

# Leisure Time Spending Tendencies of University Students: The Case of TRNC

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**Abstract:** Nowadays, the significance of leisure time is increasing in our daily life. In addition to entertainment and relaxation, individuals can make use of their leisure time as self-developed and productive. This study aims to reveal the leisure time trends of university students. The population of the research consists of students studying at Girne American University in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Research participants consisted of 582 university students. One hundred thirteen of the participants are men, and 81 of them are women. The survey technique utilized, which is one of the field research methods, was applied to collect the research data. SPSS 22.00 package program was used in the analysis of the study. As a result of the research, it was seen that the participants mostly preferred passive activities. Furthermore, it was concluded that the crucial thing concerning the students participating in the study from the governments of TRNC and local administrations to make the most of their free time is the opening of more leisure time areas. In line with the opinions of the participants, it was concluded that the leisure time opportunities offered by the government and local administrations of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus for students are not sufficient. These results highlight the importance of leisure activities for successful individuals throughout their life span.

**Keywords:** Leisure, Leisure time spending, University students, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

## 1. Introduction

Time has been crucial since the existence of human beings. Time understanding plays a vital role in human development, in the success, knowledge, and perception of events. The concept of time has become increasingly important for society and individuals. Within the framework of this understanding, societies that regulate their business life, social relations, entertainment, and leisure time habits have been more successful and prosperous than other societies. These full societies use time by making plans and procedures (Başarangil, 2018).

The start and end of an individual's life can be evaluated at a particular point in the time interval defined as the long-term or short-term non-repeatable part of an individual's life. Leisure time is free from necessity, dependence on oneself and others, and can freely choose activities. Leisure time is accepted as when the individual can act independently and freely (Celik, 2014). More precisely, leisure time is defined as the time when individuals can relax, have fun, or develop themselves according to their preferences, desires, and needs, as well as the obligations to undertake during this time (Havitz et al., 2013; Latip et al., 2020).

Students, who spend most of their daily lives on campus, have different subcultures depending on the physical environment's characteristics and education. Therefore, even if university students are members of the same community, many factors affect how they spend their leisure time (Aslan, 2000;

Ajoi et al., 2021). Hence, individuals experiencing low sharpness towards current activities, briefly not being motivated, can cause an understanding of boredom. It has been stated in many studies that the perception of boredom has a significant effect on orientation to risky behaviors (Kara & Ayverdi, 2018; Kara & Gücal, 2016). Another essential issue in orienting to these risky behaviors is the leisure time attitudes of individuals, which leaves a thought-provoking effect in the review of the relevant literature. It is thought that leisure attitudes, which are believed to be formed due to evaluating the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors towards leisure time and leisure time activities within the framework of certain criteria in terms of the individual, interact with the perception of boredom in this context. This research aims to reveal the leisure time spending tendencies of university students. Thus, the importance of this study, which is based on the hypothesis that individuals' positive or negative reactions compiled from the experiences, emotions, memories they gained, comes from this point.

### **1.1. Time and Leisure Time Concepts**

Time has always been a fundamental element of existence and discussed by the religion, philosophy, science, and art branches. It is stated in the references that this concept was tried to be explained by Saint Augustine centuries ago with questions such as the idea of time and how it can be defined (Mahmood et al., 2021). According to Karaküçük (2005), benefiting from the time well depends on the individual himself/herself, his/her work and life, recreation and entertainment, balancing well within the time units he/she allocates for providing the biological and physiological necessities. From this point on, time usage and content issues stand out (Phelps et al, 2018).

Köktaş (2010) states that countries with an awareness of time use have also developed. Whereas it is emphasized that this is an essential point in revealing the difference and qualities between developed and undeveloped countries, also the balance between the time that the individual allocates to themselves, their work and social life, recreation, and entertainment, meeting his biological and physiological needs are also underlined. However, it can also be said that individuals who live their time in this balance will make themselves ready and efficient with the questions of where, when, and how (Tolukan, 2010). In this context, the issues of how individuals name and shape the concept of leisure time are essential (Willis et al, 2018).

Leisure time is considered as the time allocated to work or the remaining time spent on work-related activities such as travel, training, meetings, etc. (McLean and Hurd 2012). In addition to working, it is the time remaining from sleep, nutrition, personal care, and responsibilities required to continue life (Bull et al., 2003; Fan et al., 2018).

Leisure time is the time remaining from their work; work-related activities such as travel, meeting, and training; physical needs for their life such as sleep and nutrition; non-work-related activities of personal care such as cleaning, make-up, shower; these personal responsibilities (lawn-mowing; care of the family members, etc.) (Munusturlar, 2016). In brief, leisure time is defined as the increase and expansion of knowledge, creativity and skill development, and enhancement in addition to resting and relaxing in the time that the person allocates for himself/herself (Smale, 2010).

