

## Labour Process of Football Referees In Professional leagues: The Example of Sakarya Province

Associate Professor Cemal İYEM<sup>1</sup>  
Dilek ÇELEBİ TEMKİNER<sup>2</sup>,  
Gökhan ÇAKMAK<sup>3</sup>  
Halil İbrahim GENÇ<sup>4</sup>

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### Abstract

In the world, the beginning of the football refereeing, was correlated with the beginning and spread of football. With football becoming such a colossal industry, footballers who play this game, have been turned into leisure time employees. Particularly, the labour process of footballers have begun at this point where football has turned into a profession. The profession of football refereeing has come into prominence as the decision-making authority about conflict in football field, while the footballer are playing football. Just as the effort footballers perform, referees also perform in order to manage the football match and make the right decisions. However, when it is investigated, it is observed that there are very few scientific research done. Consequently, referees to be studied in a scientific research is quite important in order to overcome the lack of information on this subject. In the study semi-structured interview of qualitative research was used.

**Keywords:** Football Refereeing, Labour Process, Football Industry

### Introduction

Sport, is an activity that draws the attention of mankind and stays intriguing in every period of time. At first, it was an activity that was a way to distract from work; however, with the increase of spare time and with sports expanding in economics, it started to become an occupation (Talimciler, 2005). Nowadays, when sports are mentioned, the first one that comes to mind is football.

<sup>1</sup>Sakarya University School of Business Dep. of HR Management, [ciyem@sakarya.edu.tr](mailto:ciyem@sakarya.edu.tr)

<sup>2</sup>Sakarya University School of Business Dep. of HR Management, Masters (with thesis) Candidate

<sup>3</sup>Sakarya University Department of Sport Management, Masters (with thesis) Candidate

<sup>4</sup>Sakarya University PE and Sports Teaching Department, PhD Candidate

The world is going through changes and transformations that have never been before. Globalisation seems to be the engine behind these rapid transformations (Doğru, 2008). In the period that we live in; sports have become a subject of consumption, rather than stay as a game or a spare time activity (Talimciler, 2005). The phenomenon of globalisation has affected and still affects football as it does so to other areas. With the process of globalisation, football was also commoditized and became a subject of trade and thus becoming a colossal industry (Doğru, 2008).

With football becoming such a big industry, the players who are performing the game in the fields have become free time labourers. Labour process of football players started here. The occupation of refereeing comes to surface as a decisive authority when the football players in the fields fall into differences. Just as the efforts put into the game by football players; referees also need to put hardwork in order to officiate this beautiful game and give accurate decisions.

In the world, the beginning of football refereeing is parallel to football and its expansion. It was first suggested that football should be played in accordance with certain rules in 1860 (Dinç, 2013). It is possible to say that refereeing originated from England and started to become institutionalized in 1880 (Sülün, 2013). In 1893, Harrow, the first football association was established and it was decided here that referee decisions were not objectionable, also in a meeting in Chelton, it was found suitable for one referee and two assistant referees to perform the duty (Pepe and others, 1999) and thus, refereeing started to become what it is at the present day.

### **1. Conceptual Framework**

The establishment of the Sheffield Club in 1855 (Kargün, 2011) and 11 other clubs established following Sheffield Club; formed the English Football Association in 1863, (Sülün, 2013) which marked the beginning of the institutionalization of football. Through time, football, a pied piper and the universal sport that has the biggest audience (Efe and others, 2008), became a colossal industry with employers and employees all around the world (Dinç, 2013). Football emerged under the popular vote, and in the present day, became an organisation of work under the name of industrial football (Talimciler, 2008). With football becoming an industry, labour process of football players as the producers of the game (Erdoğan, 2008) and referees as managers of the games on the fields have begun.

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A referee is the person who enforces the rules of the games set beforehand and selected by the sport organizations' administrators, and the person who decides upon points received, wins, defeats and punishments. The referee manages the game and his/her decisions are final (with the exception of game laws error or changing the erroneous decision with assistant referees' warnings before the game) (Satman, 2015). The referee is the second person that exists and is needed in the field after the player. Referee is the person who shares fate with players on the sacred field. Without the referee, the sport and the player; in extent the game

event would not come true. Referee is among the indispensable components of football (Denizli, 2010). All of these aspects set forth the importance of the referee alongside with the referee's authority.

