

Exploring the relationship between zest for work and self-efficacy in referee career retention

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Abstract

This study investigated the correlation between Zest for work and self-efficacy in the retention of professional referee careers. The research employed a relational screening model and used convenience sampling owing to the ongoing season. A total of 330 referees participated, comprising 47% (n = 155) basketball referees, 19% (n = 63) handball referees, 17% (n = 56) football referees, and 17% (n = 56) volleyball referees. Among the referees, 23.3% (n = 44) were female, and 76.7% were male. A personal information form as a data collection tool was used for the research, The Referee Retention Scale (RRS), The Zest for Work Scale for Referees (ZWSR) and "The Referee Self-Efficacy Scale (REFS)". Data analysis was conducted using SPSS 25. The t-test was used to compare the referees' RSS, ZWSR, REFS, and sub-categories by gender, and one-way ANOVA was used to compare them by branch. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to determine the relationships between the age and seniority of the referees and the relationships between the RSS and its sub-categories, ZWSR and REFS, and their sub-categories. Multiple linear regression analysis was used to predict the referees' retention of professional careers. The significance level was taken as $p < .05$. When the findings were examined; it was concluded that an increase in Zest for work and perceived self-efficacy positively influenced the referees' attitudes and willingness to continue working in the field. The multiple linear regression analysis results regarding predicting the continuation of referees in their profession show that professional satisfaction and self-efficacy positively influence referees' decisions to remain and persist in their profession.

Keywords: Continuing the Profession, Job Satisfaction, Basketball, Football, Volleyball

Introduction

In sports competitions, players, spectators, referees, and managers form the indispensable links of a chain. Each of these elements plays a crucial role. Among them, referees, who actively interact with athletes on the field and significantly impact the outcome of competitions, are essential. Referees are essential to ensuring that competitions across all sports are conducted fairly and enjoyably. Referees, as neutral enforcers of the rules, are essential for maintaining a fair competitive environment in sports (Giel and Breuer, 2020). Their presence is crucial for the sustainability of the sports industry (Kellet and Shilbury, 2007). Given that most sports involve direct competition between opposing players or teams, having an impartial authority to discern right from wrong and enforce fairness is indispensable, a responsibility that resides squarely with referees (Güner, 2009).

Referees must perform multiple, simultaneous tasks under pressure to successfully fulfil their duties and avoid mistakes in their decision-making during competition. For instance, in the face of challenging circumstances and heightened pressure, officials are tasked with assessing and adjudicating consecutive rapid events, instantaneous decision-making, effective game management, and precise communication. Essentially, they must concurrently address various facets of a match to ensure orderliness and address conflicts and challenges (Tuero et al., 2002; Karaçam and Pular, 2016). Moreover, referees face immense pressure from various stakeholders, including players, clubs, and spectators, both before and after the match and during the game. This challenge is particularly pronounced in major sports leagues. The pressure on referees in sports has become an increasingly growing concern and is seen as an issue that referees must regularly contend with (Antonie, 2023). This ongoing pressure environment results in referees quitting their profession or being dismissed from their duties. This pressure significantly impacts referees when starting their careers and maintaining their profession (Jacobs et al., 2020).

Consequently, the role of a referee is frequently demanding and exhausting. In this context, it is essential to recruit, retain, and develop referees for the successful development of various sports organizations and industries (Barr and Hums, 2012; Chelladurai, 2014). Referees are essential to the success of organized

sports competitions (Dobt et al., 2021). However, sports federations and managers are increasingly challenged by a declining number of qualified referees. Understanding the factors that influence the retention and recruitment of referees is crucial for sports organizations, as referees play a vital role in the sports industry workforce. By addressing these factors, sports organizers can develop more effective strategies to attract and retain referees (Ridinger, 2015; Ridinger et al., 2017).

There are few studies in the literature that examine and evaluate the factors influencing the entry, continuation, and burnout of sports referees in their profession (Purdy and Snyder, 1985; Furst, 1989; Kellet and Warner, 2011; Tingle et al., 2014; Ridinger, 2015; Ridinger et al., 2017; Antonie, 2022; Popovych et al. 2022; Vasilica et al., 2022). Based on the current literature, knowing the variables that can predict the sustainability of referees in their profession is crucial for their career continuity. In the sports industry, referees play a significant role in the workforce, and it is essential to understand the reasons behind their initial participation, ongoing involvement, and departure from the refereeing profession. Understanding these factors can help sports managers develop strategies to recruit and retain referees more effectively.

