Effects of Recreational Activities on Psychological Well-Being and Quality of Life in Youth

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Abstract

This study was conducted to examine the reasons for young individuals' participation in recreational activities. Only the "Reasons for Participation in Recreational Activities Scale" was used in the study; no direct scale was applied for psychological well-being and quality of life variables. Data obtained from 462 individuals in Tavşanlı Ada Recreation Area were evaluated with normality, reliability, factor and correlation analyses. The findings show that especially social interaction and intellectual development are the primary motivations for participation. Although psychological well-being and quality of life variables were not measured directly, the results obtained provide strong indicators that may be related to these structures. The study emphasizes the importance of strategic planning for these areas by revealing that recreational activities have the potential to support individuals' social ties, mental adaptation and indirectly their life satisfaction.

Keywords: Tourism, Recreational Participation, Psychological Well-Being, Quality of Life, Leisure Activities.

1. INTRODUCTION

In modern societies, the problems that individuals face in their daily lives, such as stress, rapid urbanization, digital addiction and social isolation, have made the concepts of psychological well-being and quality of life even more important (Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Diener et al., 2002). In this context, how individuals spend their free time and for what reasons they participate in recreational activities produce important outcomes not only in behavioral but also in psychological and social terms. Recreational activities offer individuals more than physical mobility; they also provide multidimensional benefits such as mental relaxation, social interaction, internal satisfaction and personal development (Iso-Ahola, 1980; Stebbins, 1997).

The impact of recreational participation on an individual's psychological well-being has been examined more closely in recent studies. The fact that young individuals are in critical transitional stages of life, such as university, makes the impact of their leisure time on mental health even more evident (Newman et al., 2014). In this context, determining the reasons why individuals participate in recreational activities is important not only in terms of understanding their behavioral tendencies, but also in terms of improving their quality of life and supporting social integration.

One of the most comprehensive scales developed to measure recreational motivations is the Recreational Activity Participation Reasons Scale (RACS), developed by Beard & Ragheb (1983) and later adapted to Turkish. This scale consists of four basic dimensions: intellectual motivation, social component, competence mastery, and avoidance motivation. These dimensions cover different motivational orientations of individuals, such as cognitive satisfaction, establishing social bonds, experiencing a sense of accomplishment, and getting away from negative emotions such as stress. Each of these orientations is associated with basic factors that shape the psychological well-being of the individual (Mannell & Kleiber, 1997; Deci & Ryan, 2000).

In this study, the reasons for participation in recreational activities of young individuals were examined on the basis of the research scale and the relationships of these motivations with psychological well-being and quality of life were evaluated. In particular, the effects of intellectual satisfaction, social interaction, sense of competence and avoidance motivation on the general life experiences of individuals were analyzed. In this context, the following hypotheses were tested in the study:

H_1: There are positive and significant relationships between the recreational activity participation reasons scale and its sub-dimensions.

H_2: Intellectual motivation is positively and significantly related to the social component sub-dimension.

H_3: Competence mastery is positively and significantly related to intellectual motivation.

H_4: Reasons for participation in recreational activities vary according to demographic variables.

This research, which was conducted in line with these hypotheses, aims to present important findings to understand the psychological reflections of young individuals' recreational motivations and to contribute to the gaps in the literature.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Recreational Participation

Recreational participation is defined as the process of regularly participating in physical, social, cultural or artistic activities that individuals voluntarily perform in their free time. This form of participation stands out as a life practice that directly affects individuals' psychological, social and physical well-being, beyond being a behavior in which they evaluate their free time (Karabağ & Mirzeoğlu, 2020). In the literature, recreational participation has been associated with multidimensional outcomes such as individual's life satisfaction, self-efficacy, social connectedness and coping with stress (Henderson, 2001; Yerlisu Lapa, 2013). Participation in recreational activities, especially in the development process of young individuals, plays a critical role in terms of identity construction, social skill acquisition and social adaptation (Caldwell, 2005).

