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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

## THE IMPACT OF PERSONALITY TRAITS ON LEISURE AND LIFE SATISFACTION IN WOMEN WHO PARTICIPATE IN EXERCISE

### *Abstract*

The purpose of the study is to investigate the impact of personality traits on leisure and life satisfaction in women who participate in exercise. This study was conducted in the relational screening model. The participants of the study consisted of 288 ( $M=35.35$ ;  $SD=11.83$ ) women from Antalya with the ages ranging between 17 and 70. The data of the study were obtained through using the following scales: The Eysenck Personality Questionnaire Revised/Abbreviated Form, Leisure Satisfaction Scale and Life Satisfaction Scale. In statistical analyses; Pearson Correlation analysis and Linear Regression analysis were used. Analysis indicated that neuroticism and extraversion were significantly correlated with leisure and life satisfaction. Other analyses of this study that there is a statistically significant positive linear relationship among extraversion, life and leisure satisfaction and there is a significant negative linear relationship among neuroticism, life and leisure satisfaction. Regression analysis shows that total “neuroticism” score is one of the predictors of affection in women’s and life satisfaction; “extraversion” score is other of the predictors of affection in women’s leisure and life satisfaction. According to these results, “neuroticism” explained only 2% of the variance in leisure satisfaction and 15% of the variance in life satisfaction; “extraversion” explained 4% of the variance in leisure and life satisfaction.

**Keywords:** Personality, leisure satisfaction, life satisfaction

## INTRODUCTION

Throughout centuries, philosophers, theologians, and scholars have questioned and elaborated whether the behaviors of individuals can be shaped by their personalities; whether there can be any similarities or differences between people and whether human behaviors are hereditary or environmentally shaped or not. Until quite recently, researchers deemed the answers they had provided as insufficient. Nonetheless, Freud, with its scientific works, was the one who developed the preliminary theory of modern personality and spearheaded a number of following theoreticians. Feist and Feist (2009) defined that personality can still be as a comparatively permanent and unique characteristics attributed by the behavior and integrity of any individual, although there is not one single definition for personality which is widely agreed by all theoreticians. While theories related to personality generally reflect the personalities of theoreticians, they also comprise particular traces of each theoretician's biographical background. The truth is that the explanation behind personality theories among theoreticians is that while some of them base their theories on the quantitative dimension of psychology, a number of theoreticians dwell on the clinical and qualitative aspect of psychology, which explains the emergence of underlying disagreements (Feist and Feist, 2009). If we attempt to place all personality theories into a general classification, they can be listed as; psychodynamic theory (Freud, Adler, Jung, Klein, Horney, Fromm, Sullivan, Erikson), humanistic/existential theory (Maslow, Rogers, May), learning theory (Skinner, Bandura, Rotter and Mischel, Kelly) and dispositional theory (Eysenck, Skinner, Bandura, Rotter and Mischel, Kelly) and the permanency of an individual's inborn traits (cited in Feist and Feist, 2009). Such characteristics are shaped by human and environmental interaction.

As relevant literature is probed, a wide range of personality inventories can be identified. However among them «Eysenck Personality Inventory» is one of the most frequently encountered inventories in leisure literature (Brunes et al., 2013; Hills and Argyle, 1998; 2001; Litwiniuk et al., 2007; Motl et al., 2005; Wang et al., 2014). Eysenck establishes his personality theory on psychology and genetics and claims that differences among personalities are developed via genetic inheritance. He advocates that in addition to biology, social factors also play massive role in the formation of personality (Eysenck and Eysenck, 1975).

