

## Sociotropic and Autonomic Personal Traits of Volleyball Referees: Turkish Case

Pervin Bilir

Çukurova University, High School of Physical Education and Sports, Department of Sports Management, Adana 10330, Turkey  
[pbilir@cu.edu.tr](mailto:pbilir@cu.edu.tr)

**Abstract:** What is intended in this study is to examine the sociotropic and autonomic personal traits of the volleyball referees. Sample group of the research has been comprised of 194 volleyball classification referees, having been elected by way of the randomized sampling method. The Sociotropy-Autonomy Scale, which has been developed by Beck et al. (1983) and transcribed into Turkish by Şahin et al. (1993), was used as the data collection instrument of the study. According to the respectively attained findings, volleyball referees have been found as displaying a more autonomic personality.

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### 1. Introduction

The concept of personality is consisted of the totality of the emotional, intellectual attitudes and behavioral traits of a person, which vary from others' in both objective and subjective terms. Personality is a sort of relationship that the individual establishes with his/her internal and external environment, and which is distinguished from others' in its consistent and structured form (Cüceloğlu, 1991). Every person, throughout his/her daily life, is in interaction with his/her environment, and with him/herself at all times. In these interactions, one reveals his/her unique thoughts, emotions, attitudes, and behaviors. Individual's manner of feeling, thinking, behaving resumes in his/her profession as the identifier of his/her personality.

According to Beck's cognitive theory, personality is divided into two dimensions, namely as sociotropy and autonomy. While socially-oriented persons are described as sociotropic, success-oriented persons are described as autonomic. Having established a bond within the depression buildup between certain types of personality and the life events, to which they are sensitive, Beck has thereby revealed the significance of the interaction between personality and the life events within the depression buildup. While the individuals displaying sociotropic behaviors are prone to undergo stress and depression, this indicates the person's need to be in positive relationships with the others. To receive the approval of the others is quite important for highly-sociotropic persons. Such feelings like loss and rejection being sensed throughout interpersonal resolutions, may cause depression in this type of persons. Autonomy, on the other hand, highlights the person's need for liberal thinking, independence, and achieving the

designated targets. Personal successes and failures matter so much to the highly-autonomic persons. Loss of control on the environment, or any sense of failure may cause depression in such people (Beck, 1983; Robins et al. 1989; Blatt & Zuroff 1992, Şahin et al. 1993, Moore & Blackburn 1996; Bagby et al. 2001; Babadağ 2001; Kabakçı 2001; Lynch et al. 2003). Those with high sociotropic traits are prone to love and be loved. They are inclined to be used by others, and they are not too stubborn. They like to embark on common activities, and to help others. They also consider it important to maintain smooth relationships with others, and to be recognized by others (Lynch et al. 2003). On the basis of the aforesaid traits, sociotropic referees may be considered as being prone to be under the influence external factors while taking decisions.

While defining the *autonomy* as the humans' power and skill to think and decide liberally, to actualize their decisions, and to behave liberally and independently, Babadağ (2001) underlines the fact that, member of a profession should have the freedom of deciding as both an individual, and as the member of a profession, and to actualize his/her decisions as well. In this context, referees' bearing the autonomy trait may imply their ability to take decisions without remaining under pressure and stress. Referees, according to several studies, are such type of peoples, who may become influenced by large crowds fiercely shouting and protesting against the unfavorable decisions of the referee (Scoppa, 2008). Referees undergo stress while working. Such stress may not only arise from the incoming effects from the environment, it also threatens the fulfillment of one's profession, and endangers one's life as well (Lazarus & Folkman 1984). Stress not only negatively affects

numerous cognitive and psycho-physiological processes, such as concentration, focus of attention, effort, and stimulation, it may also lead to impaired motor performance (Jones & Hardy, 1989). Despite the applicability of the technical knowledge, it is indisputable that, refereeing on the fields is an art. Most of the artistic skill being displayed by the referee on the competition field depends on his/her personal characteristics (Ekmekçi, 2011).

As we go through the literature; we have seen many researches concerning psychological process in volleyball and personalities of athletes (Emara et al., 2013; Dana et al. 2012; Koruç, 1994) but on the other we haven't had any articles about personal traits of volleyball referees. In this research, classification referees from Turkish Volleyball Federation were observed in terms of both sociotropic, and autonomic personal traits, and in terms of demographical variants as well.

