

Exploring the Relationship between Leisure Involvement and Life Satisfaction: Perspectives of Recreational Skiers

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Abstract

In the current study, the aim is to determine the leisure involvement and life satisfaction levels of recreational skiers and to compare these factors with various demographics. The study group consists of 243 recreational skiers ($M_{age}=32.71 \pm 10.51$). "Leisure Involvement Scale-LIS" and "Life Satisfaction Scale-LSS" were used to collect data. Besides the descriptive statistics, t-test, MANOVA, ANOVA and Pearson Correlation analysis were used to test the hypothesis. The results indicated that "gender" and "participation in skiing event" variables do not have a statistically significant differences in terms of LSS. On the other hand, although "gender" variable does not differ in terms of LIS and its subscales, "participation in skiing event" variable has a significant difference in terms of the subscales of LIS. The significant difference was due to those who participated in skiing events "often" against those who engaged in skiing events "sometimes" and "rarely." In addition, there is a statistically significant positive and low-level correlation between the total mean scores of LSS and the subscales of LIS. As a conclusion, it can be said that as the frequency of participation in the recreational skiing increases, leisure involvement and life satisfaction levels of the participants will increase.

Keywords: Winter Sports, Skiing, Involvement, Life Satisfaction, Leisure.

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Serbest Zaman İlgilenimi ve Yaşam Doyumu Arasındaki İlişkinin İncelenmesi: Rekreatif Kayakçıların Perspektifleri

Öz

Bu çalışmada, rekreatif kayak yapan bireylerin serbest zaman ilgilenimi ve yaşam doyum düzeylerinin belirlenmesi ve bu faktörlerin çeşitli demografik özelliklerle karşılaştırılması amaçlanmaktadır. Araştırmanın çalışma grubunda rekreatif amaçlı kayak yapan toplam 243 kişi yer almaktadır ($Ort_{yaş}=32.71 \pm 10.51$). Araştırmada veri toplama aracı olarak "Serbest Zaman İlgilenim Ölçeği-SZİÖ" ve "Yaşam Doyumu Ölçeği-YDÖ" kullanılmıştır. Elde edilen verilerin analizinde betimsel istatistikler, t-testi, MANOVA, ANOVA ve Pearson Korelasyon analizi kullanılmıştır. Sonuçlar, katılımcıların YDÖ ortalama puanlarının "cinsiyet" ve kayak etkinliğine katılım" değişkenlerine göre istatistiksel olarak anlamlı farklılaşmadığını göstermiştir. Analiz sonuçlarına göre, katılımcıların YDÖ puanlarının cinsiyet değişkenine göre anlamlı farklılaşmadığı ancak SZİÖ'nin alt boyut ortalama puanları arasında "kayak etkinliğine katılım" değişkenine göre anlamlı farklılık olduğu bulunmuştur. Kayak etkinliklerine sıklıkla katılanların ortalama puanları diğerlerinden daha yüksektir. Ayrıca, YDÖ toplam puan ortalamaları ile SZİÖ alt ölçekleri ortalama puanları arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı pozitif ve düşük düzeyde bir korelasyon vardır. Sonuç olarak rekreatif amaçlı kayak etkinliklerine katılım sıklığı arttıkça katılımcıların serbest zaman ilgilenimi ve yaşam doyum düzeylerinin artacağı söylenebilir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Kış Sporları, Kayak, İlgilenim, Yaşam Tatmini, Serbest Zaman.

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Introduction

Covid-19 pandemic which affected the entire world has shown how significant having the information related to education and management of leisure and recreation activities is for individuals. The researchers in the field revealed that there is an increase in the participation in outdoor recreational activities (Venter et al., 2021; Venter et al., 2020), that outdoor recreation activities can provide with advantages without breaking social distancing rules (Geng et al., 2021; Weinbrenner et al., 2021) and that outdoor recreation is significant to the mental and physical health of individuals (Howarth et al., 2021). In this case, examining the involvement aspects which affect the participation of individuals in leisure activities which constitutes the space for their freedom is a significant matter.

Leisure involvement was defined as the strength or context of the cognitive tie between the stimulating object and self by Kyle et.al. (2007), and it was stated that there are five factors related to leisure involvement. These are as follows: attractiveness, identity expression, centrality, identity affirmation and social bonding. Leisure involvement play an important role in participation in physical, social or cultural recreation activities of individuals and also in sustaining the participation in these activities. Forasmuch as, participation in the leisure activities is observed to have positive effects on the happiness subjective wellbeing (Pan et al., 2018), event satisfaction (Güngörmüş et al., 2019), leisure satisfaction (Matte et al., 2021), life satisfaction (Kara & Sarol, 2021) and quality of life (Güngörmüş, Satılmış, Karabulut & Karakullukçu, 2019) of the individuals.