Based on the literature, it is evident that referees' positive outlook significantly impacts their performance and attitudes towards their profession (Guillén & Feltz, 2011; Myers et al., 2012; Karaçam & Pultur, 2016; Karaçam & Pultur, 2017a; Karaçam & Pultur, 2017b; Karaçam & Pultur, 2017c; Karaçam & Pultur, 2018; Karaçam & Adıgüzel, 2019; Karaçam et al., 2023). Key positive influences, such as Zest for work and self-efficacy, are crucial for supporting referees in continuing their careers. Further research is needed to understand the factors influencing referees' decisions to remain in their profession. This study emphasizes the importance of Zest for work and self-efficacy, which are positive psychological variables believed to affect referees' career retention. Zest for work among referees is grounded in positive psychology and is characterized by positive emotional responses such as interest, enthusiasm, happiness, vitality, and excitement about their duties (Karaçam & Pultur, 2018). This concept is linked to both pleasure and gratification across various occupations, and it predicts job and life satisfaction (Hoy & Tarter, 2011). Job satisfaction refers to the enjoyable or positive emotional state derived from one's work experiences (Lent & Brown, 2006), while life satisfaction represents a broader sense of well-being (Lent et al., 2011). Park and Peterson (2010) define pleasure as embracing life with energy and enthusiasm, engaging fully in activities, and living each day as an adventure, contributing to a sense of vitality. Understanding the pleasure and satisfaction referees derive from their profession is crucial for assessing their overall job and life satisfaction.

Referee self-efficacy describes referees' confidence in executing their roles effectively (Guillén and Feltz, 2011). According to Guillén and Feltz (2011), Myers et al. (2012), and Karaçam and Pultur (2017a), areas of referee self-efficacy encompass game knowledge, strategic and decision-making skills, psychological aptitude, game management, and physical fitness. Moreover, referees with high self-efficacy tend to make more precise decisions and perform more effectively, as posited by the theories of self-efficacy and its research in sports. These referees also garner greater respect from coaches, managers, and other officials, and they experience lower stress levels than their less confident counterparts. Furthermore, Guillén and Feltz (2011) and Farshad et al. (2013) noted that high self-efficacy leads referees to a more profound commitment to their profession, enhancing their performance. Hepler and Feltz (2012) highlighted that self-efficacy significantly impacts decision-making quality, and Karaçam and Adıgüzel (2019) found that it positively influences overall referee performance. Understanding the factors contributing to the continuity of the refereeing profession is essential for planning effective training programs, successfully managing competitions, and enhancing referee performance. Current literature indicates a need for further research to identify the variables that encourage referees to remain in their profession. Present knowledge about the career sustainability of referees shows a lack of comprehensive research examining the relationships between variables such as Zest for work, self-efficacy, interest, enthusiasm, happiness, vitality, and excitement in their profession.

This study aims to explore the predictors of Zest for work and self-efficacy, which are positive psychological factors believed to influence the continuation of refereeing. Furthermore, the research will investigate how these variables can inform strategies to boost referees' professional commitment. The findings will help sports organizations develop more effective support systems for referees, fostering a more stable and committed officiating workforce.

Material & methods

This study, which aims to examine the relationship between Zest for work and self-efficacy for referees to maintain their refereeing profession, was conducted against the relational screening model. Although relational studies do not prove the existence of causality in a real sense, it is possible to make inferences about cause-effect relationships with relational studies using advanced statistical techniques (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2009).

Study Group Given the ongoing season, this research formed the study group using convenience sampling. The convenience sampling method, which is based on accessibility and convenience, is a preferred method for quickly collecting information on research subjects (Büyüköztürk, 2010). Those who were active referees within the Sports Federations in Türkiye in 2022-2023 were included in the research. Of the 330 referees who

participated in the research, 47% (n:155) were basketball, 19% (n:63) handball, 17% (n:56) football, and 17% (n:56) volleyball referees. 23.3% (n:44) of the referee group participating in the research are female, and 76.7% are male referees. The average age of the referees participating in the research is 31.27 years, and their refereeing experience is 10.63 years. All of the referees participating in the research are certified referees. The Basketball, Handball, Football, and Volleyball Federations gave permission where permission was requested for the application of the certified referees, whose ongoing leagues were administered the scale via an online questionnaire.

