

# Investigation of ego and task orientation among international wrestling referees

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## Abstract:

**Aim:** study was to investigate any possible effect(s) of experiences from active membership and participation in task or ego orientations among referees in the sport of wrestling.

**Material:** The sample consisted of 213 international referees from 30 countries (Greece, Turkey, Bulgaria, France, Italy, Germany, Sweden, Finland, Switzerland, Russia, Poland, Hungary, U.S.A., Ukraine, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Iran, Japan, Korea, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Egypt, Canada, Georgia, Croatia, Uzbekistan, Norway, Cuba, Belarus, & Tunisia). Their age ranged from 26 to 60 yrs. old ( $M=43$ ,  $SD=8.6$ ). During the procedure, the participants were asked to fill a specific questionnaire, the «Task and Ego Orientation in Sport Questionnaire» (Duda & Nicholls, 1992). **Results:** Results showed that the referees from elite wrestling level' countries (Russia, Azerbaijan, Iran, Turkey, Georgia, Armenia, Bulgaria, Ukraine, U.S.A., Korea, Japan, Kazakhstan, & Cuba) are more task oriented than those from the non-elite wrestling level' countries. Researchers believe that this occurred because referees from non-elite wrestling level' countries might have less game-sport experience and more specifically in high level games. At the same time, the Olympic experience referees were more task oriented than the non-Olympic experienced. **Conclusion:** Referee's decisions are an important issue in the sport milieu. The investigations in decision-making by referees and factors that affect it are rather scarce and research should focus on such topics. Improvement of decision-making by referees, would lead to safer and better performance. Thus, better understanding of referees' behavior, through identification and operationalization of the factors affecting it, might lead to more effective selection, training and performance.

## Keywords:

task orientations, referees, decision-making, wrestling.

**Барбас В., Бебетос Е., Христос К., Гурбі Д., Мірзаєй Б.** Дослідження его та цільової орієнтації серед міжнародних рефері з боротьби. **Мета:** дослідити можливості досвіду активної участі у цільовій або его орієнтації серед рефері по спортивній боротьбі. **Матеріал:** Вибірка складалась з 213 міжнародних рефері з 30 країн (Греція, Туреччина, Болгарія, Франція, Італія, Німеччина, Швеція, Фінляндія, Швейцарія, Росія, Польща, Угорщина, США, Україна, Вірменія, Азербайджан, Іран, Корея, Монголія, Казахстан, Єгипет, Канада, Грузія, Хорватія, Узбекистан, Норвегія, Куба, Беларусь та Туніс). Вік варіював з 20 до 60 років ( $M=43$ ,  $SD=8.6$ ). під час процедури, учасникам було запропоновано заповнити спеціальний опитувач «Task and Ego Orientation in Sport Questionnaire» (Duda & Nicholls, 1992). **Результати:** Результати свідчать, що рефері з елітних борцівських країн (Росія, Азербайджан, Вірменія, Болгарія, Україна, США, Корея, Японія, Казахстан та Куба) більш орієнтовані у рішення конкретних завдань, ніж інші представники не елітних борцівських країн. Це, вочевидь, пов'язано із тим, що рефері з країн, які не є елітними за рівнем розвитку боротьби мають менший спортивний досвід і менше уявлення про рівень змагань. В той же час, рефері, які мають олімпійський досвід були більш орієнтовані у вирішенні змагальних задач, ніж ті, що не мають олімпійського досвіду. **Висновки:** Рішення рефері є важливим питанням у спортивному середовищі. Дослідження, присвячені процесу прийняття рішення рефері і факторів, що впливають на це рішення, дуже мізерні. Удосконалення процесу прийняття рішення рефері, призведе до більшої безпеки та об'єктивної оцінки. Краще розуміння поведінки рефері, шляхом виявлення та введення в дію факторів, що впливають на нього, може призвести до більш ефективного відбору, навчання та ефективності суддівства.

цільова орієнтація, рефері, приймати рішення, боротьба.