As a process of evaluation, life satisfaction is defined as the process of evaluating the life quality of an individual in a certain field (Diener Emmons et al., 1985); in this case, the positive or negative evaluations related to the environment of an individual is a reflection of their life satisfaction (Valenzuela et al., 2009). Although life satisfaction can be related to certain life domains such as job, marriage, and family, it also reflects the situations that an individual wishes to come true and the situations that an individual has achieved (Refaeli et al., 2019). Therefore, specific domains in life can be accepted as the effective factors to obtain life satisfaction. When the structure of recreational activities that are carried out during leisure, it can be thought that they can positively affect the life satisfaction of individuals. Yumuk and Güngörmüş (2021) reported that life satisfaction which is developed through leisure activities have recently become the sole purpose of individuals since the individuals express themselves through the leisure activities that they participate in and mentioned that recreational activities that individuals participate in during their leisure time have become a means of obtaining life satisfaction. Şener et al. (2007) pointed out in their study on retired men that the most powerful predictor of life satisfaction is the frequency of leisure activity participation.

The skiing as a sport which started with the military studies helped different disciplines and rules emerge thanks to the competition and success desires of people in the process. Furthermore, the developments in technology and economy provided individuals with participation in skiing activities with recreational purposes during their leisure (Budak, 2018). These technological developments allow guests who travel to skiing resorts to spend time in comfortable facilities, to enjoy the safe and well-maintained ski tracks and to increase their wish to receive high quality services. The modern society which has a standard brought by consumer culture require meeting certain standards in participation in recreational activities based on winter sports as well (Alexandris et al., 2017). The advantages brought by both meeting the individual requests in entertainment dimension and obtaining experience through taking health and safety measures related to risky situations that can be encountered during the skiing activity tend to increase the competition and quality in terms of service quality of facilities (Bahar and Kozak, 2005).

The relocation of individuals for leisure activities has led to the development of mountain tourism and nature sports, which are widely done and developed interdependently today, by incorporating sportive movements such as climate cures, nature research, trips, walking, climbing and winter sports over time (Mızrak, 2011). Today, with the increase in financial opportunities in parallel with technological developments, it is observed that the attractiveness of winter sports increases when the escape processes of individuals from the city to nature are added. Based on the studies conducted in the literature on leisure involvement and life satisfaction, it is aimed to determine the leisure involvement and life satisfaction levels of individuals who ski with recreational purposes and to compare them according to various demographic variables.

Method

In the current study, the correlational survey model was used since the correlations between dependent and independent variables affecting leisure involvement and life satisfaction were examined. Correlational survey model is a research model that aims to determine the presence and/or degree of co-variation between two or more variables (Karasar, 2013).

Study Group

The research group of the current study which was designed in correlational survey model consists of 243 ($Mage = 32.71 \pm 10.51$) individuals who ski with recreational purposes. The participants who were chosen through convenience sampling method which is one of the improbable sampling methods (Bishop, 2018) presented their opinions related to the items in Leisure Involvement Scale (LIS) and Life Satisfaction Scale (LSS).

Data Collection Tools

In the current study, the participants were asked to fill in a survey form which consists of two different sections. In the first section of survey form, various questions related to the demographics of participants were included. The second section consisted of two different scales details of which can be found as follows.

Leisure Involvement Scale: The scale was developed by Kyle et.al (2007) and adapted into Turkish culture by Gürbüz et.al. (2018). It consists of five subscales (attractiveness, identity expression, centrality, identity affirmation and social bonding), there are 3 items for each subscale. The high mean scores obtained from the subscales indicate high level of involvement with the related subscale, and the low mean scores obtained from the subscales indicate low level of involvement with the related subscale. The items of the scale which is in five-point likert type were scaled as “1=I definitely disagree, 2= I disagree, 3= I neither agree or disagree, 4= I agree and 5= I definitely agree”.

Life Satisfaction Scale: The scale has a five-item and one factor structure which was developed by Diener et.al. (1985) to determine the satisfaction of the individuals from their lives. There are choices from 1 to 5 which indicate “not suitable at all” and “very suitable” in the scale which has a likert type structure. The Turkish adaptation of the scale was carried out by Köker (1991) and Durak, Şenol Durak and Gençöz (2010). The high scores obtained from the scale indicate the high level of life satisfaction whereas the low scores obtained from the scale indicate the low level of life satisfaction.