Personality traits play great role on the positive perceptions of any individual. Ekşi (2004) affirms that personality traits bear utmost significance in stress management; Barnett

(2013) argues that personality traits act as an important agent in leisure preferences and participation; Brebner et al. (1995) attest that the key determinants of happiness are extraversion and neuroticism personality traits. As an outcome of their personality trait, extrovert individuals are sociable, talkative, tolerant, optimistic, active, relaxed, and easy-going people who always feel the need of socialization. Also they perform better in group activities. According to researches leisure preferences and participation are direct outcomes of extraversion. Diener et al. (1984) and Furnham and Heaven (1999) extrovert individuals are, compared to introverts, more inclined to continue social interaction (cited in Lyu et al., 2013). Neuroticism, since its members bear pessimistic, troubled, depressive and similar negative traits, is in conflict with leisure and life satisfaction. Briefly noting, the less neurotic trait corresponds to the higher leisure and life satisfaction levels. Ruggeri et al. (2003) for instance identified that neuroticism is a trait that has negative effect on the general well-being as well satisfaction with leisure activities and general health status.

Life satisfaction, one of the study's dependent variables combines the existence of positive stimulation and the absence of negative stimulation and brings subjective well-being into existence (cited in Diener et al., 1985). Life satisfaction is a cognitive aspect of well-being and refers to a general evaluation of personal life (Diener, 1984). Life satisfaction enables the individuals to spend a long, high-quality, meaningful, and healthy life. Larsen and Buss suggest that life quality is the outcome of the complex interaction between inner and outer factors. Personality, however, is the inner factor of life satisfaction and it is even more influential than environment (cited in Hosseinkhanzadeh and Taher, 2013).

Leisure satisfaction is another dependent variable of the study and is a sub dimension of satisfaction within life satisfaction and social satisfaction. Beard and Ragheb (1980) claim that leisure satisfaction is the kind of satisfaction or emotion acquired as an outcome of leisure activities and preferences. This equals to the satisfaction level one can receive from all leisure experiences. Researchers such as Riesman, Glazer and Denney argue that participation in leisure activities and satisfaction received from leisure has a supportive and healing effect on the character and personality of individuals (cited in Moghadam, 2011). As naturally expected activities render a positive effect on multi-dimensional development of individuals and additionally they remind the fact that human beings are social existences. People, who are not active athletes, prefer to do physical activities in their leisure. Conducted studies manifested that people who participate in physical activities are extrovert individuals mostly (Brebner et al., 1995; Francis et al., 1998; Hills and Argyle, 2001; Lu and Hu, 2005;

Lu and Kao, 2009). It is widely agreed that regular exercises have positive effect on the physical and psychological well-being. To name a few of the positive effects are increased self-confidence, a positive view of personality, self-acceptance, decreased anxiety, depression and stress (Arslan et al., 2006; Kirkcaldy and Furnham, 1991; McKelvie et al., 2003).

In the aforementioned studies, personality traits, which are extraversion and neuroticism, put forward to effect on leisure and life satisfaction of individuals. However, only a small number of research studies combined personality traits with leisure and life satisfaction. In this study; we aimed to analyze the relationship between extraversion and neuroticism of exercise participants and their level of leisure and life satisfaction.

Research Question 1. Do personality traits exhibit a relationship with leisure satisfaction?

Research Question 2. Do personality traits exhibit a relationship with life satisfaction?

## **METHODS**

### **Research Group**

Research universe consists of 288 women who were volunteers ( $M=35.35$ ;  $SD=11.83$ ) between ages 17-70; exercising in health and fitness centers operating in Antalya and indoor and outdoor areas of municipality and private fitness and sports facilities. In this research for data collection simple random sampling method was utilized.

### **Procedure**

“Personal Information Form”, “Eysenck Personality Questionnaire–Revised Shortened Form (EPQR-A)”, “Life Satisfaction Scale” and “Leisure Satisfaction Scale” were applied between April-June 2014 to the exercising individuals living in city of Antalya. Before filled out the scale, necessary information was given to the participants on the scales and the importance of giving sincere responses was explained. The scale took approximately 5 minutes to complete.

### **Instruments**

Personal Information Form: To detect the age, marital status, exercise history of participants a personal information form has been devised.