Football could be grouped under three titles, being football players, the audience and the people who manage football. The elements that form the latter under the grouping are; administrators, managers, and referees, who hold the fate of the game in their hands, deciding on the field in person (Pepe ve ark, 1999). The referee; acts as a bridge between the audience and the players and between rival teams, on the other hand evaluating the game according to rules set before, serves as an important factor on the game; being good, exciting, with a lot of goals, within the fair-play principles, coming to an end or, with irregularities, being eventful or disputed/stormy (Efe ve ark, 2008).

In Turkey, the development of football refereeing requires the detailed exhibition, evaluation and comparison of not only the refereeing authority but also the clubs, club administrations, football players' and supporters' contractual properties and stance within the society (Kargün, 2011). The refereeing in Turkey, began its development after 1900, with retired players becoming referees. At first, while referees with coats and umbrellas exercised their duties, (Dinç, 2013) in Istanbul 1932, subsequent to the establishment of the first refereeing course; qualified referees started to oversee matches for the first time in Turkish football. In 1940, referees were required to be licensed and from this day forward, refereeing developed in accordance with the fast pace evolution of football and reached its contemporary structure (Kargün, 2011).

When the professions of the referees overseeing football games in Turkey are reviewed, it was seen that a vast variety of professionals practise refereeing. Medical doctors, teachers, lawyers, policemen, engineers, architects, academic faculty, bank employees, merchants, tradesmen, freelancers are among the primary lines of work (Albayrak and others, 2012). On 06.08.2015, professional refereeing came into affect. In this regard, at the first stage, 9 referees signed a contract with the Turkish Football Federation. Thus, football refereeing became a separate profession in Turkey ([www.tff.org](http://www.tff.org), 18.12.2015).

Beyond any doubt, football refereeing is among the occupations most hard to execute. The hardship is due to the execution of the duties before an audience who does not completely comprehend the rules of football. In addition to this; the referees work is hardened with the existence of managers, trainers and athletes who are accustomed to object to referee decisions (Dinç, 2013). Refereeing is not a science, neither a judgeship nor a policing. Refereeing requires leadership. Football is primarily a recreative game for the players. At this point, a referees approach to his/her job shall be positive and cooperative (Denizli, 2010).

For the referees to be successful in games, they need to be educated on the laws of the game, human relations, managerial and organisational information, active usage of body language, crisis management and many other subjects; apart from the physical performance needed (Kayışoğlu and others, 2010). A referee is a person who understands from human psychology, who can interpret individual and collective behaviours, a person with exemplary behaviours both in and out of the fields, who has an honest personality and a decent lifestyle (Efe and others, 2008). On the other hand; despite being under physical and emotional stress, a referee has to give quick decisions as he/she is the only person vested with decisive authority during the game (Albayrak ve ark, 2012). The refereeing profession requires versatile skills such as knowledge of the game rules, communication and evaluation skills. Due to these reasons, referees, are among the most determining factors of the game and symbolize the game rules and honesty (Reyhan, 2012). According to the labour theory of value; labour is a value and

supplies an added-value to the product (Çelik and Turunç, 2011). In the Turkish Language Institution dictionary, labour is defined as: "The work process of the man, in a conscious effort to reach a certain purpose that changes himself, the nature and the society that surrounds him". Labour, in its element, defines man itself (Tiryakioğlu, 2008).

The principal unit called football club cannot produce on its own. Therefore, in football, production is not made with a single unit, it happens with the participation of more than one units (Erdoğan, 2008). One of these units are referees. A referee could be defined as an individual "whose capital is to direct the game".

While the importance of referees become known, they have been vested with broad powers and responsibilities (Pepe and others, 1999). Thus, refereeing is a job that requires a lot of work. Referees must successfully execute their duties without depression despite the negative reactions they face before, during and after the game (Kargün, 2011). As well as officiating games; referees should successfully pass athletic tests and attend; exercise sessions 3-4 times every week, "critique" meetings where disputed positions are discussed and pre-season camps. These put forth the labour process of referees outside of the games. Considering present day conditions, enduring the defemation through especially the media could be classified as a part of the labour process of football referees.