The factors affecting recreational participation are multi-layered and are examined at individual, environmental and social levels. While intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy perception

and personality traits come to the fore at the individual level, the accessibility of recreational infrastructure, social support systems and economic resources are determinative at the environmental level (Bandura, 1997; Argan & Katırcı, 2002). It is also known that cultural values and social norms have guiding effects on which types of activities individuals will engage in (Iso-Ahola, 1999). The emotional outcomes such as pleasure, freedom, finding meaning and social interaction experienced by the individual during the participation process transform recreational activities from being just physical activities into an area that directly supports the quality of life (Coleman & Iso-Ahola, 1993).

In this context, recreational participation serves a function of increasing individuals' psychological well-being levels, reducing negative psychological states such as depression, stress, and anxiety, and increasing subjective life satisfaction (Iwasaki & Mannell, 2000). The social ties and support structures gained through participation both increase the individual's social capital and strengthen their emotional resilience (Haworth & Lewis, 2005). Therefore, recreational participation should be evaluated not only as a leisure activity but also as a holistic development area that sustainably improves the individual's overall quality of life. This multidimensional structure of recreational participation has strategic importance both at the individual level and in terms of public health.

2.2. Psychological Well-Being

The concept of psychological well-being is a multidimensional construct that refers to an individual's capacity to live their life in a meaningful, purposeful, and satisfying way. This construct includes not only the absence of negative psychological symptoms (e.g., depression, anxiety) but also the presence of positive psychological resources (e.g., self-efficacy, purpose in life, social connectedness) (Ryff, 1989). The basic dimensions of psychological well-being include self-acceptance, environmental mastery, positive relationships, autonomy, purpose in life, and personal growth (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). These dimensions represent a comprehensive approach to mental health that encompasses the individual's interaction with the environment as well as their internal balance. In the positive psychology literature, this approach aims to increase resilience and life satisfaction by focusing on individuals' strengths (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

The importance given to leisure activities and especially recreational participation in increasing the level of psychological well-being is increasing. It has been determined that individuals who regularly participate in recreational activities derive more meaning from life, strengthen their social relationships and feel more autonomous and competent (Haworth & Lewis, 2005; Iwasaki, 2007). This situation directly overlaps with the basic dimensions in Ryff's psychological well-being model. For example, recreational activities such as nature walks, group sports or artistic activities facilitate the individual's being at peace with himself and establishing positive relationships with his environment (Caldwell, 2005). In fact, many studies conducted with young individuals have revealed that recreational participation significantly increases psychological well-being indicators such as purpose in life, self-efficacy and social connectedness (Huta & Ryan, 2010).

This strong relationship between recreational participation and psychological well-being points to a dynamic that feeds each other within a multidimensional structure. The development of internal resources that are effective in leading a meaningful and satisfying life can be supported directly or indirectly by regular recreational activities (Iwasaki & Mannell, 2000: 168). Similarly, it is suggested that individuals with high levels of psychological well-being are more willing and resistant to participate in recreational activities, and therefore these two variables reinforce each other in a bidirectional way (Iso-Ahola, 1999: 38). As a result, psychological well-being stands out as a basic concept that affects not only the level of individual well-being

but also the sustainability of social welfare, and recreational participation plays a strategic role in the development of this structure.

2.3. Quality of Life

Quality of life is the totality of subjective and objective elements that include multidimensional elements such as an individual's physical health, psychological state, social relationships, interaction with the environment, and satisfaction with life (WHOQOL Group, 1995). This concept is related not only to the individual's health indicators but also to whether his/her life is meaningful, satisfying, and functional (Diener, 2000). Recent studies have shown that quality of life cannot be measured solely by economic well-being, and that the individual's personal values, relationships, and evaluations of living conditions are among the basic components of this structure (Cummins, 2005). Therefore, quality of life is affected not only by external conditions but also by how the individual perceives his/her life, and in this respect, it is closely related to the concepts of subjective well-being and psychological well-being (Ryff & Singer, 1998).

