

The Effects of Perceived Freedom in Leisure on Leisure Benefits: Students of The Faculty of Sports Science

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the differences between the levels of perceived freedom in leisure and the leisure benefits in terms of specific socio-demographic characteristics of the students studying in the faculty of sports sciences, the predictive power of the levels of the perceived freedom in leisure on their leisure benefit levels. A total of 318 participants, including 199 male and 119 female, studying in different sports sciences faculties selected by the convenience sampling method, constitute the sample. In addition to the Personal Information Form, the "Perceived Freedom in Leisure Scale-25" developed by Witt and Ellis (34) and adapted to Turkish by Lapa and Kaas (22) and the "Leisure Benefit Scale" developed by Ho (15) and adapted to Turkish by Akgül et al. (2) were used as data collecting tools in the study. Descriptive statistics, independent t-test, ANOVA, MANOVA, and regression analysis were adopted in the analysis of the data. The independent t-test results showed no significant difference between the levels of individuals' perceived leisure levels by their gender. The ANOVA results showed no difference between the participants' satisfaction status and the levels of perceived freedom in leisure per week. The MANOVA results showed that the effect of individuals' gender, welfare status, and weekly leisure on their leisure benefit levels was not significant and that there were no statistical differences between the sub-dimensions. To the results of regression analysis, the perceived freedom in leisure is an important predictor of leisure benefit. Consequently, the research revealed that the levels of perceived freedom in leisure and leisure benefit do not differ based on socio-demographic characteristics and that the perceived freedom in leisure is an essential factor in participants' benefits.

Keywords: Sports Science Faculty Students, Perceived Freedom in Leisure, Leisure Benefit

INTRODUCTION

Neulinger defines the concept of perceived freedom (35), which emerged as an essential dimension to understand individuals' leisure behavior, as specified by Ellis and Witt (9) and Neulinger (25) as a primary criterion of leisure and as a situation in which people do what they do willingly or by choice (31,22). In other words, perceived freedom is in the form of a cognitive, motivational structure that includes people's perceptions of leisure activities they participate in (1). Poulsen et al. (27) stated that individuals' experiences in leisure, whether successful or unsuccessful, may affect their level of freedom when they participate in a particular activity (17). Öztürk et al. (26) reported that perceived freedom is an

important variable affecting leisure participation. The individuals who experience perceived freedom in leisure feel more competent and perceive that they can control their leisure before, during, and after participation in activities (19). Therefore, he suggested that individuals should have some qualifications such as having the necessary competence, controlling their experience, and participating in activities with intrinsic rather than extrinsic expectations to get the maximum benefit from leisure activities (23,5). In leisure when people have the opportunity to express themselves as "free" and "voluntary" (18,4) it is necessary to determine what the objectives and expectations of participation in activities are (12). In parallel with this argument, Eskiler et al. (10) expressed that people participate in leisure activities to feel good or happy and to meet

their psychological needs. Especially from leisure activities in which individuals participate independently of work or daily living activities (33), they achieved different levels of benefits and satisfaction (36). In this sense, leisure benefits are defined as the perceptions of individuals participating in various activities during leisure to improve personal conditions and meet individual needs (16). In literature, studies prove that individuals doing leisure activities benefit in various aspects. They include weight control, stress prevention, meeting new people (11), strong family bonds (14), improved physical fitness, mental relaxation and satisfaction (24), reduced health problems such as high blood pressure and heart disease, and self-recognition and self-realization (32,28). Thus, this research aims to determine the differences between the levels of perceived freedom in leisure and the levels of leisure benefit by the socio-demographic characteristics of the students studying in sports sciences faculties and the predictive power of the levels of the perceived freedom in leisure on their leisure benefit levels.

Materials and Method

Research Model

Following the aim of the study, the research adopted a relational screening model. In this model, questions such as the degree of change between variables or the level of the situation examined are clarified with relational screening design (13).

Study Group

The study group consists of 318 participants, including 199 male (Mean_{age}=20.95±2.22) and 119 female (Mean_{age}= 20.29±2.16), who studied at the faculties of sports sciences of different universities in Turkey, were selected by convenience sampling method. Among the participants, 67.6% of those surveyed had a "normal" welfare state, while 34.3% had a weekly leisure time of "16 hours and more".

Data Collection Tools

Personal Information Form: The "Personal Information Form" prepared by the researcher

consists of questions such as gender, age, department, grade, welfare status, and weekly leisure to gather information about the individuals involved in the study.