**Барбас В., Бебетос Е., Христос К., Гурбі Д., Мірзаєй Б.** Исследование эго и целевой ориентации среди международных рефері по борьбе. **Цель:** исследовать возможный опыт активного участия в целевой или эго ориентации среди рефері по спортивной борьбе. **Материал:** Выборка состояла из 213 международных рефері из 30 стран (Греция, Турция, Болгария, Франция, Италия, Германия, Швеция, Финляндия, Швейцария, Россия, Польша, Венгрия, США, Украина, Армения, Азербайджан, Иран, Корея, Монголия, Казахстан, Египет, Канада, Грузия, Хорватия, Узбекистан, Норвегия, Куба, Беларусь и Тунис). Возраст варьировал с 20 до 60 лет ( $M=43$ ,  $SD=8.6$ ). Во время процедуры, участникам было предложено заполнить специальный опросник «Task and Ego Orientation in Sport Questionnaire» (Duda & Nicholls, 1992). **Результаты:** Результаты свидетельствуют, что рефері из элитных борцовских стран (Россия, Азербайджан, Армения, Болгария, Украина, США, Корея, Япония, Казахстан и Куба) более ориентированы в решениях конкретных задач, чем другие, представители не элитных борцовских стран. Это, очевидно, связано с тем, что рефері из стран, не являющихся элитными по уровню развития борьбы, имеют меньший спортивный опыт и меньшее представление об уровне соревнований. В тоже время, рефері, имеющие олимпийский опыт были более ориентированы в решении соревновательных задач, чем не имеющие олимпийского опыта. **Выводы:** Решения рефері являются важным вопросом в спортивной среде. Исследования, посвященные процессу принятия решений рефері и факторов, которые влияют на это решение, весьма скудны. Совершенствование процесса принятия решений рефері, приведет к более безопасной и объективной оценке. Лучшее понимание поведения рефері, путем выявления и введения в действие факторов, влияющих на него, может привести к более эффективному отбору, обучению и эффективности судейства.

целевая ориентация, рефері, принимать решение, борьба.

## Introduction

One of the factors which could assist in better comprehending referees' decisions is achievement orientation. In achievement motivation in sport, goals have been perceived as being related to the way individuals believe, feel or regulate their abilities [1, 8, 11–13]. Nicholls [14] claimed that goal orientation is related to a number of attitudes, convictions and values. In his theory he postulated the existence of two main goal orientations, task and ego, which are independent of each other but

differ among individuals and across environments. Research has showed that a person with an ego orientation is more likely to approve improper sport behaviors and accept athletic aggression, while this does not hold true for persons with task orientation [5, 6]. Individuals with task orientation are more likely to choose moral than non-moral values when there is a conflict [4, 5] and to respect social conventions, personal commitment, the rules and officials [7].

Cross-sectional studies in the USA [3] and Greece [16] have indicated positive relationship between participation in sport and goal orientations, but it is still unclear wheth-

er this is the cause or effect of youngsters' involvement in sport. According to social learning theory [2], participation in sport is expected to cultivate youngsters' goals to further improve and demonstrate their sport abilities. Hence, the positive relationship between goal orientations and participation in sport, found in cross-sectional studies, could be ascribed to social learning effects of sport involvement on goal orientations, rather than the opposite. In addition, given the different opinions about the role of ego orientation in sport achievement [4, 9], the interactive effects of task and ego orientation should be also reported. One could possibly assume that the positive effects of task orientation on sport involvement are even stronger when they are accompanied by high ego orientation but they are undermined when they are joined by low ego orientation [9], although some authors suggest that ego orientation has no benefits in youth sports [10].

Internationally minimal attempts were made in order to investigate any relations between goal orientation and

any sport officials. As a result of that, the significant aspect of this study is the first attempt to investigate levels of goal orientation among international wrestling referees.

*Hypothesis:* The task orientations among international referees of wrestling depend on the development of the struggle in a particular country.

*Aim:* the study was to investigate any possible effect(s) of experiences from active membership and participation in task or ego orientations among referees in the sport of wrestling.

## Materials and Methods

### Participants

The sample consisted of 213 international referees from 30 countries (Greece, Turkey, Bulgaria, France, Italy, Germany, Sweden, Finland, Switzerland, Russia, Poland, Hungary, U.S.A, Ukraine, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Iran, Japan, Korea, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Egypt, Canada, Georgia, Croatia, Uzbekistan, Norway, Cuba, Belarus, & Tunisia). Their age ranged from 26 to 60 yrs.

