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## **Analysis of Football Referee Satisfaction in Making Decision Based on Experience Levels**

**Yudi Nurcahya\*, Widi Kusumah, Dadan Mulyana, Hikmat Kodrat**

Sport Coaching Education Study Program, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Indonesia

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### **Abstract**

The role of a referee is important in every football match. A referee sometimes makes mistakes which can affect the outcome of the match. Dissatisfaction with the decision given by a referee will give an impact on the performance shown in a football match. This study aimed to find out the satisfaction of football referees in making decisions in football matches based on the experience of the referee. This research is a quantitative study using descriptive research methods with a causal comparative research design. The research samples involved were the referee who served in the Indonesian League 1 match. The instrument of this study was a Soccer Referee Decision Satisfaction Scale questionnaire. Based on the results of data processing and analysis using the Independent sample T-Test, it was found that there were differences in the level of satisfaction of football referees in making decisions based on the experience of each referee. It indicates that the experience of a referee will affect the psychological aspects of the referee in making decisions.

## INTRODUCTION

The presence of a referee in leading a football match is important. In team sports conducted in open an field, such as football, there are a number of roles that must be fulfilled, such as players, coaches, and referees (Catteeuw et al., 2009). The football match, of course, must be led by a person playing a role as a referee. The presence of a referee as a leader in a competition is correlated to their age. This is because a referee is at their best when their age is older than the player. Referees and assistant referees, at the top standard, tend to be older than the elite players (Castagna et al., 2005). In a football match, one of the referees on the field is in charge of the game. The referee is supported by two assistant referees whose main task is to decide whether a player is offside and determine if the ball is inside or outside the game (Catteeuw et al., 2009). In every football match, the role of a referee is important; in a professional football match, the error in the decision given by the referee may have an effect on the outcome of the match (Castagna et al., 2007). The decisions made by a referee must consider the fairness, sportsmanship, objectivity, and consistency aspects. Football referees generally have a high self-esteem in making decisions and the decision-making styles are used more effectively (Gülle, 2017).

Every decision made by a referee will be influenced by various factors inherent in the individual. In general, the age of elite referees and assistant referees is between 30-45 years (Krampe & Ericsson, 1996). The older the age of a referee, the better the compsure in leading the match and the more experiences he will have. Referees always have a challenging task in every sport, because there many aspects to be considered in every match, including the speed of making decisions, the complexity of the decisions, the possible consequences of their actions, the number of people involved in the competition, and also the hostility of spectators at sporting events (Guillén & Feltz, 2011). In addition, the presence of boisterous spectators, especially spectators of the home team, will influence the referee in making decisions. Statistical data from match records show that the home team won more often than the away team, the home team were awarded more penalties and received fewer yellow cards (Nevill et al., 1999). It does not only happen in football matches, but also in other sports. The home team's advantage can be found in sports where

the decision of the referee can influence the outcome, such as football, basketball, and boxing (Balmer et al., 2001).

Disturbances received by a referee throughout the match, including from players, the audience, and the official team, will influence the referee in making decisions. A referee sometimes makes the wrong decision due to the disturbance. Increased anxiety experienced by a referee will result in inappropriate and inconsistent decisions as the result of the roar coming from the audience (Lane et al., 2006). The referee's wrong decision due to the disturbance can still be tolerated to some extent (Craven, 1998). The experience of a referee in leading the match will help the referee in making decisions. An experienced referee, in leading matches, will be able to manage the anxiety, because they are able to anticipate the events that might arise in a match with a large number of spectators. A referee satisfaction with the decisions they had given in every football match is an interesting thing to be investigated. Currently, research examining problems regarding the referee satisfaction with the decisions they made is limited. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the referee satisfaction level of the decisions they made in football matches based on their experiences.

## METHODS

This research is a quantitative study comparing the level of satisfaction of soccer referees with the decisions they made in football matches and the experience of the referee. The method used in this research was a descriptive method using the Causal Comparative research design. The purpose of this study was to find the causes or consequences of the differences among the sample groups.

### Participants

The population of this research was the referee who served in the League 1 match in Indonesia (the main league in Indonesia), consisting of 40 referees. The selection of 40 referees was based on data that the referees serving in League 1 were the best referees in Indonesia. The sampling technique used a total sampling technique, which means that the entire population became the research sample. All samples were divided into 3 groups based on their experiences in leading the match. The division of groups was based on the length

of time the referee had become a football referee. The groups consisted of referees with under 5 years of experience group, 5-10 years of experience group, and more than 10 years of experience group.

### Instrument and Procedure

The research instrument used was the Soccer Referee Decision Satisfaction Scale (SRDSS) questionnaire (Can et al., 2014) containing 9 questions. The questions were given to find out the satisfaction of the referee in making decisions. Each part of this instrument had a score on a scale ranging from 0 to 4. The validity and reliability of this questionnaire were accepted with a CFI value = 0.96, GFI = 0.92 (Can et. al, 2014).

