

## Investigation of the Relationship between Participation in Recreational Activities and Sensation Seeking among University Students

Yalcin Tukul

Necmettin Erbakan University, Turkey, ytukul7@gmail.com

**Abstract:** The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between the quality and quantity of university students' participation in recreational activities and sensation seeking. The study was conducted among 478 university students through a causal-comparative research design. The participants were obtained through convenience sampling method which is one of the techniques of probability sampling. The study employed the Questionnaire for Participation in Recreational Activities, Leisure Satisfaction Scale and Sensation Seeking Scales to collect data for this research. In the evaluation of the data, along with descriptive statistics, Independent Samples t-Test and ANOVA were used. To determine the relationship between leisure satisfaction and sensation seeking, Pearson Correlation test and to determine the impact Regression analysis were used. The findings revealed no significant difference between leisure satisfaction and sensation seeking among university students in terms of gender and year of study. Another finding showed that, while there was a significant difference between participation in active sports, social, artistic and cultural activities and leisure satisfaction, no significant difference was found for sensation seeking. Finally, students' sensation seeking significantly affected their leisure satisfaction.

**Keywords:** University students, recreational activities, sensation seeking, gender

### Introduction

Even though the purpose of individuals to participate in the leisure activity is different, there is a point in which all of them are common (Henderson and Bialeschki, 2005). The individual participates in them, to enjoy the leisure activity and to be satisfied as a result of this pleasure (Çelik, 2011). According to Ardahan and Yerlisu Lap (2010), leisure satisfaction, is the degree of meeting the expectations of the individual from the activities that he actively or passively participates in order to obtain health, fun, satisfaction, renewal and happiness to gain new skills, without being tied to external forces and with health, social, cultural, sports or artistic expectations participate voluntarily and without any financial benefits. De la Vega et al. (2018) suggested that recreation as a concept is a shelter of events that includes social, educational, sports and artistic pastimes.

Broadhurst (2001) mentioned the existence of numerous factors that affect our approach to recreational activities in leisure, and he stated that some of them were factors such as genetic structure, personality, family influence, teachers, peer groups, environment and nature awareness. In this context, individuals' search for Sensation in their leisure processes, has an important effect. The quest for Sensation is a personality trait associated with a tendency to take risks for various, unique, complex and intense urges. People looking for Sensation, often ignore the risk factor, or they regard the risk as a valuable reward (Zuckerman & Kulman, 2000). Zuckerman (1994) talks about the four characteristics of sensation seekers. 1- Sensation seeking and adventure seeking behavior, 2- Experience seeking behavior, 3- Conditional reflex loss, 4- Sensitivity to boring. It has been seen that there are few studies in the literature where sensation seeking and leisure satisfaction are examined together. However, the concept of "Sensation" is an important factor in satisfaction, perceived in leisure (Yerlisu Lapa, 2013).

The root of our leisure habits is based on our past, depending on the culture and geography we live in. The answer to the question of where, how, when and with which recreational activity we will spend our leisure, is shaped depending on different reasons along with the living conditions, opportunities and regional culture reasons of our era. In this context, Torkildsen (2012) shows that the Sensation perceived by individuals in their leisure, is one of the factors affecting their leisure satisfaction. He stated that these behaviors were based on traditions that have been transmitted for centuries. Some research on university youth has revealed that the vast majority of youth do not know how to spend their leisure or, that they spend these times with passive activities, but at the same time are willing to participate in many activities if possible (Torkilden, 2005). For this reason, this research was examined in terms of sensation seeking and leisure satisfaction of university students and their participation in active sports, artistic, cultural and social activities.

## Method

In the research, the screening model was used in which the opinions of the participants or their characteristics such as interest, skill, ability and attitude were determined (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). The relationships between university students' participation in leisure activities, leisure satisfaction and Sensation seeking were examined in this study, based on the comparative relational scanning method which is one of the scanning models.

The sample group of the study consisted of a total of 478 university students, 212 males and 266 females, who study at different faculties of Necmettin Erbakan University and Selcuk Universities with an average age of  $20.80 \pm 1.45$ .

## Data Collection Tool

The form used as a data collection tool in the research consists of three parts. The first part "Personal Information Form" was used to determine the gender, age, departments, classes and weekly leisure periods of the students. In the second part, "Leisure Satisfaction Scale" developed by Beard and Raged (1980) and adapted to Turkish by Gökçe and Orhan (2011) was used to measure the leisure satisfaction levels of students. The scale is 5-point Likert Type and, the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient is 0.88. In the third part, the 'Sensation Seeking Scale' developed by Hoyle et al. and adapted to Turkish Culture by Çelik and Turan (2016) was used. The reliability coefficient of the one-dimensional scale was found to be .79.

## Findings

When Table 1 is examined, the participants' Sensation seeking and free time satisfaction scores do not differ significantly according to the gender.

Table 1. Distribution of Scale Scores by Gender

Variables	Gender	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
<b>Sensation Seeking</b>	Male	212	3,16	0,69	,736	,462
	Female	266	3,12	0,59		
<b>Leisure Satisfaction</b>	Male	212	3,63	0,48	,358	,721
	Female	266	3,61	0,46		

When Table 2 is examined, it was observed that there was no significant difference in Sensation seeking mean scores depending on active sports ( $p > 0.05$ ). However, there was a significant difference in leisure satisfaction mean scores depending on active sports ( $p < 0.05$ ). Leisure satisfaction of university students engaged in active sports, is significantly higher.