Data collection tools Personal information form, “Referee Retention Scale (RRS)” developed by Karaçam et al. (2021), “The Zest for Work Scale for Referees (ZWSR)” developed by Karaçam and Pultur (2018), and “Referee Self-Efficacy Scale (REFS)” developed by Karaçam and Pultur (2017a) were used as data collection tools for the research. The research was initiated after obtaining approval from the Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee of Istanbul Aydın University, Social and Human Sciences, in compliance with the decision numbered 2021/475. Participants were informed about the study during the data collection phase, and their consent was obtained through a consent form prior to the commencement of data collection.

Referee Retention Scale (RRS): The scale was developed by Karacam et al. (2021) to determine referees' tendencies to continue in the refereeing profession. The scale has 27 items in the form of a five-point Likert-type rating. It has 7 sub-factors: Manager's perception, consisting of 4 items (24. 25. 26. 27), the desire to referee, consisting of 3 items (1. 2. 3), mentors, consisting of 4 items (11. 12. 13. 14), award, consisting of 4 items (7. 8. 9. 10), community perception and education, consisting of 6 items (18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23), the stress phenomenon consisting of 3 items (15. 16. 17) and the perception of competition in refereeing consisting of 3 items (4. 5. 6) in the scale. 8, 15, 16, 17, 24, 26 and 27 items of the scale are reverse scored. The higher the scores obtained for each factor on the scale, the more important the factor is perceived to be. As a result of the EFA performed by Karaçam et al. (2021), the KMO value was found to be .81. Bartlett sphericity test results were significant [$\chi^2 = 2938.526$, $sd=378$, $p=0.000$]. While Cronbach's alpha value of 27 items was calculated as .83, it was observed that the reliability (internal consistency) for seven factors varied between .70 and .88. DFA results for the scale were calculated as $\chi^2/sd = 1.784$, RMSEA=.06, CFI=.90, GFI=.85, RMR=.10, NFI=.81, and IFI=.90.

The Zest for Work Scale for Referees (ZWSR): The Zest for Work Scale for Referees (ZWSR), developed by Karaçam and Pultur (2018), was used to determine the pleasure of referees from the refereeing profession. The ZWSR consists of 7 items (sample item: I enjoy refereeing) and one dimension. There is no reverse-coded item in the scale. As the score obtained from the scale increases, the pleasure and gratification obtained from the profession of refereeing also increases. In the study by Karaçam and Pultur (2018), the Zest for Work Scale for Referees (ZWSR) demonstrated a total explained variance of 50.59%, with all scale items aligning under a single factor. The scale showed strong internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of .83 and a KMO value of .85, indicating suitable sample adequacy. The confirmatory factor analysis revealed favourable fit indices: the χ^2/df ratio was 1.636, RMSEA was .07, the CFI stood at .96, GFI was .94, AGFI was .90, RMR was .01, and tNFI was .92. Furthermore, item-total correlations ranged from .56 to .84, and all t-values were statistically significant, supporting the reliability of the ZWSR.

The Referee Self-Efficacy Scale (REFS): The Referee Self-Efficacy Scale (REFS) was developed by Karacam and Pultur (2017a). There are 18 five-point Likert-type items on the scale. The scale consists of a total of 5 subscales: physical fitness, consisting of 5 items (sample item: Have enough physical strength level to referee a match); game knowledge, consisting of 3 items (sample item: I can understand all the rules of your sport), decision-making, consisting of 3 items (sample item: I can make quick decisions), pressure, consisting of 3 items (sample item: I am not influenced by pressure from coaches), and communication, consisting of 4 items (sample item: I can communicate with players effectively). The scale items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly disagree = 1" to "Strongly agree = 5," without reverse-scored items. High scores on each scale factor signify greater self-efficacy, as identified in the research by Karaçam and Pultur (2017a). The scale explained 72.27% of the variance and was structured into a five-component model with eigenvalues over 1. Internal consistency for the scale components yielded coefficients of .88 for physical fitness, .71 for game knowledge, .85 for decision-making, .88 for pressure tolerance, .81 for communication, and .90 for the overall scale. The KMO value was .86. CFA results showed a χ^2/sd ratio of 1.842, RMSEA of .06, CFI of .94, GFI of .88, and RMR of .01, demonstrating robust psychometric properties.