## 2. Material and Methods

In this research of descriptive form, 194 referees, who had been elected by way of randomized sampling method out of the 400 classification referees from Turkish Volleyball Federation, composed the sample group hereof. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of this study was calculated as .85 for the sociotropy scale, and .78 for the autonomy scale. Kolomogorov – Smirnow test in single group was applied in order to ascertain whether the sociotropic and autonomic scores had displayed a normal distribution, or not. Upon ascertaining that all the data were displaying normal distribution, t-test was applied in the comparison of the averages of the two groups, while One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was applied in the comparison of the averages of more than two groups, and Scheffe-Test was applied in determining the difference between the average.

**Data Collection Tool:** "Sociotropy-Autonomy Scale", having been developed by Beck et al. in 1983, and transcribed by Şahin et al. into Turkish culture (1993), was applied in determining the sociotropic and autonomic personal traits of the referees. The aforementioned scale is consisted of 60 articles, which calculate the personal traits both dependent to, and autonomous from the people. While 30 out of the aforementioned articles are associated with the sociotropy subscale, the remaining 30 are associated with the autonomy subscale. Each article is of 5-staged likert type starting from "not describing at all" to "describing quite well" in response to the question "how much does it describe you? While the question articles of the sub-dimensions of sociotropy and autonomy are included in mixed form, the highest score which may be obtained from a subscale is (30 articles) 120 points. The higher are the points being obtained from the sociotropy sub-dimension the higher are the sociotropic personal traits, while the higher are the points being obtained from the autonomy sub-dimension the higher are the autonomic personal traits.

At the studies conducted in Turkey, internal consistency of the scale was found in between .70 and .83 per sociotropy, and as .81 per autonomy. Out of the studies conducted with regard to the validity of the scale, it was found out that, the sociotropy subscale may distinguish the patient and normal groups, and that it is closely associated more with depression (Şahin et al. 1993.; Savaşır and Şahin 1997).

## 3. Results

Results from the significance analysis of the sociotropic-autonomic personal traits of the referees as per the demographical variables are given in (Table 1).

**Table 1:** Significance Analysis of the Sociotropic-Autonomic Personal Traits of the Referees as per the Demographical Variables (G, gender; A, age; MS, marital status; Field of Occupation Profession: FOP; Refereeing Degree: RD; Referee Ranking: RR; Referee Period: RP; Education: E; National: N; International: Int; Primary Education: PE; High-School:HS; University:U)

Individual Features		N	Socitropy		Autonomy	
			$\bar{X} \pm SD$	p	$\bar{X} \pm SD$	p
G	Female	56	68.78±14.68	<b>0.01*</b>	74.04±13.82	0.87
	Male	138	62.20±19.80		73.70±13.72	
A	22≤X<30	26	68.12±15.90	<b>0.04*</b>	72.12±15.63	0.80
	30≤X<38	79	62.94±14.86		73.68±13.53	
	38≤X<46	63	69.43±18.44		75.18±13.38	
	46≤X	26	71.42±15.47		73.58±13.92	
MS	Married	144	67.81±16.06	0.19	73.80±13.54	0.80
	Single	50	64.20±17.77		74.36±14.50	
FOP	Public	130	66.67±14.49	0.81	73.27±13.86	0.33
	Private	64	67.30±18.63		75.31±15.54	

RD	N	191	67.03±16.62	0.30	74.16±13.74	0.08
	Int	3	57.20± 6.56		60.36± 4.36	
RR	A	22	65.46±17.51	0.09	73.73±12.74	0.51
	B	72	70.79±46.76		75.83±14.19	
	C	95	64.26±15.82		72.72±13.82	
	KD	5	66.40±16.83		71.00±10.32	
RP	0≤X<5	4	62.00±20.58	0.16	68.75±25.94	0.43
	6≤X<10	81	66.11±15.48		72.21±13.88	
	11≤X<15	60	64.77±16.30		75.50±12.93	
	16≤X<20	28	67.66±20.25		74.28±14.77	
	21≤X<25	15	75.40±12.30		74.73±9.02	
	25≤X	5	78.40±15.50		83.20±16.21	
E	PE	1	67.00±00.00	0.08	83.00±00.00	<b>0.06</b>
	HS	32	71.53±19.80		78.13±14.07	
	U	161	65.95±15.78		73.06±13.60	