Data Analysis

In the analysis of the data, first of all, skewness and kurtosis analysis methods were used to test the normality distribution. To determine the differences between the variables, t-test, MANOVA, ANOVA and Simple Correlation tests were performed for the correlated samples. Cronbach's Alpha analysis was used to determine the reliability of the measurement tools. In the statistical analysis of the data and in the evaluations, the significance level of $p < 0.05$ was considered.

Ethics of the Study

When conducting this study, the "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Regulation" was followed, and permission was obtained from the university's Ethics Committee.

Findings

In this section, first of all, the distribution of the scale scores is displayed in a table. Then there are the findings that indicate the relationship between demographic variables (gender and the frequency of skiing activity participation) and leisure involvement and life satisfaction. Finally, Pearson Correlation Analysis results carried out to test the correlation between life satisfaction and leisure involvement are presented.

Tablo 1

Descriptive Statistics of the Variables

Scales	N	Mean	Sd	Skewness	Kurtosis	C. Alpha
LSS	5	4.35	0.82	-1.48	1.79	0.852
Attractiveness (LIS)	3	3.18	1.19	-0.10	-0.89	0.885
Centrality (LIS)	3	3.77	0.91	-0.42	-0.61	0.873
Social Bonding (LIS)	3	3.73	1.02	-0.66	-0.21	0.771
Identity Affirmation (LIS)	3	3.33	1.15	-0.24	-0.81	0.784
Identity Expression (LIS)	3	4.99	1.00	-0.62	0.54	0.862

LSS = Life Satisfaction Scale. LIS = Leisure Involvement Scale

When the mean scores obtained from the subscales of LIS by the participants were examined, it can be seen that the highest mean score belonged to “identity expression” factor, and that the Cronbach’s Alpha internal consistency coefficients of the scale ranged from 0.771 and 0.885 for the subscales. The total scale Cronbach’s Alpha internal consistency coefficient was calculated as 0.931 for LIS. The total mean score of LSS was determined as 4.35. The total scale Cronbach’s Alpha internal consistency coefficient was calculated as 0.852 for LSS.

Table 1 presents that when the kurtosis and skewness values were considered, it can be seen that these values are between the range of ± 1.79 for all the score groups. To Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), the range of ± 3.29 for kurtosis and skewness values and to George and Mallery (2010), the range of ± 2 for kurtosis and skewness values is acceptable for normality. For this point on, the curves of normality distribution were thought not to be deviated from the normality after considering Q-Q distributions; therefore, it was decided that parametric statistical techniques would be used for the analyses of correlation.

Tablo 2

LIS Subscales and LSS Compared to Gender and Participation Frequency

Scales	Male (149)		Female (94)		Rarely (110)		Sometimes (44)		Often (89)	
	Mean	Sd	Mean	Sd	Mean	Sd	Mean	Sd	Mean	Sd
LSS	5.06	0.95	4.87	1.06	4.90	0.96	5.09	1.09	5.04	1.01
Attractiveness (LIS)	4.41	0.82	4.26	0.82	4.14	0.90	4.33	0.80	4.61	0.65***
Centrality (LIS)	3.22	1.16	3.11	1.25	2.73	1.07	3.09	1.16	3.78	1.10***
Social Bonding (LIS)	3.75	0.94	3.79	0.87	3.78	0.87	3.55	0.89	4.03	0.91***
Identity Affirmation (LIS)	3.70	1.05	3.78	0.96	3.43	1.04	3.75	0.92	4.08	0.92***
Identity Expression (LIS)	3.37	1.17	3.25	1.11	2.97	1.11	3.43	1.16	3.71	1.06***

* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$. *** $p < 0.001$.

The total mean scores of participants obtained from LSS [$t(240) = 1.385$; $p = 0.167 > 0.05$] do not differ significantly in terms of “gender” variable. As a result of MANOVA analysis, it was determined that the main effect of “gender” variable on LIS subscales is not significant [$\lambda = 0.965$, $F(5,237) = 1.713$, $p = 0.132 > 0.05$]. Also, it was seen that all subscale mean scores do not significantly differ as score for “attractiveness” [$F(1,241) = 1.973$; $p = 0.161 > 0.05$], “centrality” [$F(1,241) = 0.490$; $p = 0.484 > 0.05$], “social bonding” [$F(1,241) = 0.125$; $p = 0.724 > 0.05$], “identity affirmation” [$F(1,241) = 0.343$; $p = 0.558 > 0.05$] and “identity expression” [$F(1,241) = 0.688$; $p = 0.408 > 0.05$].