Data analysis Data analysis was conducted using SPSS 25. Initial examination confirmed correct data entry, absence of outliers, and appropriateness of the variables for further analysis. The Shapiro-Wilk Test indicated a normal distribution ($p > .05$).

T-tests were utilized to compare RSS, ZWSR, REFS, and their subcategories across gender groups. One-way ANOVA assessed differences across sports branches. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient explored relationships between referees' age and seniority and between RSS, ZWSR, REFS, and their respective subcategories. Multiple linear regression was applied to predict referees' retention in their professional careers, with a significance level set at $p < .05$.

Results

Table 1. T-test results of referees' total and sub-categories of RSS, ZWSR and REFS and sub-categories by gender

Variables	Woman (n=77)		Male (n=253)		t	sd	P
	S	S	S	S			
RSS Total	93.74	11.09	93.28	12.88	0.28	328	.77
<i>Community and Education</i>	23.27	4.41	22.81	5.60	0.65	328	.51
<i>Manager Perception</i>	14.25	4.38	13.66	4.60	1.00	328	.31
<i>Mentor</i>	12.49	4.33	13.64	4.30	-2.04	328	.04*
<i>Competition Perception</i>	13.57	1.87	13.79	1.90	-0.90	328	.36
<i>Award</i>	7.27	2.77	7.75	2.96	-1.26	328	.20
<i>The Desire to Referee</i>	13.29	2.04	12.84	2.40	1.49	328	.13
<i>Stress</i>	9.57	1.85	8.76	1.73	3.50	328	.00*
ZWSR Total	32.59	3.35	32.48	3.66	0.24	328	.80
REFS Total	85.07	6.58	86.59	4.93	-2.17	328	.03*
<i>Physical Adequacy</i>	23.62	2.38	24.03	1.99	-1.51	328	.13
<i>Game Knowledge</i>	14.27	1.18	14.60	0.84	-2.76	328	.00*
<i>Decide</i>	14.05	1.42	14.56	0.93	-3.69	328	.00*
<i>Pressure</i>	13.87	1.96	14.34	1.24	-2.51	328	.01*
<i>Communication</i>	19.25	1.49	19.03	1.52	1.11	328	.26

***p* < .05

When Table 1 is examined, a significant difference was observed between the total scores of mentors from RSS sub-categories, game knowledge, decision-making, pressure and REFS from REFS sub-categories, in favour of male referees according to gender. In addition, stress scores from the RSS sub-categories showed a significant difference in favour of female referees according to gender (*p* < .05). No significant difference was found in other variables according to gender.

Table 2. Correlation between referees' total and sub-categories of RSS, ZWSR and REFS and sub-categories, age and seniority

Variables	N	Age	Years working as a referee
RSS Total	330	-.17**	-.12*
<i>Community and Education</i>	330	-.18**	-.17**
<i>Manager Perception</i>	330	-.06	-.05
<i>Mentor</i>	330	-.07	-.01
<i>Competition Perception</i>	330	-.16**	-.12*
<i>Award</i>	330	-.00	.09
<i>The Desire to Referee</i>	330	-.16**	-.15**
<i>Stress</i>	330	.03	.02
ZWSR Total	330	-.26**	-.23**
REFS Total	330	.06	.11*
<i>Physical Adequacy</i>	330	-.02	-.00
<i>Game Knowledge</i>	330	.08	.13*
<i>Decide</i>	330	.23**	.26**
<i>Pressure</i>	330	.07	.10
<i>Communication</i>	330	-.01	.02

***p* < .01, **p* < .05

Analysis of Table 2 reveals a negative correlation between referees' age and several metrics: the total scores of RSS, perceptions of community and education, competition, refereeing impulse subcategories, and the total ZWSR scores. Additionally, a notable negative relationship exists between referees' seniority and the same set of scores and perceptions. Conversely, a positive and significant relationship was observed between the subcategories of REFS—specifically game knowledge and decision-making—and the overall REFS score. No significant relationships were detected in other variables assessed in the study.