The Perceived Freedom in Leisure Scale -25: The "Perceived Freedom in Leisure Scale-25" developed by Witt and Ellis (34), firstly adapted to Turkish by Lapa and Ağyar (21), and then tested by Lapa and Kaas (22) regarding the construct validity was used to determine individuals' perceived competence, perceived control, and perceived intrinsic motivation in leisure. The scale possesses 25 items and one sub-dimension, and the reliability coefficient has been determined as 0.93. The items on the scale are scored from (1) 'Strongly Disagree' to (5) 'Strongly Agree.'

The Leisure Benefit Scale: The "Leisure Benefit Scale" developed by Ho (15) and adapted to Turkish by Akgül et al. (2), was used to describe the leisure benefit of individuals. The scale consists of three sub-dimensions and 24 items, including "Physical Benefit" (7 Items), "Psychological Benefit" (8 Items), and "Social Benefit" (9 Items). While the reliability coefficient of the scale was measured as 0.83, the internal consistency coefficients for the sub-dimensions were 0.81 for the physical benefit sub-dimension, which was 0.80 for the psychological, and 0.86 for the social benefit sub-dimension. The items on the scale are scored from (1) 'Strongly Agree' to (5) 'Strongly Agree.'

Data Analysis

SPSS 20.0 software was used to analyze the research data. The percentage and frequency method was used to determine the distribution of participants' personal information. Skewness and kurtosis values were examined to decide whether the data shows the normal distribution, and it was found that the data are of the normal distribution. The independent t-test, ANOVA, MANOVA, and regression analysis were used to analyze the research data. Lastly, Cronbach Alpha coefficients were calculated to determine the reliability of the scales.

FINDINGS

Table 1. Distribution of scale scores

	Sub-dimensions	Item Number	n	Mean	Sd.	Skewness	Kurtosis	α
PFLS	Perceived Freedom in Leisure	25	318	3.77	0.59	-0.36	-0.30	0.94
	Physical Benefit	7	318	3.97	0.67	-0.56	0.49	0.90
LBS	Psychological Benefit	8	318	3.90	0.65	-0.50	0.35	0.88
	Social Benefit	9	318	3.88	0.71	-0.61	-0.53	0.89

In Table 1, the mean score of PFLS was determined as (3.77). The highest mean of the LBS level in the sub-dimensions was found to be in the sub-dimension of “physical benefit” (3.97), while the lowest mean was in the sub-dimension of “social

benefit” (3.88). For PFLS, the reliability coefficient was measured as 0.94, while for LBS, the internal consistency coefficients ranged between 0.88 and 0.90.

Table 2. Analysis Results of PFLS-LBS Scores by Gender of Participants

	Male (n=199)		Female (n=119)	
	Mean	Sd.	Mean	Sd.
Perceived Freedom in Leisure	3.74	0.59	3.81	0.60
LBS				
Physical Benefit	3.96	0.69	3.99	0.65
Psychological Benefit	3.88	0.66	3.92	0.63
Social Benefit	3.90	0.72	3.87	0.69

Table 2 presents the analysis results by the gender of the participants in the research. According to the analysis results, PFLS scores of individuals do not differ significantly by their gender ($t=-0.980$; $p>0.05$). Besides, the MANOVA analysis results

showed that the main effect of the gender of the participants on the sub-dimensions of the LBS was not significant, and there was no statistically significant difference among the sub-dimensions [$\lambda=0.995$, $F_{(3,314)}=0.534$; $p>0.05$].

Table 3. Analysis Results of PFLS-LBS Scores by Welfare Status of Participants

	Low (n=47)		Normal (n=215)		High (n=56)	
	Mean	Sd.	Mean	Sd.	Mean	Sd.
Perceived Freedom in Leisure	3.73	0.73	3.74	0.58	3.92	0.49
LBS						
Physical Benefit	4.08	0.83	3.95	0.65	4.00	0.62
Psychological Benefit	4.03	0.76	3.86	0.61	3.91	0.69
Social Benefit	3.94	0.82	3.85	0.70	3.98	0.64

Table 3 shows the analysis results related to the welfare status of the participants in the research. According to the analysis results, there was no meaningful difference between individuals' PFLS scores by their welfare status ($F=2.281$; $p>0.05$).

Besides, the MANOVA analysis results showed that the main effect of the participants' welfare status on the sub-dimensions of LBS was not significant, and there was no statistically significant difference among the sub-dimensions [$\lambda=0.984$, $F_{(6,626)}=0.818$; $p>0.05$].