It was determined that the total mean scores of participants obtained from LSS [$F(2-240) = 0.772$; $p = 0.463 > 0.05$] related to “ski activity participation frequency” do not differ significantly. When the MANOVA analysis results were considered, the variable of “ski activity participation frequency” has a significant main effect on the subscales of LIS [$\lambda = 0.833$, $F(5,237) = 4.530$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$]. When it is considered to understand which dependent variable contributes to the multi-variable significance, in terms of the main effect of “ski activity participation frequency”, it is concluded that all subscales of LIS have a significant difference; namely, “attractiveness” [$F(2,240) = 8.738$; $p = 0.000 < 0.05$], “centrality” [$F(2,240) = 22.387$; $p = 0.000 < 0.05$], “social bonding” [$F(2,240) = 7.076$; $p = 0.001 < 0.05$], “identity affirmation” [$F(2,240) = 10.848$; $p = 0.000 < 0.05$] and “identity expression” [$F(2,240) = 11.429$; $p = 0.000 < 0.05$]. In the subscale in which significant

differences were found, the group which participates in skiing activities “often” statistically have higher scores when compared to the groups “sometimes” and “rarely”.

Tablo 3

Simple Correlation Analysis Results for Leisure Involvement and Life Satisfaction

	LSS	Attractiveness	Centrality	Social Bonding	Identity Affirmation	Identity Expression
Pearson Correlation	1	0.187**	0.233**	0.223**	0.276**	0.233**
LSS Sig. (2-tailed)		0.003	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
N	243	243	243	243	243	243

* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$. *** $p < 0.001$.

The results of simple correlation analysis indicate that there is a positive and low level of statistically significant correlation between all subscales of LIS and the total mean scores of LIS.

Discussion

In the current study, the aim was to determine the leisure involvement and life satisfaction levels of individuals who ski with recreational purposes and to compare them according to various demographic variables, and in the light of this, necessary analyses were made. The results of MANOVA analyses in terms of gender variable did not indicate a significant difference in LSS and the subscales of LIS. Similar to the current study, Tükel and Temel (2020) reported no significant difference in terms of gender variable in LSS in their study. When the literature is considered, there are studies indicating significant differences in LSS in favor of male participants (Serdar, 2021). On the other hand, when the literature is reviewed for LIS, Demirel (2019) revealed results that support the results of the current study and reported that there is no significant difference in terms of gender variable in their study.

When the “ski activity participation frequency” is considered, the analysis results indicated that there is no significant difference in LSS; however, there is a significant difference in LIS. Paralleled with the current study’s results, Yumuk (2019) revealed no significant difference in terms of activity participation frequency in LSS. Nevertheless, there are studies indicating that recreational activities carried out during the leisure positively affect life satisfaction (Lee et al., 2023). That all the subscales of LIS showed significant differences in terms of participation frequency is parallel to various studies in the literature and in every point where leisure involvement is evaluated as an approach. When the first studies carried out related to the leisure involvement, it is seen that the most

important behavioral aspect of leisure involvement is the frequency of participation both in theory and in application (Kim and Scott, 1997). From another point of view, Sönmez and Gürbüz (2022) found out that a better quality of life can be achieved through the increase in the participation in leisure activities, which indicates that the increase in participation in leisure activities which is one of the most important factors of leisure involvement also increases the parameters such as quality of life and life satisfaction.

Simple correlation analysis results carried out to determine the direction and level of correlation between the subscales of LIS and LSS revealed that there is a positive and low level of statistically significant correlation between all subscales of LIS and the total mean scores of LIS. Similarly, Sato et.al. (2017) reported in their study on levels of event satisfaction, life satisfaction and leisure involvement that leisure involvement is correlated with the satisfaction of all life domains. However, An et al. (2021) revealed that attractiveness subscale of LIS is positively correlated with the life satisfaction yet, centrality subscale is negatively correlated with life satisfaction. Since the sample group of the current study consists of recreational skiers and when the benefits of participation in recreational activities are considered, it can be thought that revealing a positive correlation between leisure involvement and life satisfaction can be also correlated with sensations emerging during the activities such as thrill and happiness. In future studies, it is thought that it will be beneficial to conduct qualitative research in order to understand the reasons for the results obtained from this research in depth.

Conclusion

When the findings of the current study are considered, it is seen that gender variable does not have a impact value in the sample group the study to reveal a significant difference for life satisfaction and leisure involvement; however, the individuals who participated in skiing more often have a higher level of leisure involvement. Moreover, when the correlation between the two parameters used in the data collection in the current study is considered, it can be said that the level of leisure involvement and the level of life satisfaction of the individuals can increase through the increase in the recreational skiing activity participation.

Ethical Approval

Ethics Review Board: Atatürk University, Faculty Commission of Ethics

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Authors Contribution

All parts of the study (design, methods, analyzes etc.) were carried out by the only author involved in the study.

Conflict of Interest

The author declare no conflict of interest.

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