Table 3. Correlation between referees' total and sub-categories of RSS, ZWSR and REFS and sub-categories

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. RSS Total	1.00	.78**	.61**	.57**	.41**	.21**	.40**	.34**	.42**	.19**	.08	.07	.10	.20**	.19**
2. Community and Education		1.00	.42**	.27**	.33**	.03	.25**	.13*	.42**	.23**	.12*	.10	.11*	.26**	.24**
3. Manager Perception			1.00	.058	.13*	.09	.07	.27**	.22**	.03	.01	.03	.07	.09	.06
4. Mentor				1.00	.15**	.15**	.09	.07	.10	.11*	.01	.02	.03	.03	.06
5. Competition Perception					1.00	-	.34**	.05	.58**	.38**	.32**	.23**	.19**	.28**	.38**
6. Award						1.00	.05	.07	-	.16**	-	.07	-.11*	-	-
7. The Desire to Referee							1.00	.05	.38**	.15**	.17**	.03	.13*	.27**	.21**

8. Stress	1.00	.04	-.10*	.08	-	.09	.05	-.12*
9. ZWSR Total		1.00	.42**	.31**	.14**	.28**	.38**	.45**
10. Physical Fitness			1.00	.53**	.43**	.35**	.40**	.77**
11. Game Knowledge				1.00	.54**	.52**	.52**	.78**
12. Decision-making					1.00	.52**	.49**	.74**
13. Pressure						1.00	.46**	.73**
14. Communication							1.00	.75**
15. REFS Total								1.00

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Table 3 reveals significant positive correlations within referee scales: between RSS total score and ZWSR total score ($r = .42$, $p < .01$), and REFS total score ($r = .19$, $p < .05$). These findings indicate that increases in Zest for work and self-efficacy among referees enhance their willingness to continue their careers. Moreover, this enhanced attitude positively influences their Zest for work and self-efficacy. Additionally, a significant correlation was noted between the ZWSR and REFS total scores ($r = .42$, $p < .01$), suggesting that as referees' Zest for work increases, so does their self-efficacy, boosting overall career satisfaction.

Table 4. Results of the Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Related to Predicting the Continuation of Referees in Their Profession.

Değişken	B	Sd _B	β	t	p
Constant	46.27	10.11		4.57	.00*
ZWSR Total	1.45	.19	.42	7.44	.00*
REFS Total	-.00	.13	.00	-.02	.97

$F = 34.930$, $p = .000$; $R = .42$, $R^2 = .17$

In Table 4, when examining the results of the multiple linear regression analysis related to predicting the continuation of referees in their profession, it is observed that ZWSR Total and REFS Total together have a significant relationship with RSS Total ($R = .42$, $p < .05$). These variables together explain 17% of the variance associated with RSS. Moreover, ZWSR ($\beta = .42$, $p < .05$) is a significant predictor of RSS. However, REFS ($\beta = .00$, $p < .05$) is not observed to be a significant predictor of RSS.

Discussion

This study examined the relationship between Zest for work and self-efficacy in the referees' willingness to continue with their profession. According to the research results, Mentorship, one of the RRS sub-categories, shows a significant difference in favour of male referees. Game knowledge, decision-making, pressure, and REFS total points, which are sub-categories of REFS, also showed a significant difference, especially for male referees. When stress, which is one of the RRS sub-categories, is analyzed according to gender, it is seen that there is a significant difference, especially for female referees. No significant difference was found in other variables according to gender.

The evidence indicates that stress factors have a more pronounced effect on female referees' career persistence than male referees. In this situation, it can be concluded that female referees have difficulties in knowledge of the game, making decisions under stress, and especially in maintaining their profession without being affected by the pressure of the players. In a study conducted among football referees by Dereceli et al. (2019) and Orhan et al. (2022), it was seen that the physical competencies, communicative competencies, and not being under pressure from the male football referees were higher than the female referees. The findings support our research results because a study by Ridinger et al. (2017) showed that 10% of the referees participating in the research left the profession due to stress and abuse.

Analysis revealed a negative correlation between referees' age and several measures: the total score of RSS, perceptions of community and education, competition, sub-categories of refereeing impulse, and the total ZWSR scores. Conversely, a positive and significant relationship was found between the age of the referees and the decision-making score within REFS sub-categories. The observed decline in referees' enthusiasm towards their profession may be correlated with their advancing age, potentially resulting in diminished commitment and engagement in their duties. In addition, it is a typical result that the experience increasing with age can positively affect the decision-making status of the referees.