Table 4. Analysis Results of PFLS-LBS Scores by Weekly Leisure Periods of Participants

	1-5 hours (n=59)		6-10 hours (n=94)		11-15 hours (n=56)		16 hours+ (n=109)	
	Mean	Sd.	Mean	Sd.	Mean	Sd.	Mean	Sd.
Perceived Freedom in Leisure	3.74	0.65	3.72	0.56	3.80	0.62	3.81	0.58
LBS								
Physical Benefit	3.84	0.71	3.98	0.64	4.04	0.67	4.01	0.69
Psychological Benefit	3.80	0.72	3.84	0.64	3.93	0.64	3.98	0.62
Social Benefit	3.76	0.79	3.86	0.67	3.91	0.72	3.96	0.69

In Table 4, the results of the analysis are given according to the participants' weekly leisure periods in the study. The analysis results indicate that PFLS scores of individuals did not differ significantly by

the weekly leisure periods ($F=0.518$; $p>0.05$). Additionally, in the results of MANOVA analysis, it was determined that the main effect of the weekly leisure periods of the participants on the sub-

dimensions of LBS was not significant and there was no statistically significant difference among the sub-

dimensions [$\lambda = 0.976$, $F_{(9,759)} = 0.830$; $p > 0.05$].

	B	Standard Error	β	P
Constant	1.650	.175	-	.000
Physical Benefit	-.080	.063	-.091	.204
Psychological Benefit	.407	.074	.443	.000*
Social Benefit	.220	.060	.262	.000*

Table 5 shows the results of regression analysis of individuals' perceived leisure freedom levels and their leisure benefit levels. According to the results of the analysis, it was determined that the individuals' perceived leisure freedom levels were a significant predictor of the psychological and social sub-dimensions of leisure benefit levels ($R = 0.597$; $R^2 = 0.356$; $F_{(3,314)} = 57.895$, $p < 0.05$). It was observed that there was a positive and moderate correlation ($R = 0.597$) between the participants' perceived leisure freedom levels and their leisure benefit levels, and the perceived leisure freedom levels explain 35% of the total variance on their leisure benefit levels.

Discussion

In this study, firstly, the differences between the perceived leisure freedom levels and the leisure benefit levels based on the socio-demographic characteristics of the students studying in sports sciences faculties, and secondly, the predictive power of the levels of the perceived freedom in leisure on their leisure benefit levels were analyzed.

Although female's perceived leisure freedom levels were higher than male's, no significant difference was found. To Lapa and Ağyar (23), there was no significant difference in perceived leisure freedom levels among university students by their gender. While this study shows parallelism in terms of the study results by Demirel et al., (5), Serdar and Ay (29), and Demirel et al., (6), the research findings do not overlap with the results of studies by Yüksel et al., (37), Kara (19), and Lapa (20). When the levels of leisure benefits were examined according to the gender variable, the main effect on the sub-dimensions was insignificant, and there was no difference among the sub-dimensions, which can refer to the level of benefit that males and females receive through their perceived freedom in leisure, is generally similar. Ho's (15) study on the leisure attitudes and benefits of high school students in Taiwan found that the main effect on leisure benefit levels in terms of the gender of students was insignificant, and there were no differences in the sub-dimensions. Similarly, the research is in line with Doğan (7) in literature, while the results of the research conducted by Chen et al. (3) did not coincide with the results of this study.

It was found out that the main effect of leisure benefit levels of individuals relative to their welfare status was not significant, and there were no differences among the sub-dimensions. The finding can imply that individuals' welfare status is not a significant variable over their leisure benefits. The study by Ho (15) found that the main effect of students' weekly income on leisure benefit levels was not significant, and there was no difference in the sub-dimensions. This result is in parallel with the finding of the study. To the literature, there was a difference between the benefit levels of individuals obtained from leisure by their welfare status in the studies conducted by Doğan (7) and Durhan and Karaküçük (8).

Although the levels of perceived freedom in leisure with functional welfare status were higher than those of other individuals, no significant difference was found. Serdar et al.'s (30) investigation on the relationship between leisure boredom and perceived freedom indicated no difference between individuals' perceived freedom in leisure and welfare status. However, Lapa (20) found that individuals with high-income levels had higher perceived freedom in leisure.

Although the levels of perceived freedom in leisure with a leisure period of 16 hours or more per week were high, no significant difference was found. Our study results show parallelism with the results of the study conducted by Serdar et al. (30). The result can refer that the levels of perceived freedom in leisure based on their leisure period is similar to another. Besides, it was determined that

the main effect on the leisure benefit levels according to weekly leisure periods was not significant, and there was no difference in sub-dimension. However, in light of the study findings, it can be suggested that as individuals' weekly leisure periods increase, the leisure benefit levels improve. Based on the literature, the study results do not coincide with the results of the research by Doğan (7).

The regression analysis results showed that the levels of perceived freedom in leisure were a significant predictor of the psychological and social sub-dimensions of leisure benefit levels. There was a moderate and positive relationship between the levels of perceived freedom in leisure and their leisure benefit levels.

Conclusion

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