The everyday evolution of football, the increase in the denominator and the growth of the football economy increase the importance of refereeing and make it bigger than just managing the game. Football now, does not only interest the ones who play it. Partial or impartial a grand mass, club administrators and even politicians are interested with the outcome; and if they find a chance to do so, they try to affect this outcome. The easiest way to maintain this is thought as affecting the referee. Sometimes through gifts or tangible offerings and sometimes through violence; the referee judgments are tried to be tampered with thus, altering the outcome. This is one of the aspects that show how deep and wide the labour process of referees is. A referee must put up with these external factors and manage a fair event. Bearing in mind all of these, it is visible that how hard the referees job is.

In an area of approximately 7000 square meters, controlling 22 players, 2 assistant referees, the ball (being the main factors), and if any, the 4<sup>th</sup> referee, goal posts, corner areas, weather conditions and other external factors at the same time and giving technical decisions regarding the game is the basic definition of the duties of the referee (Tekgöz, 2011). A football referee makes approximately 120 decisions during a single game (Efe and others, 2008). A referee must use skills like physical performance, knowledge of the rules, communication skills, following the game and rapid judgments all at the same time. When the emotional pressure they face in the fields are imagined, their labour process could be better understood. Recognizing referees, putting forth their working conditions, and preventing negativities require setting out the labour process of referees.

There is no justice in football, there are referees. As per the definition, he/she is arbitrary, peremptory and a merciless dictator. You cannot object to him/her; he/she is a judge with the whistle in his/her mouth, cards in his/her hands, counting whatever goal he/she wishes to, annulling others, and punishing whichever player he/she wants. A referee is never applauded, but always booed. The referee is the person who runs the most on the field, runs from one goalpost to the other out of necessity. A referee's task is to observe the white ball and the events from start to end of the game, drenched in sweat (Yapı Kredi, 2002). All of these set out the labour process of the referee on the fields.

## 2. Objective And Method

In the study we made regarding the labour process of football players, it was seen that there has not been sufficient studies made before. This study was made in order to fill the gap that was seen and light the way for other studies to come.

Interview, is a discussion made between two or more people on a certain subject. One of the interview types, semi-structured interviews; is a type of interview where the interviewer has a broader road-map where he/she changes the course of the interview according to the interviewee's interest and knowledge in order to reveal different aspects of the subject (Altunışık and others, 2001). In this manner, as a research method, interview technique from qualitative research techniques was used. The type of interview used is semi-structured interview.

### 2.1. Findings

Table 1: Demographic Information

<i>Individual</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Length of Service as a Referee</i>	<i>Number of Games Officiated in a Single Season</i>
Ind. 1	25	Undergraduate	6 years	30-40
Ind. 2	24	Undergraduate	6 years	35-40
Ind. 3	33	Graduate	14 years	25-30
Ind. 4	34	Graduate	11 years	13 professional, 35 amateur
Ind. 5	27	Undergraduate	7 years	15 professional, over a 100 amateur
Ind. 6	32	Undergraduate	12 years	20
Ind. 7	26	Undergraduate	4 years	130-135
Ind. 8	27	Undergraduate	5 years	80
Ind. 9	25	Undergraduate	6 years	10 professional, 85 amateur
Ind. 10	26	Undergraduate	7 years	60

### THEME 1- Working Conditions

Table 2:

#### *Self-improvement and Advancement in Refereeing*

Ind. 1	There could be positive affects. There is a chance of advancement in refereeing.
Ind. 2	I am somewhat luckier due to the yield of refereeing.
Ind. 3	As long as I show adequate performance, I have the chance of advancement.
Ind. 4	Yes, there is.
Ind. 5	I have the opportunity to advance by taking examinations at certain points. We

	receive sufficient training for self-improvement.
<b>Ind. 6</b>	I could have the opportunity to advance with regards to my performance. There is self-improvement with the courses or trainings given.
<b>Ind. 7</b>	We have the opportunity to officiate games in upper classifications and abroad if we do well in the examinations.
<b>Ind. 8</b>	To become a FIFA referee.
<b>Ind. 9</b>	To be able to become an upper classification referee.
<b>Ind. 10</b>	To move to the upper classification and represent the community in the best possible way.

