

A Study on the Frequency of Participation in Recreation Activities and Recreation Area Preferences of Local People *

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the relationship between local people's recreational activities participation frequency and the importance they attach to recreation area preference factors. Moreover, the study seeks to ascertain whether there are discrepancies recreational activities participation frequency and recreational area preferences among local people according to their socio-demographic characteristics. The sample consists of individuals residing in the central districts of Şanlıurfa. A quantitative method was used, with 537 valid responses collected through face-to-face questionnaires. The study showed that both recreation preferences and participation frequency vary significantly by gender, age, education, marital status, occupation, length of residence, income, visiting partners, participation time, and perceptions of recreation area adequacy. A significantly high positive correlation was found between participation frequency and recreation area preferences. The study provides theoretical contributions to recreation and leisure studies and practical implications for developing effective and user-oriented recreational policies and infrastructures in urban areas. The findings can inform the design and management of inclusive, accessible, and needs-responsive recreational environments that enhance community well-being and quality of life.

Keywords: Leisure Involvement, Recreation Activities, Recreation Area Preference

*Ethics Committee Approval of this study has been taken from Harran University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee with decision number 2023/162 and dated 22.11.2023.

1. Introduction

The contemporary phenomenon of rapid urbanization has resulted in a notable increase in stress factors that collectively diminish the quality of life of individuals. Those residing in large urban centres are seeking avenues to evade the accelerated pace and the adverse conditions characteristic of urban life. In this context, recreation areas have become crucial spaces that address the needs of individuals, including renewal, rest, and having a pleasant time (Sezer & Akova, 2016). Among the factors affecting individuals' preferences about recreation areas, motivations such as the desire to be in proximity to nature, stress relief, physical exercise, and socialization emerge as particularly salient (Deniz et al., 2019). Outdoor recreation areas with natural landscapes provide individuals with the opportunity to renew themselves physically and mentally through participation in a range of activities, including nature sports, hiking, hunting, and picnics (Çalık et al., 2013). These activities enable individuals to utilize their free time efficiently, enhancing their work efficiency and motivation (Can, 2015).

Recreation can be defined as the voluntary activities that individuals engage in, distinct from the demands and responsibilities they face in their daily lives (Akyüz, 2020). The degree of participation in such activities varies according to the recreational opportunities available in the environment in which individuals live and their individual preferences (Önaç et al., 2018). Local governments and private organizations must provide a range of recreational options that cater to the abilities and needs of individuals, directing them toward the most suitable option. Additionally, these entities need to develop and maintain sustainable recreational areas that address the community's recreational needs (Öztürk, 2021).

The preferences of individuals about recreational activities vary due to the multiplicity of options available for the utilization of leisure time, the existence of disparate physical and psychological needs, and the existence of diverse interests. Similarly, the degree of participation in an activity, the specific activity in which an individual engages, and the frequency of participation are closely associated with their needs (Eravşar, 2020). In this context, recreational areas must be organized to meet people's needs and ensure sustainability. This requires a clear understanding of the demands and needs of individuals, as well as facilitating access to these areas (Gönen et al., 2022). Furthermore, recreation businesses should be capable of devising and diversifying their activities, incorporating social, cultural, sporting, health, artistic, and educational elements. This should be done in alignment with society's needs to create valuable and sustainable content to enhance participation in activities (Şimşek, 2018).

In conclusion, the facilities and investments should be made based on the factors that effectively determine the preferences of the local population about recreation areas. Otherwise, these areas will remain merely a decorative feature of the city, and the investment will fail to generate the desired service output and return (Karakan et al., 2021). This study aims to determine the relationship between local people's in recreational activities participation frequency and the importance they attach to recreation area preference factors. Furthermore, the study seeks to determine whether there are differences local people recreational activities participation frequency and their recreational area preferences according to their socio-demographic characteristics. The study is significant in exploring how socio-demographic characteristics influence the frequency of participation in recreational activities and the preferences for recreation areas among urban residents. By focusing on the local population in Şanlıurfa, the research provides empirical data that can inform the planning and development of more inclusive, accessible, and need-oriented recreational spaces. The findings contribute to both the academic literature and practical urban policy by highlighting the importance of designing recreational environments that align with users' physical, social, and psychological needs.

2. Literature Review – Conceptual Framework

In this section, information is given about the factors affecting recreation area preference, Relationship between recreation area preference, frequency of participation in recreation activities and demographic

characteristics relationship between recreation area preference and recreation activity participation frequency.

2.1. Factors Affecting Recreation Area Preference

The factors that emerge as being of particular significance in the context of recreation area preferences are contingent upon individuals' physical, social, and psychological needs and demographic characteristics. In general, factors such as the diversity of sporting activities, the availability of physical facilities, the natural environment, and the cleanliness of the area are among the most important features to which individuals attach the greatest importance. Conversely, location-related limiting factors, such as a lack of time and distance, hurt participation in recreational activities. It has been observed that younger individuals tend to prefer more active and sporting activities, while older individuals tend to favour more calm, rest-oriented recreational activities.

2.1.1. Sportive Diversity and Physical Facility

Sportive diversity and physical facilities have an important place in the reasons why individuals prefer recreation areas. In the study conducted by Gümüş & Koç (2019) on Mersin University students, it was revealed that the most important reason for the preference was 'sportive diversity.' In addition, physical facilities also played an important role in the preferences of the participants. Similarly, in the study conducted by Uzun & Gözaydın (2017) with students at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, it was stated that students were not satisfied with the sports facilities on the university campus and felt the lack of sports venues, especially swimming pools. This situation emphasizes the importance of physical facilities in recreational preferences. Gönen et al. (2022) also underlined the importance that university students attach to sportive diversity and physical facilities in recreation areas. In the study of Öztaş & Mumcu (2023) on determining the recreation area preferences of university students, sportive diversity and location were determined as determining factors.