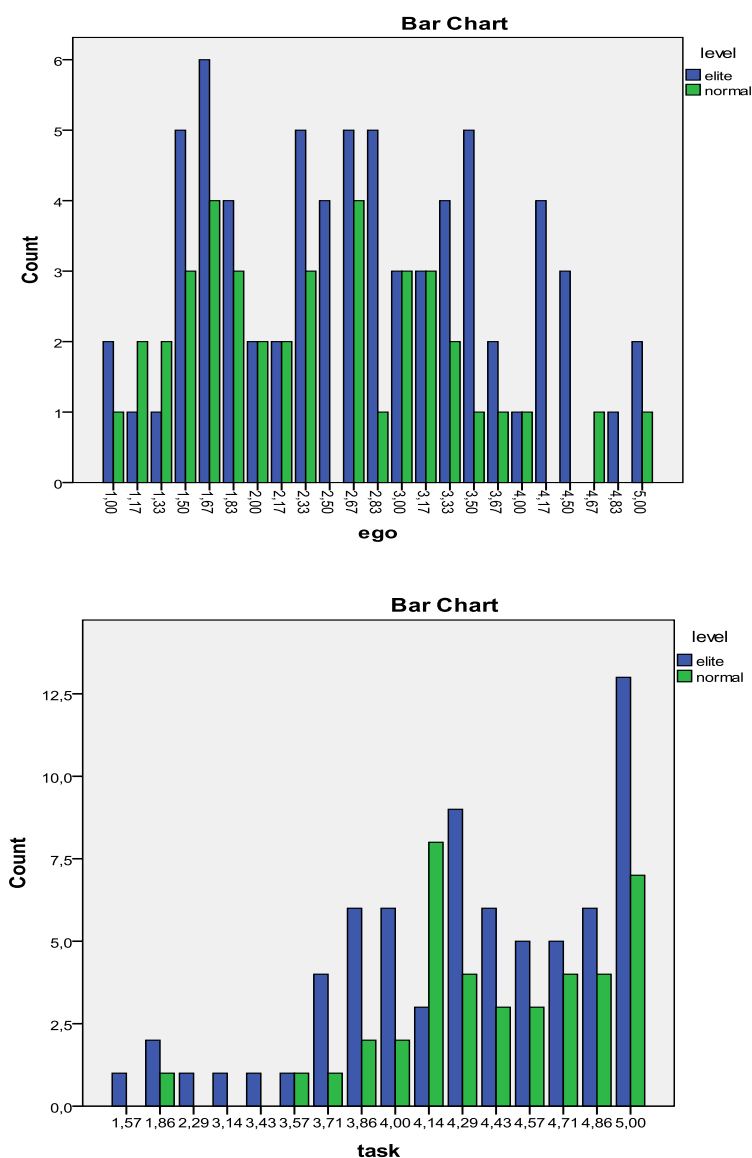


Figure 1. Elite and non-elite referees.

old ( $M=43$ ,  $SD=8.6$ ).

#### Research Design

During the procedure, the participants were asked to fill a specific questionnaire, the “Task and Ego Orientation in Sport Questionnaire” (Duda & Nicholls, 1992). This questionnaire was translated into Greek with the use of the back-translation technique [15]. Apart from, this questionnaire was adapted from to Greek mentality and modified for referees [17]. There are two independent scales related to either Task or Ego Orientation. In its present form, each statement begins with “I feel more successful as a referee when ...” followed by 13 different endings. For example, the endings related to Task Orientation include “I learn to apply the rules correctly”, “something I learn makes me want to referee even more”, “learn something that helps me referee better by trying harder”, “try really hard to referee well”. For

Ego Orientation, examples are “I am the only one who can referee a hard game”, “I can do better than other referees”, “other referees cannot do as well as I can”, “other referees mess up while I do not”, “my decisions are better than those of other referees”. The respondent was asked to indicate how much he agreed with each of the 13 statements (7 of which relate to Task Orientation and 6 to Ego). Responses are given on a 5-point Likert scale with anchors of 5: strongly agree and 1: strongly disagree.

#### Statistical Analysis

Statistical analysis was performed with the help of programming package Statgraphics 5.1 (Manugistics, Inc.). The methods of parametric statistics of t-criterion of Student were applied.