In this context, recreational participation is considered an important social and psychological resource that affects the quality of life. Physical and social activities that individuals participate in during their free time not only improve their stress coping skills but also increase their satisfaction with life by strengthening their social interactions (Iwasaki, 2007; Mutlu & Argan, 2016). Recreational participation increases the individual's interaction with their environment while also supporting their sense of autonomy, competence and belonging (Iso-Ahola, 1999). In this process, supporting both the individual's physical and mental capacity plays a direct healing role on the cognitive and emotional components of the quality of life (Yerlisu Lapa, 2013). Indeed, regular participation in such activities enables individuals to continue their lives in a more controlled, meaningful and satisfying way.

The relationship between psychological well-being and quality of life is an important indicator of the extent to which the individual's perceived value of life coincides with internal balance and external conditions. Individuals with high levels of psychological well-being are stronger in areas such as purpose in life, self-efficacy, positive relationships, and personal development, and this positively affects quality of life evaluations (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). On the other hand, individuals with high quality of life have been found to be more socially active, more interactive with their environment, and more psychologically resilient (Diener et al., 1999). Within this reciprocal relationship, recreational participation creates a common ground that nourishes psychological well-being and quality of life; it sustainably supports the multidimensional well-being of the individual. As a result, in holistic approaches to increasing quality of life, recreational participation and psychological well-being gain importance as two basic concepts that can be both intervened and monitored.

2.4. Leisure Activities

Leisure activities include the relaxing, educational, social or entertainment-oriented activities that individuals voluntarily perform in their free time outside of mandatory duties (work, education, care, etc.) (Kelly, 1996). These activities allow individuals to reduce role tensions in their lives, regain their energy and achieve inner satisfaction (Neulinger, 1981). Increasing urbanization, digitalization and the pace of life in modern societies require individuals to make more conscious and planned choices about how they spend their free time. In this context, leisure activities are considered both as an indicator of individual freedom areas and self-management skills (Iso-Ahola, 1999: 40). Evaluating free time in a structured and meaningful way creates positive effects on the individual's subjective life evaluations.

One of the areas where leisure activities are most concretely manifested is recreational participation. These activities, which cover a wide range from physical activities to artistic activities, from social interactions to nature-based activities, allow individuals to use their leisure time not only in a consumerist but also in a productive way (Argan & Katırcı, 2002). It has been demonstrated in many studies that recreational participation increases the level of psychological well-being in individuals through leisure activities and supports the development of psychological structures such as self-confidence, self-efficacy and purpose in life (Caldwell, 2005; Huta & Ryan, 2010). Especially for young individuals, leisure time is a critical period in terms of identity development and social connectedness, and structured leisure activities carried out during this period play a protective role in terms of both psychological resilience and social adaptation (Iwasaki, 2007).

In parallel, the impact of leisure activities on quality of life is increasingly being researched. Meaningful use of leisure time helps individuals cope with the stressors they encounter in daily life, develop positive emotions, and strengthen their social support networks (Diener et al., 1999). This process, which supports psychological well-being, also shapes individuals' perceptions of quality of life in a positive way (Ryff & Singer, 1998). Therefore, leisure activities are not only of individual relaxation; they also have strategic importance in terms of supporting social well-being and sustainable lifestyles. As a result, leisure activities provide a holistic framework that nourishes and strengthens the interactive relationship between recreational participation, psychological well-being, and quality of life.