The data collection process was carried out to the referees in the 2019/2020 League 1 match. All of referees had agreed to be involved voluntarily proven by the consent form. All of involved referees were willing to fill out the satisfaction level of the referee questionnaire. The process of filling out the questionnaire was carried out after the referee led the match in Indonesian League 1. The referee's satisfaction level instrument was given to the referee and was filled in a few moments after the referee led the match. Before filling out the questionnaire, the research subjects received an explanation regarding the intention, purpose, and method of filling out the questionnaire. The process of filling out the questionnaire took 10-20 minutes. This instrument was given to 40 referees who led the match in Indonesian League 1 2019/2020.

### Data Analysis

The obtained data from the questionnaires that have been answered by the participants are then analyzed by using of SPSS version 22 software with the Independent sample T-Test.

## RESULT

The data that were successfully obtained from the data collection carried out on 40 referees in the Indonesian League 1 2019/2020 were then analyzed statistically. The referee satisfaction data obtained through distributing questionnaires on the Football Referee Decision Satisfaction Scale were then processed. The results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 presents data from 40 samples who filled

out the Football Referees Decision Satisfaction Scale (SRDSS) questionnaire regarding the level of soccer referee satisfaction in making decision in Indonesian League 1 2019/2020 based on their levels of experience. Table 1 describes that the minimum scores of the three group were 18 for referees with under 5 years of experience, 21 for referees with 5-10 years of experience, and 29 for referees with more than 10 years of experience, while the maximum scores for each group were 33 for the referees with under 5 years of experience, 32 for a referee with 5-10 years of experience, and 33 for a referee with 5-10 years of experience. Of the 40 referees, the average scores were 24.62 for referees with less than 5 years of experience, 26.78 for referees with 5-10 years of experience, and 31.25 for referees with more than 10 years of experience. From Table 1, it can be seen that the standard deviation values are 4,482 for referees with less than 5 years of experience, 2,763 for referees with 5-10 years of experience, and 1,708 for referees with more than 10 years of experience.

The data obtained were then processed using the Independent sample T-Test. Based on the processing carried out, the values were obtained as shown in Table 2.

**Table 1.** Description of The Sample Data

	Referee Satisfaction Level		
	Under 5 Years of Experience	5-10 Years of Experience	More than 10 Years of Experience
Max Score	33	32	32
Min Score	18	21	21
Average	24.62	26.78	26.78
SD	4.482	2.763	2.763

**Table 1.** The Test Result Difference

	Sig.	Conclusion
Referee Satisfaction Level	0.005	There is a significant difference

The Table 2 shows that the difference of soccer referee satisfaction level in making decisions based on the level of experience among referees with experience under 5 years, 5 to 10 years, and more than 10 years of experience have a sig value 0.005, which means that the value is less than 0.05. These results indicated that there were differences in the soccer referee satisfaction level in making decision among referees with more than 10

years of experience, 5 to 10 years of experience, and under 5 years of experience. The average result of referees with more than 10 years of experience was 31.25. The average result of referees with 5-10 years of experience was 26.78. Meanwhile, the average result of referees with under 5 years of experience was 24.02.

## DISCUSSION

This research was aimed to find out the soccer referee satisfaction level in making decisions based on their experiences. The obtained results indicated that referees with a longer experience in leading soccer matches in the Indonesian League 1 had a higher level of satisfaction with the decisions they made in a soccer match. The difference of the referee satisfaction level was caused by the right and wrong of the decisions they made in the match. Referees with a longer experience had a good accuracy in making decisions. Meanwhile, accuracy in decision making is one of the most important aspects of a referee performance (Helsen et al, 2004).

Competition in the Indonesian League always presents a competitive competition, thus the winner must be determined in the last match. Competition among major clubs in Indonesia, such as Arema, Persib, Persija, Persipura, and other major clubs is a long-awaited match that results in competition in the match (Saputra et al., 2020). The factor of the spectators in the field will affect the pressure received by the referee. In some matches, the audience is large, while some other matches had only a few spectators. The number of spectators present on the even does not only influence the referee's decision in big matches, but also a strong factor in small-scale matches (Unkelbach & Memmert, 2010). The noise from the audience will increase the referee's anxiety in leading the match (Balmer et al., 2006).

In this study, the referee led the match under different pressures. Referees who officiate at a high tension match with a large number of spectators tend to have a lower satisfaction level than referees leading a low tension match. Referees leading big matches with a high level of difficulty are, of course, more careful in making decisions. The anticipation of giving the wrong decision will cause more anxiety and stress on the referee (Balmer et al, 2006). The doubts in making decisions will certainly affect the referee satisfaction level with

the decisions they make in a match. Basically, a referee has a strong desire to make right decisions which free from errors by following the rules and regulations (Lane, 2006). The performance satisfaction of a referee will affect their performance in the field. A worker with a high job satisfaction will love the job he does in general, which will make a person feel that he is being treated properly and believe that the work he does will get satisfactory results (Akehurst et al., 2009).

## CONCLUSION

The results of data analysis and discussion of the soccer referee satisfaction level in making decisions based on the experience level found differences in the referee satisfaction level in making decisions based on the experience among referees with less than 5 years of experience, 5 to 10 years of experience, and more than 10 years of experience. It concludes that the longer the experience of a referee, the higher the level of the referee satisfaction in making decisions in soccer matches.

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