Table 2. Comparison of Sensation Seeking and Leisure Satisfaction Scores according to University Students' active Sports Status.

Variables	Active Sports Status	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
<b>Sensation Seeking</b>	Yes	228	3,11	0,63	-,864	,388
	No	250	3,16	0,64		
<b>Leisure Satisfaction</b>	Yes	228	3,66	0,44	1,947	,048
	No	250	3,58	0,49		

When Table 3. is examined, it was observed that there was no significant difference in Sensation seeking mean scores depending on the participation actively in social activities ( $p > 0.05$ ). However, a significant difference was found in leisure satisfaction mean scores depending on the participation actively in social activities ( $p$

<0.05). Leisure satisfaction of university students participating actively in social activities, is significantly higher.

Table3. Comparison of Sensation Seeking and Leisure Satisfaction Scores by University Students' Participation in Cultural and Artistic Activities

Variables	Actively Participation in Social Activity	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Sensation Seeking	Yes	264	3,15	0,67	,481	,631
	No	214	3,12	0,59		
Leisure Satisfaction	Yes	264	3,71	0,47	5,116	,000
	No	214	3,50	0,43		

When Table 4 is examined, it was observed that there was no significant difference in Sensation seeking and leisure satisfaction mean scores depending on active artistic and cultural activities ( $p > 0.05$ ).

Table 4. Comparison of Sensation Seeking and Leisure Satisfaction Scores by University Students' Participation in Social Activities

Variables	Actively Participation in Social Activity	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Sensation Seeking	Yes	135	3,15	0,62	,280	,780
	No	343	3,13	0,64		
Leisure Satisfaction	Yes	135	3,67	0,51	1,512	,131
	No	343	3,60	0,45		

When Table 5 is examined, it was found that the correlation coefficients between the participants' leisure satisfaction scale and the Sensation seeking scores scales are positive and moderately significant ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Table 5. Correlation between Participants' Leisure Satisfaction and Sensation Seeking

		Sensation Seeking	Leisure Satisfaction
Sensation Seeking	Pearson Correlation	1	,260**
	-p-		,000
Leisure Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	,260**	1
	-p-	,000	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at level 0.01 (2-tailed).

## Discussion and Conclusions

In this study, leisure satisfaction and Sensation levels of university students were examined according to their participation in active sports, cultural and art activities and social activities. According to the research findings, no difference was found in Sensation and leisure satisfaction scores by gender. These findings are similar to the research results of Ardahan and Yerlisu Lap (2010), VongTze (2005). The students are satisfied and excited about their leisure activities, regardless of their gender. However, Sensation seeking behavior of men is generally observed at higher levels in the literature than women. Ewert et al. (2012) stated in their study on Sensation recreation participants, that female participants tend to seek less Sensation than male participants, but this difference cannot be explained by their skill or dedication levels.

Another finding reached in this study is that, leisure satisfaction varies significantly according to the participation of university students in active sports, cultural and artistic activities and social activities. It has been observed that the participants who perform active sports, artistic, cultural and social activities, provide a high level of satisfaction from leisure. However, no significant relationship was found between participation in sports, artistic, cultural and social activities and sensation seeking.

According to Kalkan (2012), it was found that individuals participating in various leisure activities feel happier, healthy and strong and relaxed after the event experience and they have increased their self-confidence and are socialized as a result of experiences. As a result, the participants who spend their leisure actively with artistic, social and cultural events by participating in games and physical activities, leisure satisfaction levels are significantly higher. Significant relationships between students' attitudes and activity levels in leisure activities was found in a study by Akyürek et al. (2018) which was examining leisure satisfaction of the university students. Students who participate in leisure activities and provide leisure satisfaction, develop their social, physical and mental skills which they can use later in school-related activities and, feel healthy as part of a group and, build healthy relationships with other people and, overcome some difficult tasks.

The final finding of this study is that there is a meaningful relationship between participants' leisure satisfaction and sensation. These findings are similar to the research results of Kaas (2016). Positive and significant correlations were obtained between the two variables in this study, which the participation of university students in recreational activities and their leisure satisfaction and sensation levels were examined (Kaas, 2016). When the literature is examined, it has been observed that there are studies that show the relationship between leisure and life satisfaction and the sensation seeking on adults (Oishi, Schimmack & Colcombe 2003; Stegman 2011). Stegman (2010) explained the variables that may be associated with the sensation seeking as age, gender, national differences, racial differences, socio-economic status, leisure, occupation and performance and, that the variables that affect the quest for sensation, are age and gender. As a result, it was determined that students' participation in active sports, artistic, cultural and social activities in leisure had a positive effect on individuals' leisure satisfaction.

In addition, it was concluded that there was a significant positive relationship between students' leisure satisfaction and sensation seeking behavior. In this study, it is aimed to describe the relationships between individuals in the university sample and leisure satisfaction and sensation seeking variables according to their participation in recreation activities and, this is very important in terms of enlighten future studies on this subject. In future studies, the data of the research can be collected from larger samples and the analysis can be repeated and, the generalizability and validity of the results obtained from the research can be increased.

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