Eysenck Personality Questionnaire - Revised Shortened Form: Francis et al. (1992) found Eysenck Personality Questionnaire and Short Form of the same Questionnaire (48 items) as a long scale. Upon revising the existing form, they devised EPQR-A. Turkish validity and reliability of the scale has been checked by Karanci et al. (2007). Questionnaire contains 24 items that analyze the personality with respect to extraversion and neuroticism factors detailed in our study. As the factors employed in our study are examined, it is detected that;

Extraversion represents sociability and impulsivity and the ones who receive high scores in this dimension are defined as communicative, outgoing people who prefer to be with others rather than being alone (examples: “Are you a talkative person? Are you energetic all the time?”) (Başol et al., 2011). Within the scope of this study, internal consistency coefficient of the scale has been measured as .71.

It has been argued that neuroticism dimension indicates emotional consistency or extreme reactance. Another argument is that the person who receives high scores from this dimension may possess anxiety, depression, tension, shyness, over- sentimentality and low self-confidence (example: “Do you ever complain about being nervous? Do you often feel yourself burned out?”) (Başol et al., 2011). Within the scope of this research, internal consistency of scale has been detected as .67.

Leisure Satisfaction Scale: In order to detect leisure satisfaction level of research participants Leisure Satisfaction Scale developed by Beard and Raghed (1980) and shortened in 2002 by Idyll Arbor Inc. has been employed. Gökçe and Orhan (2011) adapted the short version of the scale into Turkish. Item analyses related to the Turkish validity of scale provided findings confirming six sub-dimensions structure of the scale. Additionally for Cronbach’s Alpha first half=.90, for the second half .88, and the correlation between two forms as.77. As for present research, internal consistency coefficient of the overall scale was .93, and internal consistency coefficients of the sub-dimensions of scale were respectively.79, .82, .77, .88, .76 and .84. Shortened version of the scale was 5 Likert Type consisting of 24 items (1=almost not true at all, 2=rarely true, 3=occasionally true, 4=mostly true, 5=almost always true) divided into six sub-dimensions termed as psychological, educational, social, relaxation, physiological and aesthetic.

Life Satisfaction Scale: In the measurement of life satisfaction level of research participants “Life Satisfaction Scale” developed by Diener et al. (1985) has been utilized.

Turkish adaptation of the scale has been performed by Köker (1991) and Yetim (1991). This 5-Likert scale is a self-evaluation form consisting of 5 items ranging as 1 (Not appropriate at all) and 7 (Completely appropriate). Köker (1991) identified that test re-test consistency coefficient of the scale repeated with three-week intervals is .85. Yetim (1991) has detected that corrected split-half value is .75 and Kuder Richardson-20 value is .78. Within the scope of current study internal consistency coefficient of the scale has been measured as .86.

### Data Analysis

In the analysis of obtained data, to detect personal information and leisure activities participation, frequency (n), arithmetical means (M) and standard deviation (SD) descriptive statistical methods were utilized. In the analysis of data, Pearson Moments Correlation and Simple Linear Regression were used.

## RESULTS

Descriptive statistics of the participants on their Life Satisfaction, Leisure Satisfaction and EPQR-A as well as sub-dimension were presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Descriptive statistics of the participants on life satisfaction, leisure satisfaction and personality traits

Scales	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
<b><i>Life Satisfaction</i></b>	288	4.66	1.26
<b><i>Leisure Satisfaction</i></b>			
Psychological	288	3.64	.80
Educational	288	3.85	.80
Social	288	3.70	.75
Relaxation	288	4.01	.83
Physiological	288	3.60	.78
Aesthetic	288	3.73	.76
<b>Total</b>	288	3.75	.61
<b><i>Personality Inventory</i></b>			
Extraversion	288	3.96	1.79
Neuroticism	288	3.01	1.82
<b>Total</b>	288	6.96	2.17