When the data in Table 2 is taken into account, it was seen that the profession of refereeing has the possibility of advancement. The referees who succeed the written and practical examinations done from the beginning of the season and till the end, have the opportunity to advance to the upper classification. In upper classifications, referees have the chance to increase their financial gain and recognisability.

**Table 3:***Moral and Material Compensation in the Refereeing Profession*

<b>Ind. 1</b>	Yes, I can get it on many occasions. However, this is not a job to do with the expectation of materiality.
<b>Ind. 2</b>	I get compensated on many occasions. However, it is the most important/customary to work even when you are not going to get compensated.
<b>Ind. 3</b>	Although it seems financially rewarding considering country standards; when football economy is taken into account, it is not at the adequate level. Morally, it satisfies me.
<b>Ind. 4</b>	Takes too much time. Not very lucrative.
<b>Ind. 5</b>	It does not live up to my expectations financially. Morally, as we gain a wider entourage, we gain respect.
<b>Ind. 6</b>	Refereeing is not a profession. Financially, it provides adequate satisfaction, however, morally, there are ups and downs.
<b>Ind. 7</b>	No.
<b>Ind. 8</b>	Not for now.
<b>Ind. 9</b>	No. Financially restricted, also I don't feel powerful morally.
<b>Ind. 10</b>	Financially, yes. Morally, no.

According to answers given in Table 3, it appears that football referees do not see their jobs as a proper profession, and are generally unhappy about their material compensation; it is also deduced that they practice football refereeing as a hobby or an extra job. In this situation, it is among the biggest reasons of the occasional errors.

**Table 4:***Hardships Faced in the Refereeing Profession*

<b>Ind. 1</b>	Psychological hardships.
<b>Ind. 2</b>	Negative prejudice and pressure exerted by the society on referees.
<b>Ind. 3</b>	Objective criteria cannot always be applied equally. As a society, we are also not very fair. The defeated team easily blames us.
<b>Ind. 4</b>	Intolerance of the teams. Because they only see football as winning and a power display.
<b>Ind. 5</b>	During games, the pressure exerted by the supporters, players and the managers.
<b>Ind. 6</b>	Players and audience being nonprogressive. During the games, non-humane behaviours take the lead in the hardships referees face.
<b>Ind. 7</b>	Psychological pressure and
<b>Ind. 8</b>	Understanding people.
<b>Ind. 9</b>	The feeling of security. Too much self-confidence could harm.
<b>Ind. 10</b>	Defamation.

According to the answers given in table 4, it was seen that football referees face a number of hardships, which are led by the pressure exerted by the supporters, players and managers who only take into account their teams and interpret the decisions made so, and moreover they push this pressure further until becomes defamation.

**Table 5:***Profession of Refereeing and Private Life*

<b>Ind. 1</b>	It could be beneficial in terms of social environment.
<b>Ind. 2</b>	In terms of social environment it is a big plus. In terms of perspective, also it provides a positive effect.
<b>Ind. 3</b>	Refereeing requires a lot of time to be spent. As I also have another job, private life is almost non-existent. Sometimes I even cannot spend time with my family. Planning is a must.
<b>Ind. 4</b>	It increases the social respect however, it takes a lot of time from family.
<b>Ind. 5</b>	As we usually go to games on weekends, it restricts the time we spend with our families.
<b>Ind. 6</b>	It creates domestic problems. As there are games on days-off from work; making time for family is problematic.
<b>Ind. 7</b>	It restricts most of the private life.
<b>Ind. 8</b>	Takes a lot of time, but it makes me earn respect.
<b>Ind. 9</b>	I cannot allocate time to my family. Sociability turns into asociality in time. Because all I want to do is to rest.
<b>Ind. 10</b>	People recognizing me and showing respect.

According to answers given in Table 5; football referees execute their duties as a secondary job and consequently they have problems allocating time for family and friends, thus making refereeing a negative affect to private life. The positive side to this profession is that it provides various opportunities to meet new people.