Similarly, in the study conducted by Erbaş (2020) with individuals doing physical activity in 6 different parks and recreation areas in Ankara, it was determined that they attach the most importance to sportive diversity and location when choosing recreation areas. In the study of Şimşek & Kırtepe (2023), among the factors of preference for recreation areas, providing sportive diversity and sufficient physical facilities are among the important determining factors. It can be said that these two factors stand out in the recreation area preferences of university students and individuals who actively participate in sportive activities.

Regarding the physical facilities available in recreation areas, the fact that the area is intertwined with nature and clean is important, particularly for individuals residing in urban areas. Sezer & Akova (2016) demonstrated that naturalness and cleanliness are the most crucial criteria in determining the preference for recreation areas in their research with urban residents in Istanbul. This study illuminates the desire of individuals living in large cities to engage with nature and the expectation of a clean environment.

Boll et al. (2014) reached a similar conclusion in a study of people living in Hamburg, Germany. The findings of this study indicate that naturalness and landscape diversity exert a considerable influence on the preferences associated with recreation areas. These findings demonstrate that individuals prefer recreation areas with a high degree of natural intertwining and a clean environment. Karaşah's (2017) study in Artvin found that areas offering the opportunity to integrate with nature (e.g., Kafkasör City Forest) were among the most preferred recreation areas, with hiking identified as the most popular activity in these areas. In their studies, Kubas et al. (2010), Sarı (2019) and Önaç et al. (2018) identified cleanliness and contact with nature as significant criteria for the evaluation of recreation areas.

2.1.2. Location

The factors that restrict individuals' participation in recreational areas also significantly impact their preferences. Karaşah's (2017) study determined that the primary factor preventing individuals from participating in recreational activities is a lack of time. This is a common problem, particularly for individuals residing in large urban centers with demanding work schedules. Furthermore, Köse & Kul

(2020) revealed in their study in Istanbul that economic and logistical factors, such as distance and work intensity, limit individuals' participation in recreational areas.

The significance of location in determining the preference for a recreation area is revealed by time, distance, and ease of transportation. As evidenced by the studies of Erbaş (2020), Öztaş & Mumcu (2023), and Şimşek & Kırtepe (2023), location is among the crucial factors influencing the preferences of individuals regarding recreation areas. Furthermore, the study by Sezer & Akova (2016) identified transportation time, public transport facilities, and the adequacy of signposts (Önaç et al., 2018) as significant factors influencing preferences for recreation areas.

2.1.3. Personnel and Activity

In addition to sporting diversity, physical facilities, naturalness, cleanliness, and location, other considerations are important in choosing a recreation area. Staff competence (Gönen et al., 2022; Şimşek & Kırtepe, 2023) and safety (Kubas et al., 2010; Oğuz & Çakci, 2010; Sarı, 2019) are also significant factors. Other factors that have been identified as influencing recreation area preference include the availability of family/group activity opportunities (Önaç et al., 2018), inclusiveness, and activity content richness (Kurar, 2020). Conversely, the studies conducted by Gümüş & Koç (2019), Erbaş (2020), and Şimşek & Kırtepe (2023) identified the 'activity' dimension as the least important factor influencing recreation area preference.

2.2. Relationship between Recreation Area Preference, Frequency of Participation in Recreation Activities and Demographic Characteristics

The recreational preferences and tendencies of individuals are subject to variation contingent on the socio-demographic and recreational area characteristics of individuals (Önaç et al., 2018). In studies conducted on different samples, gender (Gönen et al., 2022), gender, age, marital status, educational status (Öztürk, 2022), age, educational status (Sezer & Akova, 2016), gender, class, income level, length of residence (Önaç et al., 2018), marital status, age level, an education level (Şimşek & Kırtepe (2023) identified gender, education level, income level, age, occupation (Sarı, 2019), marital status (Kırtepe et al., 2017), place of residence, age, marital status, gender, and the department studied (Togo & Öztürk, 2020), and place of residence (Öztaş & Mumcu, 2023) as significant factors influencing recreational preferences. The results demonstrate that individuals' preferences concerning recreational areas are subject to variation according to socio-demographic characteristics and that these factors significantly influence the formation of preferences. Based on this evidence, the following hypotheses were formulated:

- H₁: *There is a significant difference in the preferences for recreation areas according to the demographic characteristics (h_{1a}: gender, h_{1b}: age group, h_{1c}: education level, h_{1d}: marital status, h_{1e}: occupation, h_{1f}: length of residence, h_{1g}: monthly income, h_{1h}: visiting partner, h_{1i}: activity period, h_{1j}: duration of activity participation, h_{1k}: perception of the adequacy of recreation areas/facilities) of local people.*

The frequency of participating in recreational activities is subject to variation according to the demographic characteristics of individuals. In the studies carried out on different samples, it has been determined that the frequency of participating in recreational activities varies according to different variables such as gender, age, educational status (İskender et al., 2015), gender, income level (Müderrişoğlu & Uzun, 2004), type of activity, college attended (Kement, 2019), gender, marital status, age, income status (Demirbaş, 2020), gender, class of education, income level, residence time (Önaç et al., 2018). These findings indicate that demographic characteristics influence the frequency of engagement in recreational activities. Based on this evidence, the following hypotheses were formulated:

- H₂: *There is a significant difference recreational activities participation frequency according to the demographic characteristics (h_{2a}: gender, h_{2b}: age group, h_{2c}: education level, h_{2d}: marital status, h_{2e}: occupation, h_{2f}: length of residence, h_{2g}: monthly income, h_{2h}: visiting partner, h_{2i}: activity period, h_{2j}: duration of activity participation, h_{2k}: perception of the adequacy of recreation areas/facilities) of local people.*

