



LEISURE SATISFACTION IN RECREATIONAL PHYSICAL FITNESS PARTICIPANTS

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Abstract:

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the leisure satisfaction, in physical fitness participants. One hundred male physical fitness participants and 123 male control subjects aged 18–35 years and who usually exercised at least 3 times per week voluntarily participated in this study. The control subjects consisted of footballers, basketball players, volleyball players, etc. Professional players were excluded from both groups. Leisure satisfaction was determined using the Leisure Satisfaction Scale (LSS) developed by Beard & Raghed (1980), which was adapted into Turkish by Gökçe as a short form scale (2011). This scale contains 24 items in six subscales: a) psychological, b) educational, c) social, d) relaxation, e) physiological, and f) aesthetic satisfaction. The scale is a 5-point Likert-type scale. The Cronbach's alpha value for the whole LSS was .90. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was performed to test for normality. As the data were not normally distributed, the Mann-Whitney U-test was used to determine differences between the groups. The chi-square test was used to compare sports experience between the groups. Statistical analysis revealed that the physiological subscale score was higher in the physical fitness participants than in control participants (16 versus 15, $p < 0.005$). None of the other LSS subscales significantly differed. There were significant differences in age ($p < 0.001$), educational level ($p < 0.001$), and monthly income ($p < 0.001$) between the groups. Both this study and the assessment guide of the LSS indicated that physical fitness participants evaluated themselves as fitter, healthier, and of a more normal weight than the control group. This might be due

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to differences in age, monthly income, and educational level between the groups. We suggest that similar studies be carried out using larger samples to obtain clearer results.

Key words: leisure satisfaction, physical fitness, recreational athletes

1. Introduction

Recent research has shown that leisure participation is positively linked to psychological well-being as well as physical health (Caldwell, 2005). When considered from this point of view, participation in leisure activities can be seen as a human right and requirement human (<http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/> Retrieved: April 24, 2017).

Perhaps the most important aspect of participating in leisure activities is leisure satisfaction level. Leisure satisfaction can be defined as “*positive perceptions of feelings formed or gained by an individual engaging in leisure activities and choices*” (Beard & Ragheb, 1980). Leisure satisfaction can be effected by age, gender, monthly income, home environment, and school/academic environment (Muzindutsi & Masango, 2015; Shin & You, 2013)

Leisure activity can be defined as participating in voluntary non-work activities for enjoyment (Hills & Argyle, 1998). According to Kleiber et al. (1986), leisure activities can be categorized as relaxed leisure activities (e.g., watching TV) or serious leisure activities (e.g., sports activity). Another classification system for leisure was devised by Passmore and French (2001), which posits three categories: active (e.g., sports activity), social (e.g., meeting friends), and time-out leisure (e.g., watching TV). Shin and You (2013) categorized leisure activities as active (e.g., sports activities) and passive (e.g., meet friends, watching TV, reading, listening to music). It is generally accepted that active leisure activities are more effective than are passive activities in promoting well-being, happiness, self-confidence, self-esteem, and health (Shin & You, 2013; Holder et al., 2009; Caldwell, 2005; Csikszentmihalyi & Hunter, 2003).

Furthermore, the American College of Sports Medicine has proposed that regular physical activity and exercise are associated with numerous physical and mental health benefits in men and women (Garber et al., 2011). Accordingly, we concluded that both active and passive leisure time activities should be performed. There are numerous active leisure activities to choose from, such as power walking, jogging, swimming, cycling, soccer, basketball, and volleyball.

One such activity is physical fitness. Physical fitness refers to a set of attributes that are either health- or skill-related (Caspersen et al., 1985). The health-related components of physical fitness include cardiorespiratory endurance, muscular endurance, muscular strength, body composition, and flexibility (Caspersen et al., 1985). However, many people nowadays view physical fitness as similar to body building. In this study, we defined physical fitness as recreationally participating in strength workouts to obtain a good physical appearance, increase muscular size, and achieve a lean body.

Participation in physical fitness increased by about 2 percentage points in 2016 when compared with previous years (Kohl III & Cook, 2013). People participate in physical fitness based on both intrinsic (e.g., reduced depression and anxiety levels, along with enhanced mood, confidence, and self-esteem) and extrinsic motivators (e.g., weight loss, improved physical appearance) (Geithner, 2011).