**THEME 2 – Viewing the Work****Table 6:***The reasons to choose Refereeing Profession and Expectations*

<b>Ind. 1</b>	I practise refereeing as a hobby, however for most of the times it becomes a priority. I aim to officiate games at higher classifications.
<b>Ind. 2</b>	It started as a hobby however it took precedence. To officiate games at European Leagues.
<b>Ind. 3</b>	Being on the football fields has been my dream since childhood. It didn't work out as a player however as a referee, I enjoy directing the game a lot and it is very valuable for me.
<b>Ind. 4</b>	I chose it for the sense of authority. I expect to oversee important games and be successful.
<b>Ind. 5</b>	I thought overseeing games would be enjoyable. I want to advance as far as possible.
<b>Ind. 6</b>	I chose it for the love of football, the social environment it creates, the pleasure the authority give to a person. I expect to direct every game with success and advance to the upper classifications.
<b>Ind. 7</b>	Because it was my father's profession. I plan to advance.
<b>Ind. 8</b>	To be within football.
<b>Ind. 9</b>	Refereeing could bring trust into the person. For every person, meeting new people is a beautiful thing.
<b>Ind. 10</b>	To do physical exercise.

According to the data on Table 6, the football referees who have participated into this study started their work as a hobby however after some time, they started to take the job more seriously. Expectations in the refereeing profession unite under advancing to the upper classifications and eventually officiating games in European Leagues.

**Table 7:***Apart from Refereeing; the Sector / Line of Work of the Main Occupation*

<b>Ind. 1</b>	Yes, I teach.
<b>Ind. 2</b>	I teach.
<b>Ind. 3</b>	I work at private sector. We need to work at other jobs in order to maintain our lives.
<b>Ind. 4</b>	I view refereeing as a hobby. I work at a different job as I need regular income.
<b>Ind. 5</b>	I work at a bank. Only practising refereeing is not financially sustainable.
<b>Ind. 6</b>	Yes. As bringing up a family is not possible with just refereeing.
<b>Ind. 7</b>	Yes. As refereeing has no future guarantees as a profession.
<b>Ind. 8</b>	No.
<b>Ind. 9</b>	Yes. As refereeing fees are not sufficient on a regular basis, another job is needed.
<b>Ind. 10</b>	Yes. For a regular source of income.

It was observed according to the responses on Table 7 that most of the referees that have participated in this study have a separate occupation apart from football refereeing. The basis for this situation seems to be the compensation from refereeing turns out an unsatisfactory level of income. It was observed that the football referees who have participated in this study have occupations with a regular income like teaching or banking in order to maintain their lives.

**Table 8:***The Profession of Refereeing and Objectives*

<b>Ind. 1</b>	Yes, I accomplish in time.
<b>Ind. 2</b>	Yes, I have long term objectives. I can achieve them over time.
<b>Ind. 3</b>	Right now my expectation from refereeing is to retire as a professional referee.
<b>Ind. 4</b>	I do not have a certain aim. I want to be at the top. However, I am far away from this objective.
<b>Ind. 5</b>	My aim is to become a top class referee. It will surely take time. Because there are certain criterion to be met.
<b>Ind. 6</b>	Yes. I work hard to reach my objectives.
<b>Ind. 7</b>	Yes. I hope I will accomplish my objectives.
<b>Ind. 8</b>	Yes. I work for them now.
<b>Ind. 9</b>	Yes. I believe I will be at the place I first aimed in time.
<b>Ind. 10</b>	Always do better.

According to the responses given at Table 8; the football referees who have participated in this study it was deduced that constantly aim new objectives and they continuously work in order to accomplish those aims. However, it was also stated multiple times that reaching these aims are not so easy and it requires many efforts.

**Table 9:***Refereeing as an Income Source*

<b>Ind. 1</b>	It could be wrong to practice refereeing as a primary income source. I often do it to be successful.
<b>Ind. 2</b>	Refereeing aims the phenomenon of success instead of lucrative income. Materiality is usually at the background.
<b>Ind. 3</b>	To me it is both reliable as an income source and enjoyable. In the upper leagues, as per the stress levels, the material compensation is still under expectations.
<b>Ind. 4</b>	I do not see it as satisfactory as it is per game, and as it is unknown when the next game will be.
<b>Ind. 5</b>	When it is practised at the highest levels it is sufficient. However, it is not adequate when it is done at lower levels.
<b>Ind. 6</b>	As refereeing is not a profession I do not see it as an occupation that provides permanent income.