2.3. Relationship between Recreation Area Preference and Recreation Activity Participation Frequency

Recreation is individuals' activities to maintain their physical, mental, and spiritual health and for social interaction and communication with their environment (Deniz et al., 2019). The participation of individuals in recreational activities, the specific type of activity engaged in, and the frequency of participation are also associated with their needs (Eravşar, 2020). Studies conducted on different samples in terms of physical needs determined that as the physical activity participation frequency increases, healthy life behaviours are positively affected (Kırtepe & Uğurlu, 2023). Furthermore, individuals who participate in physical activity more frequently report feeling healthier and experiencing an improvement in their quality of life (Ellis et al., 2002). Those with physical needs may prefer areas that facilitate regular physical activity, such as sports fields, walking paths, and cycling tracks. In studies conducted on different samples in terms of psychological needs, it was found that as the frequency of participation in recreation areas increases, individuals' psychological well-being increases (Gümüş & Koç, 2019), and depression levels decrease (Christensen et al., 2013). Those with psychological needs may be more inclined to gravitate towards green spaces, such as parks, forests, and waterfronts, which offer stress relief, relaxation, and mental renewal opportunities. These areas are often perceived as being intertwined with nature. A study on social needs revealed that as the frequency of university students' participation in recreation activities for social, cultural, and artistic categories increased, their experiences of getting to know nature, art, and culture also increased (Kozak & Doğantan, 2016). Another study revealed that individuals who frequently engage in recreational activities possess high social competence (Duman et al., 2022). These individuals may exhibit a proclivity for socializing in settings such as cafés, game halls, and cinemas, facilitating greater social interaction. Consequently, recreation areas should be designed and planned to align with people's expectations (Deniz et al., 2019).

The recreational activities participation frequency is a significant determinant of individuals' preferences regarding recreation areas. As the frequency of participation increases, areas that offer opportunities for physical activity, facilitate social interaction, and engender positive effects on psychological well-being are more likely to be preferred. In studies conducted on different samples, a significant relationship was identified between the frequency of weekly sports and activities (Kırtepe et al., 2017; Öztürk, 2022; Şimşek & Kırtepe, 2023) and the factors influencing preference for recreation areas. These findings indicate a relationship between recreational activities participation frequency and the factors of recreation area preference. While previous studies have revealed the relationship between the sports activities participation frequency and recreation area preference, there is a lack of research on the relationship between different activities participation frequency and recreation area preference. Based on this evidence, the following hypotheses were formulated:

- *H₃: There is a significant correlation between local people's preferences for recreation areas and their frequency of activity participation.*

3. Methodology

The research is based on residents' opinions of Şanlıurfa's central districts regarding their preferences for recreation areas and the frequency with which they engage in activities. Given the potential for variation in the availability of recreation areas across different districts, as well as in residents' preferences and participation rates, a sample comprising individuals from Eyyübiye, Haliliye, and Karaköprü, the central districts of Şanlıurfa, was selected for the study. The data provided by the Turkish Statistical Institute in 2023 indicate that the population of the Eyyübiye district is 400,084, the population of the Haliliye district is 392,600, and the population of the Karaköprü district is 277,160. The sample size was calculated to be 384, with a 5% margin of error, using the table of sample sizes for various population sizes (less than 25,000,000) (Balci, 2011). The data were gathered between March and June 2024 using convenience sampling due to limitations in terms of cost and time. Convenience sampling is a non-random sampling method in which the researcher determines the sample segment to be selected from the main population (Haşiloğlu et al., 2015). The questionnaires were administered face-to-face, and 537 valid questionnaires were obtained due to incorrect or incomplete responses.

A quantitative research method was employed in this study, with a preference for utilizing a questionnaire as the data collection technique. The questionnaire comprises a total of 43 questions, including seven items about the demographic characteristics of the participants, four items concerning their engagement in activities, one item regarding their field competence, 24 items assessing the preferences of the participants about recreation areas, and seven items gauging the frequency of their participation in recreational activities. The scale used in the questionnaire, entitled 'Recreation Area Preference Factors Scale,' was developed by Gümüş & Alay Özgül (2017). It comprises five sub-dimensions. The recreation area preferences scale's sub-dimensions and dimensions are outlined in Table 1. The Cronbach alpha reliability value of the scale was determined to be $\alpha = 0.964$. The scale used to measure the frequency of participation in recreational activities was developed by Güven (2018). The scale's sub-dimensions and dimensions are outlined in Table 2 for reference. The Cronbach alpha reliability value of the scale was found to be $\alpha:0.846$. The alpha coefficient indicates that the scales are highly reliable (Kalaycı, 2006). Normality tests demonstrated that the skewness and kurtosis values were less than ± 1.500 , indicating a normal distribution (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Consequently, parametric tests were employed in the analyses.

Independent samples t-test and one-way ANOVA were utilized to analyse the correlations between the participants' demographic characteristics, recreation area preferences, and their frequency of participation in recreational activities. Furthermore, Tukey HSD and Tamhane Post Hoc Tests were employed to ascertain any significant differences between the subgroups that may have been identified by ANOVA analysis. Correlation analysis was used to measure the relationship between recreation area preferences and frequency of participating in recreational activities. The IBM SPSS 21.0 software was employed for the analytical procedures. The study's compliance with ethical principles was approved by the Harran University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee during its session on 22.11.2023, with board decision number 2023/162.

4. Findings

This section presents the results of the analyses. Table 1 illustrates the levels of importance attributed by the participants to the factors influencing their preferences regarding recreation areas. It can be observed that the participants assign greater importance to the aspects of sportive diversity ($\bar{x}$: 4.4879) and physical facilities ($\bar{x}$: 4.4867) within their recreation area preferences. In comparison, they assign less importance to personnel-related issues ($\bar{x}$: 3.6960).

Table 1. Participants' Importance Levels of Recreation Area Preference Factors

Recreation Area Preference Factors	$\bar{X}$
Sportive diversity (bicycle path, walking path, opportunity to do different sports)	4,4879
Physical facilities (natural/artificial water, bench, eating and drinking area, informative sign, picnic)	4,4867
Location (close to the city centre/home, accessible by public transport)	4,3625
Activity (presence of scientific/social/cultural/sportive/entertainment activities in the area)	4,2931
Staff (availability of trainers, counselling, security and cleaning staff)	3,6960

Table 2 offers the average frequency of participation in different recreational activities categorized by type. The results indicate that the participants primarily engaged in activities with their close environment ($\bar{x}$: 3.9162) and intellectual activities ($\bar{x}$: 3.8678), while voluntary activities ($\bar{x}$: 2.9441) were the least participated in.