### **1.2. Basic Functions of Leisure Time**

Kara and Özdedeoğlu (2017) stated that leisure time has three basic functions namely rest function, development function and entertainment function:

- Rest Function: This function refers to leisure time, offering individuals with various activities the opportunity to relax, recure their energy and physical strength, get rid of stress and negativity in their lives (Akyüz, 2015; Supramaniam et al., 2020).
- Entertainment Function: It provides the opportunity to participate in some activity types, whether active or passive (not required by daily needs), with its contributions to health, emotional life, physical and psychological mood, eliminating boredom in individuals (Walker & Wang, 2009). In this context, it creates the resting function in the individual (Abayomi et al, 2017).

- Development Function: If used duly and within the framework of its value, the concept of leisure time can bring many essential features such as rest, entertainment, self-improvement, development. It is important for the individual's socialization, developing their views and vision, disseminating their freedom, and finding themselves (Karaküçük 2005).

### 1.3. Leisure activities

People need leisure activities when their daily lives are combined with fatigue, the boring pace of work, work pressure, and the overwhelming influence of routine. In the present time, leisure time has become an indispensable part of life and a means of regeneration, purification, relaxation, and healing (Tel & Köksalan 2008; Latip et al., 2020). Recreational activities are defined as activities in which people voluntarily participate in recreation and satisfaction-driven leisure time and provide physical and mental creativity by reducing their physical and mental fatigue (Hacıoğlu et al., 2003). Ibrahim and Cordes (2002) define it as leisure time activities organized for one's own benefit and related to nature.

Individuals gain many benefits by participating in recreational activities. Some of these can be said to include learning team dynamics, leadership skills, increasing confidence, personal decision making, risk management, the responsibility to yourself and others, positively influencing personality and physical development, socializing, being healthy and stable, relaxing, making new friends, learning new things, providing personal satisfaction, gaining environmental awareness, working more efficiently, experiencing belonging, increasing imagination, feeling more important (Yerlisu et al., 2010). This study aims to determine the tendencies of university students to spend their leisure time.

## 2. Method

In this study, general scanning and data-gathering methods were utilized according to the research purpose (Karataş et al., 2011; Arslan et al., 2011; Okutan et al., 2010). We reviewed and analyzed the related sources and studies to collect our needed data. The scanning model is a research method designed to identify what happened in the past or what still exists. It tries to describe the event, person, or object to be examined according to your circumstances and real condition (Arslan et al., 2011; Mahmood et al., 2021). Students who are studying at Girne American University in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus constitute this research's universe. The sample of the study was determined by a purposeful sampling. Research participants consist of 582 university students. Three hundred thirty-nine of the participants are male, and 243 are female. The survey technique, one of the field research methods, was used to collect the research data. SPSS 22.00 package program was used in the analysis of the study. The data obtained are indicated by percentage distribution.

## 3. Results and Discussion

**Table 1.** Leisure time definitions of students in order of importance

Leisure time definitions of students in order of importance	$\bar{x}$	SD
Resting	1,87	1,58
Entertainment	2,80	1,51
Providing personal development	3,34	1,47
Expanding the social environment	3,70	1,42
Getting new experiences	4,04	1,54
Increasing productivity and creativity	4,42	1,66
Other	5,74	1,50

Table 1 shows that the students in the research prefer resting as the most favorable thing in their leisure time. After that, having fun, providing personal development, expanding the social environment,

and gaining new experiences are ranked, respectively. The least important thing for students is to increase productivity and creativity.

**Table 2.** Distribution of the leisure time of students and leisure time spending methods

Distribution of the leisure time of students and leisure time spending methods		Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Leisure time per day	Less than 1 hour	57	9,79
	1-2 hours	147	25,26
	2-3 hours	219	37,63
	4 hours and above	159	27,32
Leisure time spending method	Watching CD, DVD	243	41,75
	Travel and art activities	126	21,65
	News, written and visual media following	243	41,75
	Crafts	21	3,61
	Internet	375	64,43
	Reading	162	27,84
	Phone applications	240	41,24
	Writing	63	10,82
	Doing sports	243	41,75
	Meeting with friends	276	47,42
Way of socializing	Other	84	14,43
	Alone	63	10,82
	With family	78	13,40
	With close friends	189	32,47
The most intense emotion after performing leisure activities	With group of friends	252	43,30
	Increase of self-confidence	84	14,43
	Self-loving	45	7,73
	Feeling of fatigue	69	11,86
	Craving for the next activity	54	9,28
	Relaxing and feeling of satisfaction	102	17,53
	Feeling healthy	51	8,76
	Being motivated and happy	168	28,87
Feeling that he/she has lost time	9	1,55	