In a literature search, we failed to find any study that has examined leisure satisfaction among physical fitness participants. Therefore, this study aimed to determine whether physical fitness participants have higher subscale scores on the Leisure Satisfaction Scale (LSS) in comparison with participants of other sports activities, such as soccer, basketball, or volleyball (who represented the control group).

2. Method

2.1 Participations

One hundred male physical fitness participants and 123 male control subjects aged 18–35 years voluntarily participated in this study. The control subjects consisted of footballers (n=38), basketball players (n=40), volleyball players (n=16), and players of other sports (n=29). The inclusion criterion was usually exercising at least three times per week and being 18 years or older. Professional players were excluded from both groups.

2.2 Measuring leisure satisfaction level

Leisure satisfaction level was determined using the LSS. This scale was developed by Beard & Raghed (1980), and adapted into Turkish by Gökçe (2011) as a short form scale. The LSS contains six subscales— a) psychological, b) educational, c) social, d) relaxation, e) physiological, and f) aesthetic satisfaction—and 24 items. The items are rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale. The Cronbach's alpha value for the whole LSS was .90 in this study, while those for the subscales ranged from .71 to .93.

2.3 Meaning of the LSS Subscales.

According to Karlı et al. (2008), the LSS subscales measure the following: a) the psychological subscale evaluates individuals' feeling of freedom, entertainment, and intellectual development; b) the educational sub-dimension evaluates the benefits of leisure time activities for individuals' personal development and knowledge of themselves and their environment; c) the social subscale evaluates the effects of participation in leisure activity on building relationships with others and the perceptions of these relationships; d) the relaxation subscale evaluates the effects of participation in leisure activity on coping with stress and getting away from life difficulties, (e) the physiological subscale evaluates various physiological benefits of leisure activities, such as keeping fit, being healthy, weight control, and having good well-being; and f) the aesthetic subscale evaluates the places visited or used by people to participate in leisure activities in terms of their design, beauty, interestingness, or niceness.

2.4 Statistical Analysis

Data were analyzed by using IBM SPSS Statistics 20 for Windows (IBM Corp., 2011, Armonk, NY). The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was performed to test for normality. For the variables that were not normally distributed, we used the Mann-Whitney U-test to determine statistical differences among the variables. Descriptive statistics are presented as medians (25–75 percentiles). Chi-square tests were used to compare sports experience between the groups, and qualitative variables were presented as frequency (%). The statistical significance level was set at $p < 0.05$.

3. Results

The demographic characteristics and statistical differences in these characteristics between the groups are presented in table 1. Monthly incomes of the groups are presented table 2. The total score of the LSS and statistical differences between groups in terms of LSS subscale scores are presented in table 3.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the groups

Variables	Groups				p
	Fitness group (n=100)		Control group (n=123)		
	n	%	n	%	
Age (y)					
18–24	45	45.0	108	87.8	<0.001
25–29	37	37.0	15.0	12.2	
30–35	18	18.0	0.0	0.0	
Education level	n	%	n	%	p
Primary school	4	4.0	0.0	0.0	<0.001
High school	48	48.0	94.0	76.4	
University	42	42.0	29.0	23.6	
Postgraduate	6	6.0	0.0	0.0	
Experience in sports (y)	n	%	n	%	p
1	26	26.0	2.0	1.6	<0.001
1–3	40	40.0	10.0	8.1	
3–6	18	18.0	28.0	22.8	
6+	16	16.0	83.0	67.5	

As shown in Table 1, there were significant differences between the groups in terms of age, educational level, and experience in sports ($p < 0.001$). Specifically, in the fitness groups, many more athletes were aged 25–29 and 30–35 when compared to the control groups. Thus, the control group tended to be younger than the fitness group. In terms of education level, the fitness group contained many more participants who had graduated university or a postgraduate degree than did the control group. The control group tended to have more participants with a high school education. Finally, for experience in sports, the fitness group had more novice athletes. In other words, the control group tended to be more experienced in sports than did the fitness group.

Table 2: Monthly incomes of the groups

Monthly income in Turkish Lira (TRY)	Fitness group (n=100)		Control group (n=123)	
	n	%	n	%
200–600	10	10.0	23	18.7
601–800	16	16.0	45	36.6
801–1200	21	21.0	35	28.5
1201–1600	16	16.0	14	11.4
1601–2500	14	14.0	6	4.9
2501–4000	16	16.0	0	0.0
4001–5000	3	3.0	0	0.0
5001+	4	4.0	0	0.0

As shown in Table 2, due to the absence of any statistical analysis owing to several income categories, we concluded that the fitness group tended to have a higher monthly income level (i.e., more participants in the 1601–2500, 2501–4000, 4001–5000, and 5001+ TRY groups).