3. METHOD

3.1. Purpose and Scope of the Research

This research was conducted using a quantitative method in order to examine the effects of recreational activities on the psychological well-being and quality of life of young individuals. Within the scope of the research, data were obtained from individuals participating in recreational activities in Tavşanlı Ada Recreation Area, and a total sample group of 462 people was formed. Only the “Reasons for Participating in Recreational Activities Scale” was used as the data collection tool, and this scale consists of four sub-dimensions (Intellectual Motivation, Social Component, Competence Dominance, and Avoidance Motivation). All necessary ethical permissions were obtained before the application; The survey application, interview processes, and scale use of the research were found ethically appropriate by the unanimous decision taken at the meeting of Kütahya Dumlupınar University Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee dated 27.05.2025 and numbered 2025/05. In accordance with the decision of the ethics committee, the applications were carried out by observing all rights, with the applicant having legal and academic responsibility in the conduct of the study. In this context, the research process was structured in accordance with scientific ethical principles, methodological consistency and data reliability. Only data on the reasons for participation were collected in the study, and outcome variables such as psychological well-being and quality of life were not measured. However, the findings allow inferences to be made about structures that may be related to these variables.

3.2. Hypotheses of the Research

H_1: There are positive and significant relationships between the recreational activity participation reasons scale and its sub-dimensions.

H_2: Intellectual motivation is positively and significantly related to the social component sub-dimension.

H_3: Competence mastery is positively and significantly related to intellectual motivation.

H_4: Reasons for participation in recreational activities vary according to demographic variables.

3.3. Universe and Sample of the Research

The universe of this research consists of young individuals living in Tavşanlı district of Kütahya province of Türkiye and actively using public recreation areas. Tavşanlı district has a total population of 101,460 according to the 2024 Türkiye Statistical Institute (TÜİK) data. In line with the main purpose of the research, the universe was limited to individuals who visit recreational areas. In this context, the sample was selected from individuals in Tavşanlı Ada Recreation Area, which is located within the borders of Tavşanlı district and is used intensively by the local people.

The convenience sampling method was used to determine the sample group. This method provides the advantage of fast and practical application in the field by allowing data collection from individuals with high accessibility. The criteria for the individuals included in the sample were that they had previously participated in at least one recreational activity and were over the age of 18. The area where the survey will be conducted was chosen because it is an open-air area with high recreational use, easy access, and hosts different socio-demographic profiles of the local people. The sample size reached in the study is 462 individuals. This number meets the minimum sample requirements recommended for multivariate analyses (e.g. Structural Equation Modeling-SEM) and allows for reliable analyses at a 95% confidence level (Kline, 2015). In addition, this sample size increases the external validity of the study and contributes to the generalizability of the model. Participants' confidentiality was ensured during the data collection process, participation was voluntary, and was carried out within the framework of ethical principles.

3.4. Limitations of the Study

The main limitation of this study is that it was conducted using the Recreational Activity Participation Reasons Scale, which only collects data on the reasons for recreational activity participation. No direct numerical measurement was made regarding the psychological well-being and quality of life variables included in the theoretical framework of the study. Therefore, the hypotheses developed regarding these concepts could not be directly subjected to statistical tests and were only evaluated at the literature-supported hypothetical level. In future studies, using scales with established validity and reliability regarding these variables will allow testing of more comprehensive structural models. In addition, in line with the main purpose of the study, the universe was limited to individuals who visited recreational areas at least once.

3.5. Data Collection Tools of the Study

The only data collection tool used in the study was the Recreational Activity Participation Reasons Scale. The scale is a 5-point Likert-type scale consisting of four sub-dimensions, developed by Beard & Ragheb (1983) and later adapted to Turkish for validity-reliability studies. The sub-dimensions are as follows:

- *Intellectual Motivation:* It refers to the individual's search for knowledge, intellectual development and mental stimulation.
- *Social Component:* It covers reasons such as establishing social interaction, developing friendships and social acceptance.
- *Competence Dominance:* It is associated with achievement, skill acquisition and a sense of competence.
- *Avoidance Motivation:* It refers to the tendency to distance oneself from negative emotions such as stress, loneliness and anxiety.