Having Table 1 examined in general, it is seen that, autonomy scores are higher than sociotropy scores per each trait. While 71.1% of the participants of the study are composed of male referees, the remaining 28.9% are composed of female referees. Ages of the referees are ranged from 22-30 (13.7%) to 30-38 (38.3%), and from 38-40 (33.7%) to those older than the age range of 46. While a large majority of the referees in question are national referees (98.5%), and 89.1% thereof are university graduates, 18 of whom are holding master's, and 7 thereof are holding doctorate degrees. While the fields of profession of the referees are divided in public (67%) and private (33%) sectors, 48.2% thereof are ranked at C classification, 38.1% thereof are ranked at B classification, and a large majority of them are referees with 6-10 years of expertise.

There is no significant difference between the autonomy scores of male and female referees ( $p>0.05$ ). However, sociotropy scores of the female referees were found to be higher as a result of the difference having been inspected among the sociotropy scores ( $p<0.05$ ). Having found the sociotropy scores significant as per the age groups ( $p<0.05$ ), there is a significant difference between the second age group (30-38) and the fourth one (older than 46) as a result of the Scheffé-Test respectively conducted. Only one referee was excluded from the analysis due to being a primary education graduate. No significant difference was detected between sociotropy or autonomy scores as a result of the analysis having been made as per the educational levels, marital statuses, refereeing degrees, classifications, and terms of service of the referees ( $p>0.05$ ).

Averages of the scores, which were attained by the referees from the sociotropy-autonomy scales, are given in (Table 2).

**Table 2: Distribution of the Sociotropy-Autonomy Scores of the Referees (n=194)**

Scale	Min-Max	$\bar{X} \pm SD$
<u>Sociotropy</u>		
Rejection Anxiety	3-36	19.81±7.39
Seperation Anxiety	10-47	31.29±7.26
Pleasing Others	6-25	15.77±4.29
Sociotropy Overall	21-104	66.87±16.55
<u>Autonomy</u>		
Personal Success	14-45	30.72±5.86
Freedom	13-45	29.34±6.42
Fancying solitude	3-45	13.89±4.61
Autonomy Overall	42-105	73.94±13.76

Average scores of the dimensions of the sociotropy subscale were calculated as 19.81 for the rejection anxiety, 31.29 for the separation anxiety, 15.77 for the dimension of pleasing others, and 66.87 for the overall average. Average scores of the dimensions of the autonomy subscale were found as 30.72 for the dimension of success, 29.34 for the dimension of freedom, 13.89 for the dimension of fancying solitude, and 73.94 for the overall average. Taking the average scores into consideration, volleyball referees mostly display an autonomic personal trait.

#### 4. Discussion

Despite the abundance of studies on sociotropic-autonomic personal traits, no such a study was found to have been conducted in consideration of the sociotropic-autonomic dimensions of the volleyball referees. That is why the available findings were discussed together with the studies conducted in the other fields of the literature.

Results of the sports competitions depend mostly on the decisions to be taken, and the attitudes and behaviors to be displayed by the referees. That is

why such skills as high level of attention, agility, integrity, definite and accurate decision-taking are sought among the referee candidates. Despite the probability that the aforementioned traits may be improved thanks to the respective trainings being received, referees' personal traits also play significant roles in the decisions they take. Referees mostly work under stress, and under the pressure from the fans. This is an opinion clearly observed not only by the sportspersons, but also by both the spectators, and by the sports public as well that, the fans become more prudent against their teams, more reluctant to see the truths, more disrespectful against the sportspersons and the spectators of the opponent teams, and more violent against the referees with each passing day (Arslan and Bingölbali, 1997). The sociotropic and autonomic traits being possessed by the referees may have influence on their success in their professions.