#### Results

The results showed that using the Cronbach’s coefficient  $\alpha$  internal consistency for “Task” was .80 and

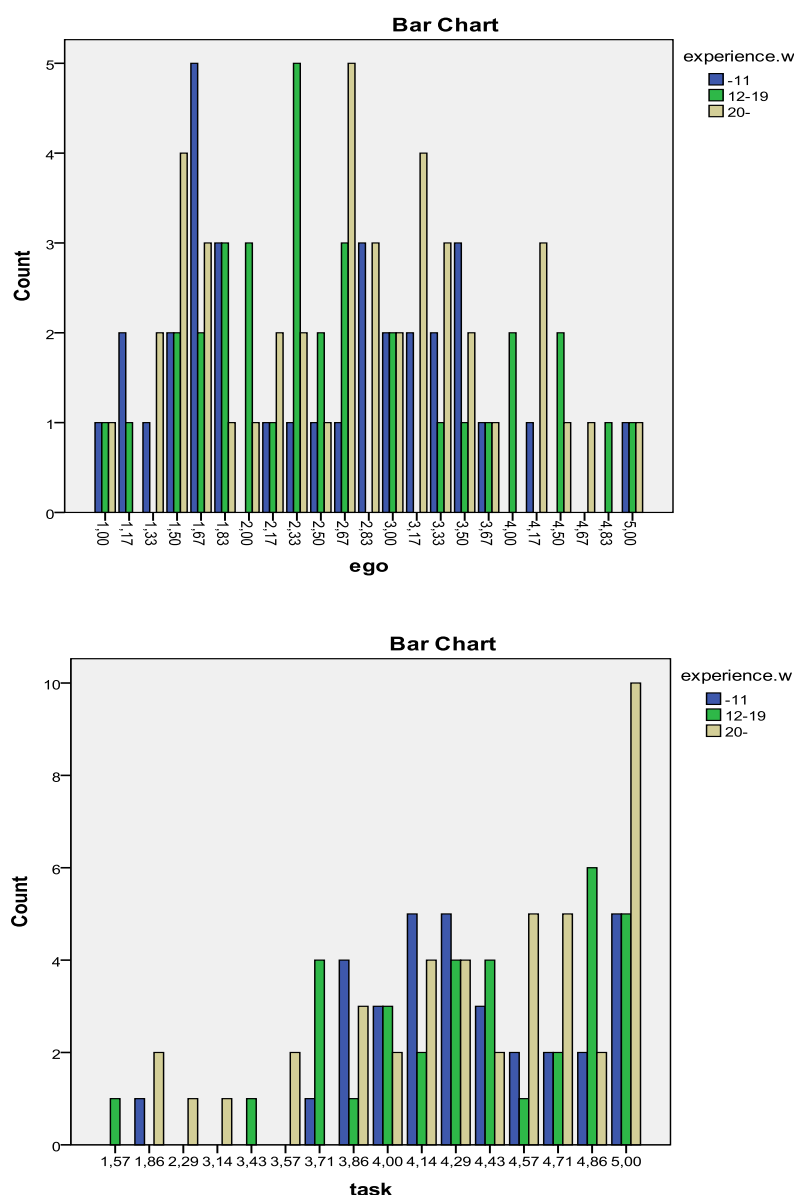


Figure 2. Levels of experience.

for “Ego” .84.

Although the analyses revealed no statistical significant differences among the sample, crosstabs indicated significant results. More specifically, the sample divided into 2 groups. Group 1, referees of Elite wrestling level’ countries (N=70), and Group 2, Non-elite (N=40). Results showed that the referees from Elite wrestling level’ countries (Russia, Azerbaijan, Iran, Turkey, Georgia, Armenia, Bulgaria, Ukraine, U.S.A., Korea, Japan, Kazakhstan, & Cuba) are more task oriented, than those from Non-elite wrestling level’ countries. Researchers believe that this occurred because referees from non-elite wrestling level’ countries might have less game-sport experience and more specifically in high level games (Fig. 1).

Also, the sample divided into 3 groups, according to their referring experience. Group 1 was referees with experience up to 11 yrs. (N=33), Group 2 from 12 up to 19 yrs. (N=34), and Group 3 from 20 yrs. and on (N=43). The results showed that referees with more experience are

more Task oriented than the other 2 groups. Researchers believe that referees with more yrs. of experience are more into the “personal commitment” idea than less experienced ones (Figure 2).

Finally, the sample divided into 2 groups according their Olympic Games’ experience. Group 1, the Olympic referees (N=32), and Group 2 the Non-Olympic (N=78). The results showed that the Olympic experience referees were more Task oriented than the Non-Olympic experienced. These results are consistent with the previous ones (Figure 3).