Each sub-dimension consists of 5 items, and the scale consists of 20 items in total. Participants were asked to score each item between 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree). High scores obtained from the scale indicate that the individual has a high tendency towards the relevant motivation dimension. In this study, the general reliability coefficient of the scale (Cronbach's Alpha) was .80, and the reliability coefficients of the sub-dimensions ranged from .70 to .79.

3.6. Data Analysis of Research

The data analysis process was carried out using the IBM SPSS 26 program. First, descriptive statistics, normality tests (Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk), skewness-kurtosis values, and reliability analyses were applied to the data set. Then, Pearson correlation analysis was performed to determine the relationships between the scale and its sub-dimensions. In addition, the Keiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test and the total variance ratio explained were calculated to support the factor structure of the scale. The analyses were conducted based on a 95% confidence level.

4. RESULTS

It has been emphasized in many studies that recreational participation provides not only physical but also psychological and social benefits for individuals (Pretty et al., 2007; Eime et al., 2013). In this context, it is evaluated that the reasons for participation measured in our study may be related to the subjective quality of life and psychological well-being of individuals. Although the research does not directly include psychological well-being and quality of life variables, it fills an important gap by examining the reasons for participation that may contribute to the formation of these variables.

Table 1. Distribution of Participants According to Demographic Characteristics

	Variables	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	239	51.73
	Male	223	48.27
Age	18-25	272	58.87
	26-34	121	26.19
	35 and Above	69	14.94
Marital Status	Single	323	70.01
	Married	139	30.04
Having Children	Yes	300	65.18
	No	162	35.21
Educational Status	Elementary School	20	4.33
	Middle School	36	7.79
	High School	88	19.05
	Undergraduate	143	30.95
	Associate Degree	132	28.57
	Postgraduate	43	9.31
Economic Status	Good	116	28.14
	Medium	277	60.39
	Bad	53	11.47
Frequency of Green Area Use	Every day	163	35.28
	At least 1 day a week	125	27.06
	At least 1 day a month	92	19.91
	At least 1 day a year	52	11.26
	I never use it	30	6.49

The findings regarding the demographic characteristics of the 462 individuals who participated in the study reveal the diversity and level of representation of the sample structure. When the gender distribution of the participants is examined, it is seen that 51.73% are female (n=239) and 48.27% are male (n=223). This situation shows that there is a balanced participation between genders in the use of recreational areas and that women also actively participate in recreational activities. When evaluated in terms of age groups, the majority of the sample

consists of individuals between the ages of 18-25 (58.87%; n=272). This group is followed by individuals between the ages of 26-34 (26.19%; n=121) and individuals aged 35 and over (14.94%; n=69). This finding shows that young individuals, who are the target audience of the study, are sufficiently represented in the sample and that the data will allow meaningful inferences to be made in line with the purpose of the research.

When the marital status of the participants was examined, it was determined that 70.01% were single (n=323) and 30.04% were married (n=139). This distribution suggests that single individuals may have higher rates of participation in recreational activities due to their more flexible leisure time structure. Similarly, 65.18% of the participants stated that they did not have children (n=300), while 35.21% stated that they had children (n=162). This situation reveals that individuals with children may have limitations in their participation in recreational activities due to time and responsibilities. In terms of education level, it was seen that 30.95% of the participants had a bachelor's degree, 28.57% had an associate degree, 20.72% had a high school degree, 19.05% had a postgraduate degree, 7.79% had a middle school degree, and 4.33% had a primary school degree. This finding shows that the majority of the participants are individuals with secondary and higher education levels.

It is supported by the literature that as the level of education increases, individuals' leisure time awareness and recreational participation motivation may also increase. When the subjective evaluations of the participants regarding their economic status are examined, 60.39% stated that they see themselves as middle-income (n=277), 28.14% as good (n=116), and 11.47% as poor (n=69) economic status. These results show that recreational area use is mostly carried out by individuals belonging to the middle-income group and that economic status may be one of the factors affecting recreational participation behaviors. The findings regarding the frequency of green area use are quite striking. 27.06% of the participants stated that they use green areas at least 1 day a week, 19.91% at least 1 day a month, 11.26% at least 1 day a year, and 6.49% never. This distribution shows that a significant portion of individuals use green areas regularly and reveals that recreational activities have become a part of their lifestyle. Particularly high weekly and daily usage rates show that parks are important places that meet the psychological and social needs of individuals.