According to the findings of this study, while the sociotropy scores of the referees vary between 21 and 104, and that the averages thereof is 66.87, sociotropy traits point at the medium level. It is generally concluded from the researches that, the link between the adverse social developments and higher sociotropic needs is much too stronger than the link between the failure and higher autonomic needs (Nietzel and Harris 1990). With an average of 73.94 out of their autonomic scores varying from 42 to 105, referees display an autonomic personality, which is higher than medium score. It may very well be said that, referees are not prone to fall into depression due to stress arising from external factors. Despite having shed light on the frequent connection between sociotropy and depression, the conducted researches could not have shown any connection between autonomy and depression (Robins and Block, 1988; Robins et al., 1989). Sociotropy and autonomy may cause not only the mental stresses, which cause disillusiones and adverse experiences, but also such opportunities, which enhance personal development and satisfaction (Beck, 1983). Independent decision-making and problem-solving skill may be considered as a professional behavior, which may be expected from the referees. As a result of a research which was conducted with regard to the assessment of personal traits in view of work-worker harmony, it has been put forth that, workers who represent the sociotropic personal trait are prone to group works, those who represent the autonomic personal trait are prone to work in individual, independent (Serinkan and Barutçu, 2006) works. Having mentioned of the importance of the autonomy level attained by the members of a profession in determining whether the respective job provides professional status, (Seren, 1998) further pointed to the fact that the autonomy among nurses is lower than that among the members

of other professions. It was pointed out that, the arrangements and content works being conducted in many nursery high-schools were intended for bringing up critically thinking, autonomously acting care-oriented nurses with enhanced problem-solving skill (Kelleci and Gölbaşı, 2004). In the study conducted by Sato and McCann (2007), sociotropy and autonomy are described as two personality dimensions, which cause the resentment degree of the individual to rise. In a study conducted on the basis that, sociotropy is defined as an enormous scale of investment in the interpersonal relations, and autonomy is defined as a major connection between success and control, diversity of the close and distant problems were investigated therein while revealing the difference between sociotropy and autonomy. According to the findings attained from the research, sociotropic individuals were found to behave kindly towards distant persons, while they were acting aggressively against those being in their nearest surrounding. Autonomic individuals, on the contrary, were found to act aggressively against those being in their nearest surrounding, while they were behaving mercifully against those being in their nearest surrounding. It is put forth that the relationship between the negative social developments and high sociotropic needs is firmer than the relationship between the failure and high autonomic needs (Nietzel and Harris, 1990). It has been suggested that, sociotropic-autonomic personal trait may be correlated with such factors as gender, age, educational status, places of residence and economical statues of the individuals, their opinions regarding their professions, family traits, problem-solving conditions, etc. (Kabakçı 2001, Kelleci and Gölbaşı 2004; McBride et al. 2005; Kaya et al. 2006). It has been concluded from our research that, there is a significant difference between the referees sociotropy scores per gender, and that sociotropy is a trait which is found more among male referees. According to Coyne and Whiffen (1995), while mentioning of the fact that sociotropic traits may reveal gender difference, and that women are more inclined to develop sociotropic traits, they also mentioned of the fact that, this was an issue being disregarded in the studies. Findings from our study show a parallelism with this study. It has also been ascertained that, sociotropic traits of female referees are found higher than those of male referees as a result of a comparison of sociotropical scores per gender. According to a study, which examined the sociotropy and autonomy levels of the sportspersons, while sociotropy levels of female sportspersons were found higher than those of male sportspersons, on the other hand, autonomy levels of the male sportspersons were found higher than those of the female sportspersons (Kalkan et al,

2002). According to the results having been put forth by the other works on the issue of sociotropy and autonomy, women's traits are more sociotropic than those of men. While women desire to keep in contact with others, men are prone to reveal autonomic behaviors for being more individualistic. In case of a break-up in their relations with others, or in case being rejected by others, it has been seen that, such sociotropic persons may fall into depression.

Autonomic persons, on the other hand, are less prone to fall into depression, due to being less dependent to others (Ellison and Freischlag, 1975; McBride et al., 2005). has revealed that, while women possess more sociotropic personal traits than men, men, on the other hand, possess more autonomic traits in comparison to those of women.

A significant difference was found among the sociotropic scores of the referees per their ages. It was seen out of such a difference that, the referees older than the age 46 possess more sociotropic traits. This may be considered as an unexpected finding. Because as the age increses more independent decision-making may be anticipated thanks to the attained professional expertise in the course of time. In the studies mentioning of personal traits and depression, it was indicated that, firstly, non-clinical samples should be used, then the findings should be tested for the patient population, and that only this way more reliable results can be attained (Coyne and Whiffen 1995). This research is of importance in terms of a preparatory work for the clinical studies to be conducted with regard to the referees.

#### Corresponding Author:

Asist. Prof. Dr. Pervin Bilir  
Çukurova University, High School of Physical  
Education and Sports, Department of Sports  
Management, Adana 10330, Turkey  
E-mail [pbilir@cu.edu.tr](mailto:pbilir@cu.edu.tr)

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