Table 2. Frequency of Participation in Recreation Activities

Recreation Activities	$\bar{X}$
Activities with Friends/Relatives	Spending time with friends and family, going on a picnic, watching TV, reading the newspaper, etc. 3,9162
Intellectual Activities	Reading books, listening to music, watching films, reading magazines and current news, etc. 3,8678
Other Individually Performed Activities	Planning various activities, taking care of animals, shopping, hobby activities (handicrafts, knitting, modelling, etc.), various sports activities, etc. 3,7635

Tablo 2 Continued

Travelling Activities	Hiking, strolling, motorcycling, travelling, domestic and international tourist trips, etc.	3,7132
Artistic and Cultural Activities	Visiting exhibitions, museums, etc., going to the cinema, going to concerts, going to the theatre, attending festivals, other artistic events, etc.	3,4395
Nature-Based Activities	Taking photos in nature, cycling, camping, trekking, nature activities, mountain climbing, rock climbing, etc.	3,2905
Voluntary Activities	Assisting the elderly and individuals requiring care, performing environmental cleaning, planting trees, painting schools, etc.	2,9441

Hypothesis 1a: There is a significant difference in the preferences for recreation areas according to the gender of local people. The results from the Table 3 support this hypothesis ($p < 0.05$). In physical facility and activity sub-dimensions, the recreation area preferences of individuals differ according to their gender. Males prioritize physical facilities and activity in recreation area preferences more than females.

Table 3. Recreation Area Preferences by Gender

Gender	Factors	Physical Facility		Activity	
	N	X̄	$\frac{t}{p}$	X̄	$\frac{t}{p}$
Male	280	4,5373	2,632	4,3643	2,705
Female	257	4,4315	,009	4,2156	,007

Hypothesis 1b: There is a meaningful difference in the preferences for recreation areas according to age group among local people. The results from the Table 4 support this hypothesis ($p < 0.05$). In the sub-dimensions of sportive diversity, individuals' personnel, physical facility and activity, and recreation area preferences differ according to their age groups. While individuals between the ages of 25 and 44 give more importance to sportive diversity and physical facilities, individuals over 45 give more importance to personnel-based facilities. Furthermore, it can be posited that individuals attach more importance to activity diversity depending on the increase in age.

Table 4. Recreation Area Preferences by Age Group

Age Group	Factors	Sportive diversity		Personnel		Physical Facility		Activity	
	N	X̄	$\frac{F}{p}$	X̄	$\frac{F}{p}$	X̄	$\frac{F}{p}$	X̄	$\frac{F}{p}$
24 and below	105	4,41		3,40		4,47		4,14	
25 to 34 years old	153	4,53	3,308	3,65	6,146	4,51	2,447	4,39	3,760
35 to 44 years old	129	4,59		3,73		4,55		4,21	
45 to 54 years old	87	4,48	,011	4,04	,000	4,48	,045	4,41	,005
55 years and over	63	4,34		3,76		4,33		4,33	

Hypothesis 1c: There is a notable difference in the preferences for recreation areas according to the education level of local people. The results from the Table 5 support this hypothesis ($p < 0.05$). All recreation area preference variables differ according to the education level of individuals. Those with a higher level of education tend to attach greater importance to the diversity of sporting activities, whereas those with a lower level of education place greater emphasis on the personnel, location, and activities offered.

Table 5. Recreation Area Preferences by Educational Level

Educational Level	Factors	Sportive diversity		Personnel		Location		Physical Facility		Activity	
	N	X̄	$\frac{F}{p}$	X̄	$\frac{F}{p}$	X̄	$\frac{F}{p}$	X̄	$\frac{F}{p}$	X̄	$\frac{F}{p}$
Illiterate	31	4,36		3,82		4,53		4,50		4,41	
Literate	41	4,48		3,91		4,27		4,45		4,49	
Primary school graduate	56	4,50	3,639	3,96	4,787	4,48	11,405	4,57	2,162	4,54	9,859
High school graduate	92	4,43		3,73		4,46		4,41		4,37	
Associate degree	82	4,31	,002	3,31	,000	4,37	,000	4,40	,045	4,17	,000
Bachelor's degree	189	4,60		3,78		4,41		4,56		4,31	
Postgraduate degree	46	4,54		3,40		3,77		4,44		3,73	

Hypothesis 1d: There is a remarkable difference in the preferences for recreation areas according to the marital status of local people. The results from the Table 6 support this hypothesis ($p < 0.05$). In the personnel subdimension, individuals' recreation area preferences differ according to their marital status. Married people give more importance to personnel facilities than single.

Table 6. Recreation Area Preferences by Marital Status

	Factors	Personnel	
Marital Status	N	X	$\frac{T}{P}$
Married	313	3,7963	2,854
Single	224	3,5558	,005

Hypothesis 1e: There is a noteworthy difference in the preferences for recreation areas according to the occupation of local people. The results from the Table 7 support this hypothesis ($p < 0.05$). In terms of personnel and activity subdimensions, there is a discernible discrepancy in individuals' preferences according to their respective occupations. Tradesmen and retired individuals accord greater significance to personnel facilities and activity diversity.

Table 7. Recreation Area Preferences by Occupation

	Factors	Personnel	Activity		
Marital Status	N	X	$\frac{T}{P}$	X	$\frac{F}{P}$
Government official	152	3,6783	3,140	4,1200	5,758
Worker	98	3,6475		4,3400	
Self-employed	40	3,7688		3,9950	
Tradesmen	69	4,0109		4,5739	
Retired	36	3,9722	,003	4,4278	,000
Housewife	75	3,3600		4,3787	
Student	56	3,6696		4,3714	
Other	11	3,6591		4,1273	

Hypothesis 1f: There is a significant difference in the preferences for recreation areas according to the length of residence of local people. The results from the Table 8 support this hypothesis ($p < 0.05$). The variables pertaining to recreation area preferences exhibit a discernible divergence contingent upon the duration of residence of the individuals in question. Those who have resided for 16 years or more accord a greater degree of significance to these variables, whereas those who have resided for less than one year assign a comparatively lesser degree of significance to the same variables.