Table 2 shows the distribution of the study subject students' leisure time and leisure time spending methods. According to this table examined, the students' daily leisure time in the study was less than 1 hour in 9.79%, 1-2 hours in 25.26%, 2-3 hours in 37.63% and 4 hours and above in 27.32%. The leisure time spending methods of the participants are as follows: watching CD in 41.75%, DVD, travel and other activities in 21.65%, news, written and visual media following in 41.75%, internet in 64.43%, reading in 27.84%, phone applications in 41.24%, writing in 10.82%, doing sports in 41.75% and meeting with friends in 47.42%.

The way of realizing the students' socialization process in the research is alone in 10.82%, with family in 13.40%, with close friends in 32.47%, and with a group of friends in 43.30%. The most intense emotion after performing leisure activities is the increase in self-confidence in 14.43% of the students, self-loving in 7.73%, fatigue in 11.86%, craving for the next activity in 9.28%, feeling relaxed and satisfied in 17.53%, feeling healthy in 8.76% and being motivated and happy in 28.87%.

**Table 3.** Places where students spend time in daily life outside of education, according to the order of importance

Places	$\bar{x}$	S
Home	1,45	0,88
Cafe /restaurant	3,52	1,93
Sports facilities	3,86	2,81
Travel in city	3,95	2,42
Shopping	4,59	2,08
Library	4,76	3,16
Cafeteria / canteen	4,82	2,67
Spending time in nature	4,85	2,25
City parks	6,05	3,15
Travel outside city	6,09	2,88
Cultural trips	6,36	3,08

The order of the places where the students spend time in daily life outside education is given in Table 3. According to Table 3, it was seen that the most important place where the participants spend time in the daily life outside education is at home, followed by cafes/restaurants, sports facilities, traveling in the city, shopping, and library, spending time in nature, city parks and traveling outside the city. It was determined that the least important places for the participants are cultural trips.

**Table 4.** Distribution of the frequency of TV, social media, e-mail, internet page, search engine and radio use of students

Distribution	Number (n)	Percentage (%)	
Frequency of TV use	None	111	19,07
	Every day	366	62,89
	Every week	75	12,89
	Few times in a month	30	5,15
Frequency of social media use	None	39	6,70
	Every day	492	84,54
	Every week	39	6,70
	Few times in a month	12	2,06
Frequency of electronic mail use	None	141	24,23
	Every day	384	65,98
	Every week	48	8,25
	Few times in a month	9	1,55
Frequency of web page use	None	51	8,76
	Every day	498	85,57
	Every week	30	5,15
	Few times in a month	3	0,52
Frequency of search engine use	None	78	13,40
	Every day	465	79,90
	Every week	33	5,67
	Few times in a month	6	1,03

Frequency of radio use	None	294	50,52
	Every day	138	23,71
	Every week	48	8,25
	Several times in a month	102	17,53

Table 4 shows the distribution of students' frequency of using TV, social media, e-mail, web page, search engine, and radio included in the study. According to the findings examined, the frequency of TV use of the students in the study was none in 19,07%, every day in 62,89%, every week in 12,89%; frequency of using social media is every day in 84,54%, none in 6,70%, frequency of using e-mail none in 24,23% and every day in 65,98%. According to the frequency of using the website, the distribution of students is none in 8,76% and every day in 85,57%, while the frequency of using search engines is none in 13,40% and every day in 79,90%. The frequency of radio use is none in 50,52% of students, every day in 23,71% and several times a month in 17,53%.

**Table 5.** Distribution of students' finding leisure time opportunities sufficient and their view on obstacles

Distribution		Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Finding sufficient leisure time opportunities in the environment	Sufficient	126	21,65
	Not sufficient	456	78,35
Thinking that gender is an obstacle to leisure activities	Yes	33	5,67
	No	549	94,33
If you have a health problem, thinking that it affects your leisure time activities	No health problem	525	90,21
	It affects	39	6,70
	It does not affect	18	3,09
Presence of a situation where the family and social structure prevent you from spending your leisure time activities as you wish	Yes	87	14,95
	No	495	85,05
Issues that are reacted by the family when spending leisure time	My family does not interfere with me on this issue	453	77,84
	If I do not do anything	36	6,19
	If I am into politics	15	2,58
	If I do sports	12	2,06
	If I spend time with my friends	6	1,03
	If I am into my smartphone	60	10,31

Table 5 shows the students' distribution in the research finding sufficient leisure time opportunities, and their views on the obstacles. According to the table's data, 21.65% of the participants find the leisure time opportunities in the environment sufficient, while 78.35% do not find it sufficient. The percentage of students who think that gender is an obstacle to leisure activities is 5.67%, and the percentage of students who think that it is not is 94.33%.