### Discussion

The results of this study support the positive role of perceived athletic competence, task orientation and intrinsic motivation in sport and exercise involvement. Further studies examining the mediator variables between sport and exercise involvement and task orientation, perceived competence and intrinsic motivation are called for [8, 12, 13]. It is important to understand the self regulation strategies trigger port and exercise behaviour [2, 4, 5]. Ref-

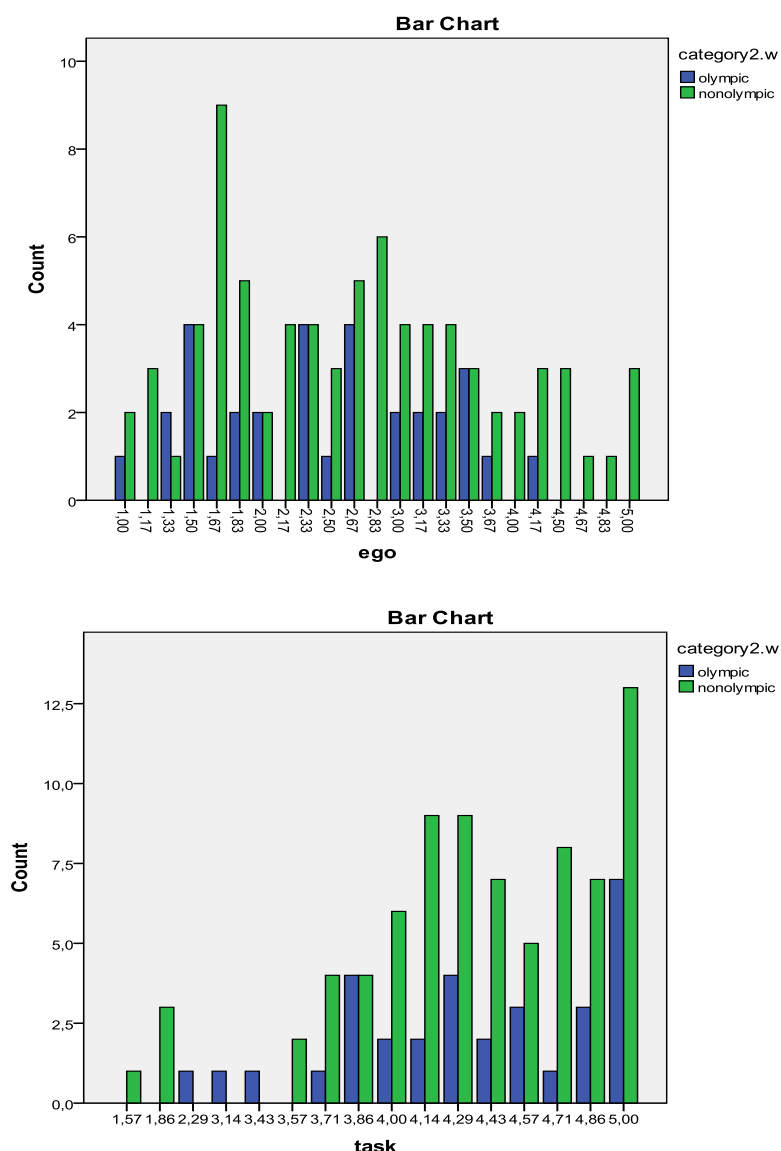


Figure 3. Olympic and Non-Olympic experience referees.

eree's decisions are an important issue in the sport milieu [3, 16]. The investigations in decision-making by referees and factors that affect it are rather scarce and research should focus on such topics. Improvement of decision-making by referees, would lead to safer and better performance [10,14]. Finally, a better understanding of referees' behavior, through identification and operationalization of the factors affecting it, might lead to more effective selection, training and performance.

Finally, the causal relationship of sport and exercise involvement with goal orientations, perceived competence and intrinsic motivation must be investigated in different cultures to determine whether these social-cognitive variables have universal importance. Future research should be focused on comparison between referees (i.e. background difference, level difference, stress & anxiety,

attention, self-confidence) on different exercise levels and settings.

### Conclusions

Referee's decisions are an important issue in the sport milieu. The investigations in decision-making by referees and factors that affect it are rather scarce and research should focus on such topics. Improvement of decision-making by referees, would lead to safer and better performance. **Thus**, better understanding of referees' behavior, through identification and operationalization of the factors affecting it, might lead to more effective selection, training and performance.

### Conflict of interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests.

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