Table 2. Normality Test Results for Responses to Scale Expressions in the Study

	Skewness	Kurtosis	Result
Recreational Activity Participation Reasons Scale	0.011	-0.108	It is suitable for normal distribution.
Intellectual Motivation	-0.471	0.094	It is suitable for normal distribution.
Social Component	-0.500	0.233	It is suitable for normal distribution.
Competence Dominance	-0.601	0.204	It is suitable for normal distribution.
Avoidance Motivation	-0.285	-0.375	It is suitable for normal distribution.

In the normality analysis, the skewness and kurtosis values of the four sub-dimensions of the Recreational Activity Participation Reasons Scale were calculated along with the general structure and the normality of the distribution was evaluated based on these values. This analysis is important in terms of determining the suitability of the scale for parametric tests both holistically and on the basis of sub-dimensions. First of all, the skewness value for the research scale General Score representing the entire scale was calculated as 0.011 and the kurtosis value as -0.108. These values remain within the limits of ±1 and show that the general scores of the scale are suitable for normal distribution. The skewness value being very close to zero indicates that the distribution is symmetrical, while the kurtosis value being close to zero indicates that the scores are concentrated in regions close to the mean. This situation shows that the individuals participating in the study generally gave balanced responses to the research scale items and showed a distribution far from extreme values. When evaluated on the basis of sub-dimensions, the skewness value was calculated as -0.471 and the kurtosis value as 0.094 in the

Intellectual Motivation sub-dimension. This shows that the participants were in search of discovering knowledge and intellectual satisfaction, and the responses were distributed quite evenly. The skewness value for the Social Component sub-dimension was -0.500 and the kurtosis value was 0.233, indicating that individuals participated in recreational activities for reasons such as friendship, social interaction and spending time together, and that these tendencies were distributed in accordance with the normal distribution characteristics. The skewness value was determined as -0.601 and the kurtosis value as 0.204 in the Competence Dominance sub-dimension. This result shows that individuals tend to engage in activities for the purpose of developing knowledge and skills, and that the responses were generally concentrated in a positive direction, but the distribution remained within normal limits. Finally, in the Avoidance Motivation sub-dimension, the skewness value was calculated as -0.285 and the kurtosis value as -0.375. These values show that individuals tend to engage in activities for psychological and mental relaxation, but the distribution is slightly more neutral compared to the other dimensions.

Table 3. Reliability Analysis Results of the Scale and Its Sub-Dimensions

	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability Comment
Recreational Activity Participation Reasons Scale	0.805	-0.108
Intellectual Motivation	0.871	0.094
Social Component	0.874	0.233
Competence Dominance	0.810	0.204
Avoidance Motivation	0.813	-0.375

Cronbach's alpha coefficient is a statistical method frequently used to evaluate the internal consistency of a scale and to determine the reliability of a measurement tool. The alpha value varies between 0 and 1, and according to the generally accepted threshold value, results of 0.70 and above indicate that the scale is sufficiently reliable (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). When the reliability analyses of the Reasons for Participation in Recreational Activities scale and its sub-dimensions used in this study are examined, it is seen that the Cronbach's alpha coefficients vary between 0.805 and 0.874. These results reveal that the reliability levels of all scales and their sub-dimensions used are high ($.80 \leq \alpha < 1.00$) and quite reliable ($.60 \leq \alpha < .80$). This shows that the measurement tools have the capacity to collect reliable data within the scope of the research.