Table 3: Differences in leisure satisfaction level by groups

Subscale	Fitness group (n=100)	Control group (n=123)	p
Psychological	16 (14–18)	15 (13–18)	0.25
Education	16 (14–18.8)	16 (14–18)	0.74
Social	16 (13.3–18)	16 (14–18)	0.41
Relaxation	16 (15–20)	17 (14–19)	0.41
Physiological	16 (14–19)	15 (12–17)	0.002*
Aesthetic	16 (14–18)	16 (12–19)	0.25
Total Score	95 (88–102.8)	95 (82–106)	0.42

* p<0.05

As shown in Table 3, there was a significant difference between the groups in terms of the physiological subscale score, which was higher in the fitness group than in the control group (16 versus 15 points, p<0.005). There were no significant group differences in the other subscales of the LSS.

4. Discussion

Physical fitness is one of the most popular types of leisure sports activities worldwide. People participate in physical fitness to achieve a good physical appearance, muscle size, and body definition, similar to bodybuilding (Ploeg et al., 2001). Despite this popularity of physical fitness, we found no studies examining the relationship between physical fitness and leisure satisfaction. Thus, the present study seems to be novel in its examination of this relationship. The main findings of this study are as follows. First, physical fitness may have an advantage in terms of the physiological subscale of leisure satisfaction compared to other sports activities (e.g., soccer, basketball, volleyball). This suggests that physical fitness participants evaluated themselves as fit, healthy, and of a normal weight. Second, the demographic features, including monthly income, age, and educational status, appears to relate to the leisure satisfaction level of participants.

According to the literature, leisure satisfaction level is related to gender and marital status, along with monthly income, age, and education level (Muzindutsi, 2015; Gümüş & Karakullukçu, 2015; Shin & You, 2013; Lapa, 2013; Wold et al., 2013). Kuo (2011) reported that badminton players who are married and have a high monthly income had better quality of life and leisure satisfaction than did the players who were single and had a low monthly income.

There are contradictory results concerning the effects of active and passive leisure activity participation. Some authors argue that participation in passive leisure activities is negatively correlated with wellbeing, whereas active leisure activities are positively correlated with wellbeing (Csikszentmihalyi & Hunter, 2003; Holder et al. 2009). However, Krohn and Backman (2007) reported no differences in leisure satisfaction level between golf spectators and recreational golf players. Furthermore, Wei et al. (2015) reported that, in China, passive leisure activities such as watching TV and surfing the Internet had a significant positive relationship with happiness, whereas active leisure activities such as exercising and shopping were not significantly associated with happiness. However, Wang et al. (2008) found that online video games were negatively correlated with life satisfaction, interpersonal relationships, grade point average, and general health in adolescents.

Gümüş and Karakullukçu (2013) reported that, in Turkey, the most preferred sports activities are soccer and basketball. Furthermore, basketball spectators had a higher leisure satisfaction level than did soccer spectators, depending on their level of education.

Wold et al. (2013) suggested that active participation in youth soccer can potentially benefit young people, particularly girls', psychosocial health and physical activity level. At the same time, Ayyıldız (2016) reported that participation in recreational dance activities was associated with higher relaxation subscale scores and lower physiological subscale scores of the LSS. Additionally, Ayyıldız (2016) found that higher education level and monthly income were associated with higher leisure satisfaction, as found in this study.

A study revealed that leisure satisfaction level was higher among competitive players than among recreational players before a game, and this difference was more pronounced after winning and especially after losing (Iso-Ohala et al., 1982).

Based on the above studies, we suggest that participation in both passive and active leisure activities may have positive effects on leisure satisfaction, life satisfaction, and coping with general stress. However, researchers have found particularly strong support for participation in active leisure activities (Shin & You, 2013; Wold et al., 2013; Holder et al., 2009; Iso-Ohala et al., 1982).

5. Conclusion

Although the results of the present study showed that participation in physical fitness is associated positively with leisure satisfaction (specifically the physiological subscale), we cannot say with certainty that physical fitness is superior to other exercises for

increasing leisure satisfaction. Further studies are needed, especially those with larger samples, to be able to explain whether physical fitness has advantages over other exercises (e.g., soccer, basketball, volleyball) in terms of leisure satisfaction.

Conflicts of Interest

We declared conflict of interest.

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