Table 8. Recreation Area Preferences by Length of Residence

	Factors	Sportive diversity	Personnel	Location	Physical Facility	Activity					
Length of Residence	N	X	F	X	F	X	F	X	F	X	F
			P		P		P		P		P
than 1 year Less	39	4,41		3,60		3,94		4,31		3,86	
1 to 5 years	156	4,39	2,998	3,48	5,551	4,33	7,683	4,48	2,958	4,12	14,808
6 to 10 years	60	4,53		3,85		4,38		4,43		4,34	
11-15 years	36	4,42	,018	3,38	,000	4,30	,000	4,40	,020	4,15	,000
16 years and over	246	4,56		3,86		4,46		4,55		4,48	

Hypothesis 1g: There is a notable difference in the preferences for recreation areas according to the monthly income of local people. The results from the Table 9 support this hypothesis ($p < 0.05$). In the sub-dimensions of sportive diversity, personnel, location, and activity, there are notable differences in individuals' preferences according to their monthly income. While those in higher income groups tend to place greater importance on sportive diversity and personnel opportunities, those in lower income groups demonstrate a stronger preference for location.

Table 9. Recreation Area Preferences by Monthly Income

	Factors	Sportive diversity		Personnel		Location		Activity	
Monthly Income	N	X̄	F	X̄	F	X̄	F	X̄	F
			p		p		p		p
10.000 ₺ and below	154	4,47		3,54		4,34		4,38	
10.001₺-20.000₺	85	4,45		3,67		4,40		4,32	
20.001₺-30.000₺	72	4,52	4,277	3,83	2,403	4,45	2,744	4,40	3,137
30.001₺-40.000₺	79	4,38		3,73		4,47		4,26	
40.001₺-50.000₺	68	4,39	,000	3,89	,027	4,14	,012	4,02	,005
50.001₺-60.000₺	46	4,73		3,52		4,36		4,20	
60.001₺ and over	33	4,74		3,99		4,31		4,35	

Hypothesis 1h: There is a noticeable difference in the preferences for recreation areas according to the visiting partners of local people. The results from the Table 10 support this hypothesis ($p < 0.05$). In the personnel and activity subdimensions, individuals' recreation area preferences differ according to their partners while visiting. Individuals who participate in activities with family and relatives attach more importance to personnel facilities and activity diversity.

Table 10. Recreation Area Preferences by Visiting Partner

	Factors	Physical Facility		Activity	
Visiting Partner	N	X̄	F p	X̄	F p
Alone	65	3,3923		4,4185	
With my wife/husband and children	231	3,7132	3,012	4,2364	5,500
With my family (Mum, Dad, Sibling)	56	3,8214		4,4679	
With my Relatives	33	4,0152	,018	4,6242	,000
With my friends	152	3,6842		4,1895	

Hypothesis 1i: There is a significant difference in the preferences for recreation areas according to the activity period of local people. The results from Table 11 support this hypothesis ($p < 0.05$). In the subdimensions of sportive diversity and physical facility, there is a discernible discrepancy in individuals' preferences according to their activity period. Those who engage in leisure activities on the weekends tend to accord greater significance to these aspects.

Table 11. Recreation Area Preferences According to Activity Period

	Factors	Sportive Diversity		Physical Facility	
Activity Period	N	X̄	F p	X̄	F p
Weekday	215	4,4155	6,956	4,4171	8,031
Weekend	322	4,5362	,009	4,5331	,005

Hypothesis 1j: There is a significant difference in the preferences for recreation areas according to the duration of activity participation of local people. The results from the Table 12 support this hypothesis ($p < 0.05$). The variables associated with the preference for recreation areas differ according to the duration of activity participation. Except for individuals who dedicate at least 16 hours per week to activities, the importance attributed to these variables increases proportionately to the time spent engaged in activities.

Table 12. Recreation Area Preferences According to Duration of Activity Participation

	Factors	Sportive diversity		Personnel		Location		Physical Facility		Activity	
Duration of Participation (per week)	N	X̄	F p	X̄	F p	X̄	F p	X̄	F p	X̄	F p
1-5 hours	264	4,41		3,44		4,33		4,41		4,21	
6-10 hours	189	4,58	6,598	3,89	14,671	4,34	3,795	4,55	8,265	4,29	9,823
11-15 hours	49	4,65	,000	4,10	,000	4,62	,010	4,72	,000	4,74	,000
16 hours and more	35	4,37		4,00		4,36		4,41		4,34	

Hypothesis 1k: There is a significant difference in the preferences for recreation areas according to the perception of the adequacy of recreation areas/facilities of local people. The results from the Table 13 support this hypothesis ($p < 0.05$). All recreation area preference variables differ according to individuals' perceptions of the adequacy of recreation areas/facilities. Individuals with a high perception of the adequacy of recreation areas/facilities give more importance to recreation area preference variables.

Table 13. Recreation Area Preferences by Perception of the Adequacy of Recreation Areas/Facilities

	Factors	Sportive diversity		Personnel		Location		Physical Facility		Activity	
Adequacy	N	X̄	$\frac{F}{P}$	X̄	$\frac{F}{P}$	X̄	$\frac{F}{P}$	X̄	$\frac{F}{P}$	X̄	$\frac{F}{P}$
Definitely Inadequate	188	4,57		3,73		4,34		4,51		4,15	
Inadequate	165	4,38	6,312	3,48	12,963	4,31	5,328	4,39	6,150	4,32	10,833
Partially adequate	90	4,40		3,45		4,27		4,47		4,22	
Adequate	58	4,48	,000	4,13	,000	4,52	,000	4,52	,000	4,46	,000
Definitely Adequate	36	4,77		4,39		4,69		4,78		4,83	

Hypothesis 2a: There is a remarkable difference recreational activities participation frequency according to the gender of local people. The results from the Table 14 support this hypothesis ($p < 0.05$). The frequency of participating in activities related to nature and travel varies according to gender. Males tend to participate more frequently in activities related to nature and travel than females do.