Correlation values of participants between their Life Satisfaction, Leisure Satisfaction and EPQR-A scores were highlighted in Table 2. At the end of correlation analysis conducted to detect the relation between leisure and life satisfaction it has been seen that there is a mid-level positive linear relation ( $p < .001$ ). The correlation between leisure satisfaction and extraversion personality trait as  $r = .205$ , correlation with life satisfaction as

$r=.206$ ; and correlation between leisure satisfaction and neuroticism personality trait as  $r=-.151$ , correlation with life satisfaction as  $r=-.384$ . As manifested by the statistical results, leisure and life satisfaction have a positive linear relation with extraversion personality trait; but negative and reverse relation with neuroticism personality trait.

**Table 2:** Pearson correlation analysis results indicating the correlation between life and leisure satisfaction of participants and personality traits

	Leisure Satisfaction		Life Satisfaction	
<b>Extraversion</b>	$r=.205$	$p<.001$	$r=.206$	$p<.001$
<b>Neuroticism</b>	$r=-.151$	$p<.001$	$r=-.384$	$p<.01$

It was presented in Table 3, extraversion and neuroticism personality trait explain leisure satisfaction significantly (extraversion:  $R=.20$ ,  $R^2=.04$ ,  $F=12.54$ ,  $p<.01$ ; neuroticism:  $R=.15$ ,  $R^2=.02$ ,  $F=6.68$ ,  $p<.01$ ). Accordingly, extrovert trait explains 4% of the variance in leisure satisfaction while neurotic trait explains 2% of the variance in leisure satisfaction.

**Table 3:** Regression analysis results between leisure satisfaction and personality traits

	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>F</i>	<i>β</i>	<i>t</i>
<b>Extraversion</b>	.20	.04	12.54	.20	3.54**
<b>Neuroticism</b> <i>Leisure Satisfaction</i>	.15	.02	6.68	-.15	-2.58**

\*\*  $p<.01$

It was presented in Table 4, extraversion and neuroticism personality trait explain life satisfaction significantly (extraversion:  $R=.20$ ,  $R^2=.04$ ,  $F=12.71$ ,  $p<.01$ ; neuroticism:  $R=.38$ ,  $R^2=.15$ ,  $F=49.35$ ,  $p<.01$ ). Accordingly, extrovert trait explains 4% of the variance in life satisfaction while neurotic trait explains 15% of the variance in life satisfaction.

**Table 4:** Regression analysis results between life satisfaction and personality traits

	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>F</i>	<i>β</i>	<i>t</i>
<b>Extraversion</b>	.20	.04	12.71	.20	3.99**
<b>Neuroticism</b> <i>Life Satisfaction</i>	.38	.15	49.35	-.38	-7.02**

\*\*  $p<.01$

## DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research is to determine the effect of personality traits of women exercising in health and fitness centers operating in Antalya and indoor and outdoor areas of municipality and private fitness and sports facilities on their leisure and life satisfaction levels.

Correlation analysis showed that there is a linear relation between participants' personality traits and their satisfaction scores. A negative linear relation between neuroticism personality trait and satisfaction scores while a positive-way linear relation between extraversion personality trait and satisfaction scores is observed. According to regression analysis, neurotic trait explains 2% of the variance in leisure satisfaction and 15% of the variance in life satisfaction; extrovert trait explains 4% of the variance in leisure and life satisfaction. As relevant researches were scrutinized, it was feasible to detect a number of studies parallel to our study which focused on the correlation between personality traits and leisure satisfaction and life satisfaction. In DeNeve and Cooper (1998), in their meta-analysis study on personality traits and subjective well-being, have indicated that personality plays key role in life satisfaction, happiness and positive effects. Yet, at the same, they play a key role in the emergence of equally significant negative effects. They have thus concluded that neuroticism personality trait has negative effects on life satisfaction and happiness. In Emmons and Diener's (1985) study focusing on the relation between subjective well-being and personality, it has been found that extroverted people's satisfaction decisions exhibit themselves positively and strongly. However, among people with anxiety or neurotic trait, there is no connection observed which is related to satisfaction. Likewise, extraversion personality trait can play role on positive effects only. Francis et al. (1998), in their research applied on student groups from four different states, have detected that there is a significant correlation between happiness and extraversion personality trait and an equally significant negative relation with neuroticism personality trait.