A study by Guillén and Feltz (2011) found that more experienced referees showed less stress and higher self-efficacy. Karaçam and Pular (2017c) found a significant positive correlation between the self-efficacy sub-scores in-game knowledge, decision-making, handling pressure, and communication for football, basketball, and handball referees and their age and years of refereeing experience. This indicates that as referees age and accumulate more years in their profession, their self-efficacy in these areas tends to increase. When the studies in

the literature are examined, it has been concluded that the self-efficacy scores of the referees increase as the age and the years of experience increase parallel to the study (Myers et al., 2012; Karaçam and Pular, 2017a; Karaçam and Pular, 2017b; Karaçam and Pular, 2017c; Adıgüzel, 2018; Karaçam and Adıgüzel, 2019; Kovalchuk and Mospan, 2020; Orhan et al., 2022). In this respect, this study is consistent with other studies in the literature.

Analysis revealed a negative correlation between referees' seniority and RSS total score and its sub-categories, including community perception and education, competition perception, and referees' desire to work. Additionally, ZWSR total scores are also negatively correlated with referee seniority. Conversely, a significant positive relationship was found between referees' seniority and game knowledge, decision-making skills from REFS sub-categories, and the REFS total score. No significant relationships were observed in other variables. Guillén and Feltz (2011) stated that the refereeing experience of the referees affects the referees' self-efficacy. Consistent with this study, Karaçam and Pular (2017a) found a positive and significant relationship between the years of refereeing and self-efficacy. Karaçam and Adıgüzel (2019), Orhan et al. (2022), Adıgüzel (2018), and Nazarudin et al. (2014) found significant differences between self-efficacy and the experience levels of the referees. These results align with our study, in which the seniority of the referees was seen as a predictor of self-efficacy. In this respect, the results of the research coincide with the results of previous studies in the related field.

Significant positive correlations were found among the RSS total score, ZWSR total score, and REFS total score. These findings suggest that referees' Zest for work and self-efficacy are positively correlated, increasing their motivation to continue their roles. Furthermore, an increase in referees' likelihood of continuing their profession is associated with enhanced levels of Zest for work and self-efficacy. Additionally, there was a significant positive relationship between the ZWSR and REFS total scores, indicating that higher levels of Zest for work are linked to greater self-efficacy, promoting career retention among referees.

When examining the results of the multiple linear regression analysis regarding predicting the continuation of referees in their profession, it is observed that professional satisfaction and self-efficacy positively influence referees' decisions to remain and persist in their profession. Furthermore, professional satisfaction alone is a significant variable in referees' decision to continue. This suggests that referees who derive satisfaction from their job are likelier to persist in their careers for longer. However, although a positive relationship is observed between self-efficacy and referees' retention of professional careers, self-efficacy alone is not a predictive factor for their continuation. A detailed literature review revealed no studies examining the combined influence of professional satisfaction and self-efficacy on referees' retention of professional careers. In this context, the findings of this research are deemed significant.

This study explored the relationship between Zest for work and self-efficacy and how they influence referees' retention in their profession. The findings indicate that increases in Zest for work and self-efficacy positively impact referees' willingness to continue in their roles. Enhanced attitudes towards continuing in the profession are associated with increased Zest for work and greater self-efficacy. The analysis also highlighted that gender, age, and seniority significantly affect referees' attitudes towards their profession, their enjoyment of their work, and their perceptions of self-efficacy across basketball, football, handball, and volleyball refereeing.

Limitations

The selected sampling methods and the incorporation of referees from diverse sports introduce certain constraints to the study. It is recommended that future research adopts a more expansive and intricate methodology to achieve a thorough comprehension of the diverse factors impacting referees' career paths.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the relationship between Zest for work and self-efficacy in referees' professional retention. The findings indicate that an increase in Zest for work and self-efficacy positively influences referees' attitudes towards continuing their careers. Enhanced attitudes towards their profession can lead to increased Zest for work and higher self-efficacy.

The analysis also revealed that gender, age, and seniority are crucial factors in shaping the attitudes of basketball, football, handball, and volleyball referees towards their profession. These factors significantly impact the enjoyment referees derive from their work and their perception of self-efficacy.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that supportive environments be created tailored to the unique challenges faced by referees based on their demographic characteristics. Providing targeted professional development and stress management resources is crucial for enhancing referees' job satisfaction and career longevity.

Additionally, sports organizations should focus on fostering Zest for work and self-efficacy to improve referees' long-term commitment and effectiveness. Addressing these factors will contribute to a more positive and sustainable career experience for referees, ultimately benefiting their sporting events' overall quality and fairness.

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