Table 14. Frequency of Activity Participation by Gender

	Activities	Nature-Based		Travelling	
Gender	N	X̄	$\frac{t}{p}$	X̄	$\frac{t}{p}$
Male	280	3,4942	3,638	3,8833	3,609
Female	257	3,1036	,000	3,5571	,000

Hypothesis 2b: There is a meaningful difference recreational activity participation frequency according to local people's age group. The results from the Table 15 support this hypothesis ($p < 0.05$). The frequency of participating in various activities, including nature, volunteering, activities with friends/relatives, travel, arts and culture, and other individually performed activities, varies according to age group. Participation in these activities generally increases with age. Furthermore, the 45-54 age group demonstrates a higher frequency of engagement with all activities.

Table 15. Frequency of Activity Participation by Age Group

	Activities	NB	V		F/R		T		A/C		OIP		
Age Group	N	X	$\frac{F}{P}$	X	$\frac{F}{P}$	X	$\frac{F}{P}$	X	$\frac{F}{P}$	X	$\frac{F}{P}$	X	$\frac{F}{P}$
24 and below	105	3,04		2,95		3,87		3,56		3,56		3,24	
25 to 34 years old	153	3,20	2,836	2,90	2,801	3,84	5,276	3,48	6,739	3,48	5,278	3,83	9,920
35 to 44 years old	129	3,42		3,02		3,96		3,85		3,85		3,71	
45 to 54 years old	87	3,59	,024	3,22	,025	4,26	,000	4,15	,000	4,15	,000	4,18	,000
55 years and over	63	3,25		2,49		3,62		3,65		3,65		4,02	

Note: (NB) Nature-Based, (V) Voluntary, (F/R): with Friends/Relatives, (T) Travelling, (A/C) Artistic and Cultural, (OIP) Other Individually Performed

Hypothesis 2c: There is a notable difference recreational activities participation frequency according to the education level of local people. The results from the Table 16 support this hypothesis ($p < 0.05$). The frequency of participation in activities related to nature, volunteering, activities with friends/relatives, travel, intellectual, arts and culture, and other individually performed activities varies based on the participants' education level. Individuals with higher education levels demonstrate a higher frequency of participation in intellectual, artistic, and cultural activities. Conversely, in nature-based activities,

activities with friends/relatives, and other individually performed activities, individuals with relatively lower education levels exhibit a higher frequency of participation.

Table 16. Frequency of Activity Participation by Educational Level

Educational Level	Activities		NB		V		F/R		T		I		A/C		OIP	
	N	X	F	X	F	X	F	X	F	X	F	X	F	X	F	X
Illiterate	31	3,07			2,68		3,45		3,58		3,84		3,15		4,03	
Literate	41	3,56			2,76		4,02		3,50		3,78		2,96		4,17	
Primary school graduate	56	3,86	8,205		2,54	3,459	3,96	5,101	3,95	2,161	3,77	5,182	3,75	5,066	4,36	9,350
High school graduate	92	3,73			2,83		3,76		3,72		3,69		3,66		3,84	
Associate degree	82	3,05							3,49		3,50		3,63		3,28	
Bachelor's degree	189	3,17			3,09		4,15		3,74		4,18		3,41		3,79	
Postgraduate degree	46	2,57			2,61		3,63		4,05		3,83		3,84		3,11	

Note: (NB) Nature-Based, (V) Voluntary, (F/R): with Friends/Relatives, (T) Travelling, (I) Intellectual, (A/C) Artistic and Cultural, (OIP) Other Individually Performed

Hypothesis 2d: There is a remarkable difference recreational activities participation frequency according to the marital status of local people. The results from the Table 17 support this hypothesis ($p < 0.05$). The frequency of participating in activities related to nature, travel, artistic and cultural, and other individually performed varies according to marital status. Married individuals tend to participate more frequently in activities related to these activities than singles do.

Table 17. Frequency of Activity Participation by Marital Status

Marital Status	Activities		NB		T		A/C		OIP	
	N	X	t	X	T	X	T	X	t	X
Married	313	3,4185	2,808	3,8530	3,539	3,5783	3,170	3,8882	2,878	
Single	224	3,1116	,005	3,5179	,000	3,2455	,002	3,5893	,004	

Note: (NB) Nature-Based, (T) Travelling, (A/C) Artistic and Cultural, (OIP) Other Individually Performed

Hypothesis 2e: There is a noteworthy difference recreational activities participation frequency according to the occupation of local people. The results from the Table 18 support this hypothesis ($p < 0.05$). The frequency of participating in all activities varies according to occupation. Government officials and students are more likely to participate in intellectual activities, while self-employed and tradespeople are more likely to participate in other activities.

Table 18. Frequency of Activity Participation by Occupation

Occupation	Activities		NB		V		F/R		T		I		A/C		OIP	
	N	X	F	X	F	X	F	X	F	X	F	X	F	X	F	X
Government official	31	2,98			2,89		3,94		3,71		4,10		3,29		3,29	
Worker	41	3,36			2,95		3,85		3,69		3,76		3,41		3,41	
Self-employed	56	3,93	9,541		4,00	6,831	4,13	6,742	4,05	3,753	3,85	4,049	3,53	3,142	3,53	3,541
Tradesmen	92	4,06			2,93		4,17		3,97		3,97		3,91		3,91	
Retired	82	3,56			2,81		3,89		4,11		3,75		3,78		3,78	
Housewife		2,88			2,32		3,35		3,35		3,40		3,19		3,19	
Student	189	2,93			3,30		4,25		3,45		4,09		3,41		3,41	
Other	46	3,55			2,82		4,09		3,73		3,55		3,18		3,18	

Note: (NB) Nature-Based, (V) Voluntary, (F/R): with Friends/Relatives, (T) Travelling, (I) Intellectual, (A/C) Artistic and Cultural, (OIP) Other Individually Performed

Hypothesis 2f: There is a significant difference recreational activities participation frequency according to the length of residence of local people. The results from the Table 19 support this hypothesis ($p < 0.05$). The frequency of participating in various activities, including nature, volunteering, intellectual, arts and culture, and other individually performed activities, varies according to length of residence. Participation in activities other than voluntary increases depending on the length of residence. Regarding participation in voluntary activities, those with less than one year of residence stated that they participated more.