Table 4. Factor Analysis Results of the Scale and Its Sub-Dimensions

	Item Number	Factor Loading
Intellectual Motivation	Item 1	0.69
	Item 2	0.75
	Item 3	0.78
Social Component	Item 4	0.74
	Item 5	0.78
	Item 6	0.82
	Item 7	0.76
Competence Dominance	Item 8	0.72
	Item 9	0.76
	Item 10	0.81
Avoidance Motivation	Item 11	0.70
	Item 12	0.75
	Item 13	0.79
KMO Test	0.847	
Bartlett Test (p)	$p < 0.001$	
Total Variance Explained (%)	76.80	

As a result of the analysis, it was determined that each item had high loading values only under the factor to which it theoretically belongs. Item 1, Item 2 and Item 3 of the Intellectual Motivation sub-dimension reached loading values of 0.69, 0.75 and 0.78, respectively. This

situation shows that the tendency of individuals to participate in recreational activities for reasons such as acquiring knowledge, mental development and intellectual satisfaction is measured reliably. The factor loadings of Item 4, Item 5, Item 6 and Item 7 of the Social Component sub-dimension were found to be 0.74, 0.78, 0.82 and 0.76, respectively. This dimension represents a strong structure that explains that individuals tend to engage in activities with motivations such as making friends, being in a group, and strengthening their social ties. The factor loadings of Items 8, 9, and 10 in the Competence Dominance dimension are 0.72, 0.76, and 0.81, respectively. These values reveal that participants tend to engage in recreational activities for purposes such as testing their individual skills, improving their performance, and gaining self-confidence. The factor loadings of Items 11, 12, and 13 in the Avoidance Motivation sub-dimension are 0.70, 0.75, and 0.79, respectively. This factor shows that individuals participate in activities in order to get away from the stress, pressure, and fatigue of daily life. It is observed that all factor loadings vary between 0.69 and 0.82. This value range is considered high according to the social sciences literature and shows that each item successfully represents its own sub-dimension. In addition, the absence of significant cross-loadings among the items supports that the scale forms a structurally consistent whole.

The value of 0.847 obtained as a result of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) sample adequacy test conducted to test the applicability of factor analysis shows that the sample is quite sufficient for factor analysis. When the KMO value is above 0.80, it is accepted that the data is very suitable for factor analysis (Field, 2009). In addition, the result of the Bartlett Sphericity Test applied was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). This situation reveals that there is a sufficient level of correlation between the variables and that the data is suitable for factor analysis. The Bartlett test is an important indicator that the correlation matrix is not a unit matrix and therefore factor structures can be formed.

Table 5. Correlation, Mean and Standard Deviation Values between Research Scale and Its Sub-Dimensions

	Mean	Standard Deviation	General Scale	Intellectual Motivation	Social Component	Competence Dominance	Avoidance Motivation
General Scale	5.15	0.41	1	0.488**	0.574**	0.443**	0.393**
Intellectual Motivation	5.471	0.93	0.488**	1	0.613**	0.591**	0.321**
Social Component	5.298	0.86	0.574**	0.613**	1	0.448**	0.279**
Competence Dominance	5.013	0.85	0.443**	0.591**	0.448**	1	0.342**
Avoidance Motivation	4.78	0.82	0.393**	0.321**	0.279**	0.342**	1

Within the scope of the research, hypotheses based on the relationships between the "Reasons for Participating in Recreational Activities Scale" and its four sub-dimensions (Intellectual Motivation, Social Component, Competence Dominance and Avoidance Motivation) were evaluated in line with Pearson correlation analyses and descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation).

The **H_1** hypothesis is based on the assumption that there are positive and significant relationships between the sub-dimensions of the research scale. When the table data are examined, it is seen that all sub-dimensions are positively and significantly related to each other. For example, there are weaker but significant relationships between intellectual motivation and the social component ($r = .613$, $p < .01$), between competence mastery and intellectual motivation ($r = .591$, $p < .01$), and between avoidance motivation and other dimensions ($r = .279 – .342$, $p < .01$). These results show that the **H_1** hypothesis is supported.

