or more) contributing to the achievement of the goal. Thus, it is a belief in having sufficient knowledge and intellectual capacity to carry out one's will [4].

## **Life satisfaction**

The concept of life satisfaction can often be referred to happiness, well-being or quality of life [5]. The elements which make up the life satisfaction are: the level of perceived life satisfaction, experiencing positive emotions and the absence of negative feelings. Quality of life is based on a subjective assessment of one's situation in comparison with the standards adopted by the individual. If the result of the comparison is satisfactory, it results in a feeling of life satisfaction [6]. It should be emphasised that life satisfaction is a desirable factor associated with: a higher level of hope for success and a positive attitude [7], better coping with problematic situations [8]), more effective implementation of one's own goals [9]. Additionally, it can be treated as a manifestation of human adaptability. A person satisfied with their life actively creates their fate, influences their future, draws conclusions from the past and is aware of themselves in the present, which allows them to make realistic plans and implement them [10].

## **The referees in sports reality**

Cuskelly et al. [11] define acting as a referee as one of the most difficult and onerous tasks in sport. The mental condition of ref may be of great importance in the course of sports competition [12, 13]. Weinberg and Richardson (1990) [14] emphasize that in an experienced referee, psychological skills influence up to 70% of their success. The role of the ref is associated with the challenge of making correct and quick decisions, dealing with pressure and external evaluation, and with the accurate perception of dynamic situations [15, 13]. The relationship between physical load and referees' decision-making in sports game was analyzed, [see. 16], however, the results were inconclusive in this area of research. At the same time, the role of a ref is connected with the reputation of the fan community such as other participants in the world of sport, players or coaches [17]. Research on sports referees is relatively rarely reported compared to the results of research on players or coaches.

## **Aim of the research, research hypotheses**

The objective of the study was to identify the relations (including differences) between hope for success and life satisfaction in the group of volleyball and football referees. Hope for success is an important component for players [18], and may also be important in the case of referees who also function in the sports reality. The research is exploratory due to the lack of research reports focusing on sports referees. The following research hypotheses have been formulated:

H1: There is a positive correlation between the level of hope for success and life satisfaction in referees.

H2: There are significant differences in the level of hope for success and life satisfaction in volleyball and soccer referees.

H3: There are significant differences in the level of hope for success and life satisfaction among men and women refereeing sports events.

## **Method:**

### **Subjects**

The study involved 214 referees (104 from volleyball and 110 from football). The survey was conducted online. An online Google Form was used. The mean age was 33.3 years and the standard deviation was 28.2. Women constituted 19% of the study group (n = 40), and men

81% (n = 174), respectively. The average seniority of volleyball referees was 15.13 years, and 4.5 years in the case of football referees.

## Research tools

Hope for success. Used in Hope for Success Questionnaire (KNS) adapted into Polish by Mariola Łaguna, Jerzy Trzebiński and Mariusz Zięba [19], which is a Polish adaptation of the Adult Hope Scale - a scale developed by Ch. R. Snyder and colleagues. The questionnaire consists of 12 items. The questionnaire consists of 12 statements ((8 diagnostic items and 4 buffer items) which applicability is rated by the subjects on a scale from 1 (“definitely untrue”) to 8 (“definitely true”). Measurement with the KNS tool takes into account two components: belief in having strong will power, which enables the achievement of goals, SW (4 questions), belief in one's ability to find solutions based on one's knowledge and mental abilities expressed in situations requiring creative problem solving- UZR (4 questions), and the overall result being the sum of SW and UZR.

The Satisfaction with Life Scale - SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin) in the Polish adaptation by Juczyński [20] contains five statements (concerning their own life), to which the respondent responds by selecting the answer on a seven-point scale. The result of the measurement is the overall level of life satisfaction.

## Results

The data collected in the study were analyzed in the Statistica 13 program. All calculations were performed with the use of parametric tests and analyzes due to the compliance of the distribution of the studied variables with the normal distribution (the assessment was made on the basis of the Shapiro-Wilk test results). To better illustrate the obtained results, table 1 contains descriptive statistics of the variables that were included in the analyzes. The results will be presented in the order of the hypotheses.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of measured variables (N=214)

Variable	M	SD
Hope for success – general results	49,11215	7,148101
Finding solutions	25,74766	3,677347
Willpower	23,36449	4,418044
Life satisfstacion	22,76636	5,717249

M – mean; SD – standard deviation

The results of the research showed that there are correlation between the level of hope for success (and its components: willpower and the ability to find solutions) and life satisfaction (Pearson's r coefficient).