<b>Ind. 7</b>	No, I don't see it that way.
<b>Ind. 8</b>	No.
<b>Ind. 9</b>	Yes, could be done as a hobby.
<b>Ind. 10</b>	Sometimes.

It was observed according to the responses on Table 9 that most of the referees that have participated in this study do not find the material compensation for refereeing satisfactory, and because of this they execute refereeing as an additional job.

Most of the referees who have participated in this study have shown that they practice refereeing either as a hobby or to satisfy satisfy their feelings.

### THEME 3- Sense of Free Time

**Table 10:**

#### *Sense of Free Time*

<b>Ind. 1</b>	In my free time I usually exercise. With the remaining free time I make time for myself or spend time with my family.
<b>Ind. 2</b>	I cannot say that I have a lot of free time. I usually work out. The rest of the time I try to make it for myself.
<b>Ind. 3</b>	I think there is no free time. I think that there are plans. If the moment is free or not, our plans define.
<b>Ind. 4</b>	Free time is the time when you rest. I want every moment of my life to be full. I want to always have time for my family.
<b>Ind. 5</b>	The time that remains after my work and refereeing. I spend my free time with my family and friends.
<b>Ind. 6</b>	To me, free time is my friends and family. I spend my free time with them.
<b>Ind. 7</b>	Free time is the time left after personal duties are fulfilled and sleep. On my free time I do refereeing.
<b>Ind. 8</b>	I rest and do artistic activities.
<b>Ind. 9</b>	Watching games, travelling and most importantly resting.
<b>Ind. 10</b>	It is making time for myself. I put use to it by reading books.

According to the responses on Table 10 that most of the referees that have participated in this study, define free time as "time spent resting, without any work". The football referees that have participated in this study either train or spend time with their families or make time for themselves on their free times.

### Conclusion And Recommendations

In view of the participant referees' statements;

It is possible to say that Football refereeing is a profession providing with promotion opportunities. Refereeing career, starting with refereeing matches in lower leagues, after some training and succeeding in related tests gives the opportunity of promoting to the upper classification. Refereeing profession, enables to set goals to oneself continuously. Besides, football refereeing, offers the chance of getting FIFA licence and refereeing in the tournaments and competitions held in several places of Europe and the World.

Football refereeing, is not considered as an adequate profession by itself, but as a good extra job. The charges earned are not in sufficient level for providing livelihood only by refereeing. For that reason, almost all the referees participated in subject study, work in other business fields and perform refereeing as an extra job. Based on this, it is Possible to say that the income obtained from football refereeing is inadequate.

While performing the refereeing profession, it is frequent to face with unfavourable situations such as psychological pressure and insult. Football players, technical Committee, managers and fans, try to make the referee to make decisions in their favour, by suppressing. As the corollary, the subject discussed the most is not the game played, but the referees. That situation leads referees fraying out more.

Refereeing profession, since it takes too much time, influences private life and social life negatively. Because of both trainings and other practices, time spared for themselves as well as their families is so little. This situation is also a factor which suppresses the referees.

The referees participating in this study defined the free time as "time on which there is nothing to do, time to rest" and they stated that within this period, they preferred to spare time for themselves and their families or to make training.

In view of above conclusions;

Studies should be carried out in order to transform refereeing profession into a complete profession in itself in the eyes of people performing refereeing. Thus it can be ensured that referees might be more successful and more devoted to the profession.

Income obtained from refereeing should be ensured to be raised. By this means, it can be provided the referees to focus only this profession without working in other jobs. This case will lead referees to have more free time and consequently their private and social lives will become more healthy.

Studies should be carried out in order to make referees achieve at a more esteemed level in the eyes of the society and to make the society to learn to Show respect to referees. Thus, Psychological pressure and insult issues can be eliminated. Referees may be provided to referee matches at ease. Wrong decisions may be avoided.

When refereeing profession is transformed to be a complete learned profession by itself, the time on which referees spare for their social and private lives will increase and therefore unfavourable influences of refereeing on social and private life will be prevented.

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