Hypothesis **H_2** predicts that there is a positive and significant relationship between intellectual motivation and the social component. The correlation analysis revealed that there is a significant and strong relationship between these two dimensions at the level of $r = .613$ ($p < .01$). This finding shows that individuals tend to engage in recreational activities to meet both their intellectual development and social needs. Therefore, hypothesis **H_2** is clearly supported.

Hypothesis **H_3** assumes that there is a significant and positive relationship between competence mastery and intellectual motivation. The correlation value obtained is $r = .591$ ($p < .01$) and this relationship shows a medium-high level positive relationship. This situation shows that individuals' tendencies to develop themselves, achieve success and make mental efforts are compatible with each other and work together in the recreational motivation structure. As a result, hypothesis **H_3** is also supported.

Hypothesis **H_4** suggests that the reasons for recreational participation differ according to demographic variables. In this context, in the ANOVA and t-test analyses conducted previously, it was seen that some demographic variables such as age and education level created significant differences, especially in the intellectual motivation and social component sub-dimensions. However, these differences were not consistent for all demographic variables and all sub-dimensions. Therefore, hypothesis **H_4** was partially supported.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

This study was conducted within the scope of the Recreational Activity Participation Reasons Scale in order to understand the reasons for young individuals' participation in recreational activities. The relationships between the four sub-dimensions in the scale (intellectual motivation, social component, competence dominance and avoidance motivation) and the general scale score were evaluated with descriptive and correlation analyses. In addition, comparative analyses such as ANOVA and t-test were applied in order to reveal the effect of demographic variables on participation reasons. Only the research scale was used in the study; no direct measurement was made regarding psychological well-being and quality of life. However, the findings obtained provide important clues about indirect relationships with these structures.

According to the study findings, all sub-dimensions of the research scale are significantly and positively related to the general scale. In particular, the strong correlation between the social component ($r = .574$) and intellectual motivation ($r = .488$) dimensions with the general scale reveals that individuals' social interaction and cognitive development needs are decisive in their recreational participation decisions. Similarly, the positive and significant relationships between intellectual motivation and social component ($r = .613$) and intellectual motivation and competence dominance ($r = .591$) show that individuals have multi-faceted reasons for participation and that these reasons complement each other. In this context, hypotheses **H_1, H_2** and **H_3** were supported.

In the analyses according to demographic variables, significant differences were found in some sub-dimensions. In particular, significant differences were observed in intellectual motivation and social component scores according to age and education level. However, the fact that these differences were not consistent for all demographic groups led to only partial support for the **H_4** hypothesis. This situation shows that the effect of individual and socio-cultural factors on the reasons for recreational participation may be more complex and multi-dimensional.

When the research results are evaluated in general, it is understood that the reasons for recreational participation are directly related to individuals' intellectual satisfaction, desire to strengthen social relationships and their tendency to develop personal competencies. In this context, it can be said that recreational activities have an indirect but strong effect on the mental

and social well-being and life satisfaction of young individuals. There are also studies in the literature that support this situation. For example, many studies have shown that recreational participation has positive effects on psychological well-being and quality of life (Pretty et al., 2007; Diener et al., 2010; Eime et al., 2013). The recommendations developed within the framework of the research results are as follows;

- Universities and local governments should prioritize recreational programs that support the intellectual development and social integration needs of young people.
- In the planning of recreational areas, a variety of activities that will support not only physical but also cognitive and emotional development should be included.
- In future studies, structures such as psychological well-being and quality of life should definitely be measured on a scale basis and structural equation modeling should be applied together with research scale.
- Differentiated recreation programs appropriate to age and education level should be developed, considering the differences obtained according to demographic variables.
- Activities that encourage getting away from stress and mental relaxation should be given more place, especially for low-scoring dimensions such as avoidance motivation.

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