Another research in relevant literature is Kovacs's (2007) study. The effect of personality trait on leisure and life satisfaction has been investigated and it is found out that extraversion and neuroticism personality traits are powerful determinants of leisure and life satisfaction. Kovacs thus concluded that leisure and life satisfaction is densely related to personality types. The findings obtained by Kovacs are the second study analyzing the relations among leisure and life satisfaction levels hence the findings echo the results we have obtained in this research. The research supports the hypothesis that personality traits have equally significant effect on not only leisure but life satisfaction as well. Extraversion and neuroticism personality traits are closely connected to leisure and life satisfaction.

The other finding manifested that there is a positive linear relation between leisure satisfaction and extraversion personality trait scores of participant women but a negative linear relation with neuroticism personality trait scores. The other finding draws parallelism

with the findings obtained in literature research. Barnett (2013), in his study aiming to detect leisure activity choices of people with different personality traits, showed that in people with strong extraversion personality trait there is high level of leisure activities participation and satisfaction which indicates that extraversion personality trait is a strong determinant here. Harden's (2008) study, analyzed the relation between participants' personalities and their leisure satisfaction, leisure attitude and leisure motivation. He concluded that extraversion personality trait has a significantly positive relation with leisure satisfaction and leisure motivation while neuroticism personality trait has a negative relation with leisure satisfaction. Liu (2014) in his study covering serious leisure participants identified that extraversion personality trait has a positive relation with leisure satisfaction but neuroticism personality trait has a negative relation. Lu and Hu (2005) in their study covering university students in China found out that leisure satisfaction has a significantly positive relation with extrovert individuals but a negative relation with neurotic individuals. Consequently, they have concluded that extraversion and neuroticism personality traits are strong determinants of leisure and happiness. Moghadam (2011) in his study covering university students in Tehran detected that extraversion personality trait affects leisure satisfaction positively but neuroticism personality trait affects negatively.

Another finding of our research puts forth that there is a positive linear relation between life satisfaction and extraversion personality trait scores of participant women while a negative linear relation with neuroticism personality trait is observed. These findings draw parallelism with similar researches in relevant literature. Heller (2003) in his study applied to full-time, healthy, and married, below-65 age detected that neuroticism personality trait has a negative-way relation with life satisfaction while extraversion personality trait has a positive-way relation. In Howell's (2005) study, the relation between participants' personality traits and their life satisfaction has been examined and it is found out that neuroticism personality trait is quite a powerful personality trait and it is the only trait exhibiting a negative relation. Extraversion personality trait is found to exhibit a positive relation. Schimmack et al. (2004) examined the relation between personality traits and life satisfaction. They have found that among participants with high extraversion personality trait, life satisfaction scores are also higher and positively connected. On the other hand, among participants with high neuroticism personality trait, life satisfaction scores are lower and negatively connected. Likewise in Wigert (2001) examined personality traits and showed that extraversion personality type exhibits a positive relation with life satisfaction.

As a consequence, it has been detected that our findings draw parallelism with the findings obtained in literature researches. Accordingly, while extraversion personality trait has a positive effect on the satisfaction percentage of people, neuroticism personality trait on the other hand has a negative effect on satisfaction level.

#### Limitation and Future Research

The most important limitation of this study was that the data were derived from only Antalya. In further studies it would be more illuminating to analyze the relation between personality traits and leisure and life satisfaction levels through different samples and the number of samples could be increased. Also it would be test the study via structural equation modeling.

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