Table 19. Frequency of Activity Participation by Length of Residence

Length of Residence	Activities		NB		V		I		A/C		OIP	
	N	X	F		X		F		X		F	
			P		P		P		P		P	
Less than 1 year	39	2,10			3,41		3,87		3,41		3,39	
1 to 5 years	156	3,39	10,181		3,07	4,454	3,69	4,480	3,22	3,474	3,40	12,408
6 to 10 years	60	3,43			3,32		4,07		3,63		3,68	
11-15 years	36	3,50	,000		2,69	,002	3,39	,001	3,11	,008	3,47	,000
16 years and over	246	3,35			2,74		4,00		3,58		4,12	

Note: (NB) Nature-Based, (V) Voluntary, (I) Intellectual, (A/C) Artistic and Cultural, (OIP) Other Individually Performed

Hypothesis 2g: There is a notable difference recreational activities participation frequency according to the monthly income of local people. The results from the Table 20 support this hypothesis ($p < 0.05$). The frequency of participating in various activities, including nature, volunteering, activities with friends/relatives, travel, intellectual, and arts and culture varies according to the monthly income. The higher the monthly income, the more frequently one participates in traveling, intellectual, artistic, and cultural activities.

Table 20. Frequency of Activity Participation by Monthly Income

Monthly Income	Activities		NB		V		F/R		T		I		A/C	
	N	X	F		X		F		X		F		X	
			P		P		P		P		P		P	
10.000 ₺ and below	154	2,99			2,79		3,81		3,42		3,75		3,31	
10.001₺-20.000₺	85	3,51	3,172		2,98	2,656	3,86	2,161	3,79	4,412	3,62	2,394	3,45	3,383
20.001₺-30.000₺	72	3,57			3,19		3,93		3,79		3,85		3,63	
30.001₺-40.000₺	79	3,51	,005		2,75	,015	4,14	,045	3,89	,000	3,95	,027	3,38	,003
40.001₺-50.000₺	68	3,13			3,41		3,99		3,99		4,09		3,75	
50.001₺-60.000₺	46	3,22			2,89		3,70		3,46		4,11		2,96	
60.001₺ and over	33	3,42			2,67		4,18		4,09		4,12		3,79	

Note: (NB) Nature-Based, (V) Voluntary, (F/R): with Friends/Relatives, (T) Travelling, (I) Intellectual, (A/C) Artistic and Cultural

Hypothesis 2h: There is a noticeable difference recreational activities participation frequency according to the visiting partners of local people. The results from the Table 21 support this hypothesis ($p < 0.05$). The frequency of participation in various activities, including nature, volunteering, activities with friends/relatives, travel, arts and culture, and other individually performed activities, varies according to their partners while visiting. Individual participation in activities is relatively low, whereas participation with relatives is more frequent.

Table 21. Frequency of Activity Participation by Visiting Partner

	Activities	NB	V		F/R		T		A/C		OIP		
Visiting Partner	N	X	$\frac{F}{P}$	X	$\frac{F}{P}$	X	$\frac{F}{P}$	X	$\frac{F}{P}$	X	$\frac{F}{P}$	X	$\frac{F}{P}$
Alone	65	2,86		2,37		3,60		3,37		2,94		3,68	
With my wife/husband and children	231	3,50	7,049	2,95	3,808	3,95	3,546	3,77	2,470	3,49	5,622	3,75	3,292
With my family (Mum, Dad, Sibling)	56	2,95	,000	3,20	,005	4,21	,007	3,57	,044	3,66	,000	4,07	,011
With my Relatives	33	3,88		3,12		3,94		3,82		3,97		4,24	
With my friends	152	3,16		3,05		3,88		3,80		3,39		3,61	

Note: (NB) Nature-Based, (V) Voluntary, (F/R): with Friends/Relatives, (T) Travelling, (A/C) Artistic and Cultural, (OIP) Other Individually Performed

Hypothesis 2i: There is a significant difference recreational activities participation frequency according to the activity period of local people. The results from the Table 22 support this hypothesis ($p < 0.05$). Volunteer activity participation was the only activity for which there was a higher frequency during the week than at the weekend.

Table 22. Participants' Frequency of Participation in Activities According to Activity Period

Activity Period	Activities		t p
	N	X̄	
Weekday	215	3,2140	14,424
Weekend	322	2,7640	,000

Hypothesis 2j: There is a significant difference recreational activities participation frequency according to the duration of activity participation of local people. The results from the Table 23 support this hypothesis ($p < 0.05$). The frequency of participation in various activities, including nature, volunteering, activities with friends/relatives, travel, intellectual, arts and culture, and other individually performed activities, varies according to the duration of activity participation. In general, the frequency of activity increases in accordance with the weekly activity duration of individuals.