To the question of thinking that if there is a health problem, it affects leisure time activities, 90,21% of the students answered that they do not have a health problem, those who said it affects is

6,70%, and those who said it does not affect is 3,09%. Whether the family and the social structure prevent them from spending their leisure time activities as they wish, 14.95% of the participants answered yes, 85.05% of them said no.

On the question of reactions from the family while spending leisure time, 77,84% of the students said, "My family does not interfere with me on this issue," 6,19% has answered as "if I do nothing," and 10,31% answered as "if I am into my smartphone."

**Table 6.** Students' expectations from TRNC governments and local governments in order to make the most of their leisure times in the order of importance

Students' expectations	$\bar{x}$	s
Opening more leisure areas	3,22	1,80
Increasing sports facilities and clubs	3,24	2,02
Providing leisure time training to people	3,60	2,20
Dissemination of cultural and artistic activity programs	4,02	1,82
Increase in tourism and guidance services	4,20	1,99
Organizing incentive campaigns to make good use of leisure time	4,46	1,95
Providing opportunities for cultural trips	5,47	1,74
Other	7,38	1,43

Table 6 shows the students' expectations in the research from the TRNC governments and local administrations to make the most of their leisure time in order of importance. According to the data in Table 6, the most important thing about the students' expectations from the TRNC governments and local administrations to make the best use of their leisure time is the opening of more leisure time areas. According to the order of importance, this is followed by the increase of sports facilities and clubs, providing leisure time training to people, disseminating cultural and artistic activity programs, increasing tourism and guidance services, and organizing incentive campaigns to make good use of leisure time. The least important thing for students about their expectations from the TRNC governments and local administrations is providing opportunities for cultural trips.

Overall, the study's main aim was to determine the tendencies of university students in spending their leisure time. The research was conducted with the participation of 582 university students. Research participants consist of 339 males and 243 females. Based on the findings obtained in the study, students defined leisure time as primarily resting. In terms of importance, this definition was followed by entertainment, providing personal development, expanding the social environment, and gaining new experiences, respectively. It was concluded that students attach little importance to productivity and creativity. In parallel with the research result, Pauperio et al. (2012) stated in their study that individuals who do active sports or have a sports background spend their leisure time mostly resting. The research findings concluded that the majority of the participants had 2-3 hours and more than 4 hours of leisure time during the day. The prominent thing in the students' leisure time spending methods participating in the research is internet use. The forms of leisure time spending following this were expressed as watching CD, DVD, news, written and visual media, phone applications, and sports. Güven (2019), in his research, states that the definition of the concept of leisure time has changed, and the use of the internet and active social media is a factor in this.

## 5. Conclusion

It was concluded that the most intense emotion after performing leisure activities in students was motivated, happy, relaxed, and satisfied. It was observed that the essential place where the participants spend their time in the daily life outside education is home, followed by cafes/restaurants, sports facilities, traveling in the city, shopping, library, cafeteria/canteen, spending time in nature, city parks and traveling outside the city. It was determined that the least important places for the participants are cultural trips. Baudrillard (2012) argues that leisure time cannot be made meaningful by creative activities. This view supports the research participants' preferences to spend their leisure time resting,

spending time with friends, and the internet rather than being creative and productive in their leisure time. According to the findings, most of the students participating in the study regularly watch TV and use social media, e-mail, web pages, and search engines every day. It was concluded that the frequency of radio use by students was low. According to another finding of the study, it is seen that the students do not have any health problems that will affect their leisure time, and the social structure of their families does not affect their leisure time activities. In addition, at the leisure time spending point, the majority of the participants stated that their families did not get involved.

It was concluded that the most important thing about the students participating in the study from the governments of TRNC and local administrations to make the most of their free time is the opening of more leisure time areas. The participants' expectations include:

- The increase of sports facilities and clubs.
- The provision of leisure time training.
- The spread of culture and arts activity programs.
- The rise in tourism and guidance services.
- The organization of incentive campaigns to make good use of leisure time.

The least important thing for students about their expectations from the government of TRNC and local administrations is providing opportunities for cultural trips. As a result, it is seen that the research participant students spend their leisure time mostly with passive activities. In line with the participants' opinions, it was concluded that the leisure time opportunities offered by the government and local administrations of TRNC for students are still not sufficient.

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