It turned out that in the group of volleyball referees positive correlations between hope for success and life satisfaction occur, as well as between the hope component - willpower and quality of life. On the other hand, in the group of football referees, hope for success and its two components positively correlate with life satisfaction. Detailed results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary of Pearson's linear correlation coefficients between hope for success and life satisfaction among referee: volleyball (n=104) and football (n=110)

Type of sport	Variable	M	SD	KNS	UM	SİLA	SWLS
Volleyball	KNS	49,97	7,36	1,00	0,85*	0,90*	0,43*
	UM ZN ROZW	25,88	3,74	0,85*	1,00	0,54*	0,17
	SİLA WOLI	24,09	4,62	0,90*	0,54*	1,00	0,55*
	SWLS	23,14	6,19	0,43*	0,17	0,55*	1,00
Football	KNS	48,30	6,88	1,00	0,87*	0,90*	0,51*
	UM ZN ROZW	25,63	3,63	0,87*	1,00	0,58*	0,28*
	SİLA WOLI	22,67	4,12	0,90*	0,58*	1,00	0,59*
	SWLS	22,41	5,24	0,51*	0,28*	0,59	1,00

M – mean; SD – standard deviation; KNS –hope for success (general result); UM – finding solutions, SİLA – wilpower; SWLS – life satisfaction; \*p<0,05

Additional analyzes were performed and showed a significant correlation between hope for success, willpower and life satisfaction in the group of female referees. Similarly, in the group of men, positive correlations were found between hope for success, the ability to find solutions, and willpower, and life satisfaction. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Summary of Pearson's linear correlation coefficients between hope for success and life satisfaction among referee: female (n=40) i male (n=174)

Gender	Variable	M	SD	KNS	UM	SİLA	SWLS
Female	KNS	50,08	5,95	1,00	0,79*	0,83*	0,35*
	UM ZN ROZW	26,53	3,47	0,79*	1,00	0,32*	-0,01
	SİLA WOLI	23,55	3,84	0,83*	0,32*	1,00	0,55*
	SWLS	22,28	6,04	0,35*	-0,01	0,55*	1,00
Male	KNS	48,89	7,39	1,00	0,87*	0,92*	0,50*
	UM ZN ROZW	25,57	3,71	0,87*	1,00	0,60*	0,28*
	SİLA WOLI	23,32	4,55	0,92*	0,60*	1,00	0,58*
	SWLS	22,88	5,65	0,50*	0,28*	0,58*	1,00

M – mean; SD – standard deviation; KNS –hope for success (general result); UM – finding solutions, SİLA – wilpower; SWLS – life satisfaction; \*p<0,05

The analysis of differences carried out with the Student's t-test showed that the differences between the referees of volleyball (n = 104) and football (n = 110) exist only in the hope for success component - willpower. In other cases, no statistically significant differences were found (see Table 4).

Table 4. Differences of willpower among referees of volleyball and football

Variable	M Volleyball	SD Volleyball	M Football	SD Football	t	f	p
SIŁA	24,09	4,62	22,67	4,12	2,38	212	0,01

M – mean; SD – standard deviation; SIŁA – willpower

The obtained results indicate that there are no differences in the level of hope for success and satisfaction with life in the group of women and men judging the competition.

## Discussion

Due to the exploratory nature of the research focusing its attention on Polish volleyball and football referees, the results of this research cannot be compared with the reports of other researchers. There is little information in the literature on sports psychology in relation to referees. Previous research conducted among referees has focused mainly on the job satisfaction [21, 22], motives for taking up the role of a ref [23], the impact of perceived organizational support, the resignation [24] and stress [25, 26]. In turn, study on Italian handball referees analyzed the importance of teamwork (or co-refereeing) in the context of improving the quality of life of these referees [27]. There are also few studies that consider comparisons between men and women working as sports referees [28, 29].

However, it is worth noting that hoping for success may be associated with the effectiveness of actions in difficult situations [30]. It seems that this resource is particularly important because sports referees work in conditions of uncertainty and are under constant pressure, so Porzak and Sagan [31] indicate, a high level of hope for success has an impact on the ability to make decisions under stressful environment. A person with a high level of hope for success and, above all, a strong belief in the ability to find a solution, will generally have lower levels of stress. The obtained research results do not entitle to draw final conclusions but constitute another important contribution to broadening the knowledge on psychological factors related to the functioning of a referee in the sports environment. Moreover, the knowledge presented in this study concerning the relationship between hope for success and life satisfaction, as well as significant differences between the studied groups of referees, should find its practical application in the mental training of referees.

## Conclusions

1. There is a relationship between the level of hope for success and life satisfaction in both volleyball and football referees.
2. In comparison to football referees, volleyball referees displayed a higher level of willpower.
3. There are no significant differences in the level of hope for success and life satisfaction between female referees and male referees.

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