Table 23. Frequency of Activity Participation According to Duration of Activity Participation

	Activities	NB	V		F/R		T		I		A/C		OIP	
Duration (per week)	N	X	$\frac{F}{P}$	X	$\frac{F}{P}$	X	$\frac{F}{P}$	X	$\frac{F}{P}$	X	$\frac{F}{P}$	X	$\frac{F}{P}$	X
1-5 hours	264	2,96		2,75		3,61		3,39		3,63		3,19		3,56
6-10 hours	189	3,64	13,055	3,05	4,600	4,16	21,561	4,06	19,908	4,05	9,586	3,59	10,281	3,85
11-15 hours	49	3,61	,000	3,33	,003	4,41	,000	4,18	,000	4,18	,000	3,82	,000	4,23
16 hours and more	35	3,49		3,34		4,17		3,57		4,23		4,00		4,20

Note: (NB) Nature-Based, (V) Voluntary, (F/R): with Friends/Relatives, (T) Travelling, (I) Intellectual, (A/C) Artistic and Cultural, (OIP) Other Individually Performed

Hypothesis 2k: There is a significant difference recreational activities participation frequency according to the perception of the adequacy of recreation areas/facilities of local people. The results from the Table 24 support this hypothesis ($p < 0.05$). The frequency of participating in various activities, including nature, activities with friends/relatives, travel, intellectual, arts and culture, and other individually performed

activities, varies according to perception of the adequacy of recreation areas/facilities. In general, depending on individuals' perceptions that recreation areas/facilities are sufficient, the frequency of activity participation also increases.

Table 24. Frequency of Activity Participation by The Perception of the Adequacy of Recreation Areas/Facilities

Adequacy	Activities	NB		F/R		T		I		A/C		OIP	
	N	X	$\frac{F}{P}$	X	$\frac{F}{P}$	X	$\frac{F}{P}$	X	$\frac{F}{P}$	X	$\frac{F}{P}$	X	$\frac{F}{P}$
Definitely Inadequate	188	3,18		3,86		3,76		4,03		3,43		3,71	
Inadequate	165	3,18	7,641	3,90	3,924	3,45	10,918	3,71	4,329	3,22	9,484	3,56	16,564
Partially adequate	90	3,09	,000	3,73	,004	3,54	,000	3,61	,002	3,22	,000	3,43	,000
Adequate	58	3,78		4,26		4,09		4,02		4,02		4,41	
Definitely Adequate	36	4,11		4,19		4,53		4,14		4,11		4,78	

Note: (NB) Nature-Based, (V) Voluntary, (F/R): with Friends/Relatives, (I) Intellectual, (A/C) Artistic and Cultural, (OIP) Other Individually Performed

Hypothesis 3: There is a significant correlation between local people's recreation area preferences and their participation frequency in activities. The results from the Table 25 support this hypothesis ($p < 0.01$). The results of the correlation analysis indicated a statistically significant positive relationship between recreation area preferences and participation frequency in various recreational activities. Except for the relationship between the frequency of participation in voluntary activities and the variables about sportive diversity and physical facilities, a significant positive relationship was observed between all sub-dimensions. The study revealed a strong positive correlation between staff facilities and the frequency of participation in travel and other individual activities. Additionally, a highly positive correlation was observed between the frequency of participation in intellectual and arts/cultural activities. The relationship between recreation area preferences and the frequency of participation in recreational activity types in other sub-dimensions is low to moderate. A correlation coefficient between 0 and 0.29 indicates a weak or low relationship, between 0.30 and 0.64 indicates a moderate relationship, between 0.65 and 0.84 indicates a strong or high relationship, and between 0.85 and 1 indicates a very strong or very high relationship (Ural & Kılıç, 2013). Furthermore, a high positive relationship was found when evaluating the cumulative relationship between recreational activities participation frequency and recreation area preferences ($r = 0.742$, $p < 0.001$).

Table 25. Relationship between Recreation Area Preferences and Frequency of Activity Participation

Activities/Preferences		Sportive diversity	Personnel	Location	Physical facility	Activity
Nature-Based	Pearson Correlation	,239**	,445**	,316**	,247**	,264**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000
	N	537	537	537	537	537
Voluntary	Pearson Correlation	,082	,383**	,142**	,056	,154**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,057	,000	,001	,195	,000
	N	537	537	537	537	537
with Friends/ Relatives	Pearson Correlation	,409**	,632**	,239**	,413**	,405**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000
	N	537	537	537	537	537
Travelling	Pearson Correlation	,358**	,777**	,322**	,295**	,325**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000
	N	537	537	537	537	537
Intellectual	Pearson Correlation	,466**	,849**	,266**	,387**	,320**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000
	N	537	537	537	537	537

Tablo 25 Continued

Artistic/ Cultural	Pearson Correlation	,353**	,903**	,273**	,259**	,412**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000
	N	537	537	537	537	537
Other Individually Performed	Pearson Correlation	,447**	,826**	,381**	,429**	,523**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000
	N	537	537	537	537	537

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study offers significant insights into the interrelationship between these behaviours by examining the preferences regarding recreation areas and activity participation rates of urban dwellers residing in the Şanlıurfa province. The findings corroborate those of previous research (Gümüş & Koç, 2019; Gönen et al., 2022; Şimşek & Kırtepe, 2023) in confirming that sportive diversity and the availability of physical facilities are the primary determinants of recreation area preference. Another noteworthy outcome of this study is the identification of significant variations in recreation area preferences according to socio-demographic characteristics, including gender, age, education level, marital status, occupation, length of residence, monthly income, frequency of partner visits to the area, duration of activity participation, and perceptions of the adequacy of recreation areas and facilities. In previous studies, recreation area preferences have been found to differ according to gender (Gönen et al., 2022; Önaç et al., 2018; Öztürk, 2022; Sarı, 2019; Togo & Öztürk, 2020), age (Öztürk, 2022; Sarı, 2019; Sezer & Akova, 2016), (Şimşek & Kırtepe, 2023; Togo & Öztürk, 2020), educational level (Öztürk, 2022; Sarı, 2019; Sezer & Akova, 2016; Şimşek & Kırtepe, 2023), marital status (Kırtepe et al, 2017; Öztürk, 2022; Şimşek & Kırtepe, 2023; Togo & Öztürk, 2020), occupation (Sarı, 2019), duration of residence (Önaç et al., 2018), income level (Önaç et al., 2018; Sarı, 2019). The study's findings confirm these findings considering the above evidence.

The study also revealed that recreation activities participation frequency differs according to socio-demographic characteristics, including gender, age, education level, marital status, occupation, length of residence, monthly income, number of partners visiting the area, times of participation in activities, and perceptions of the adequacy of recreation areas/facilities. Previous studies have demonstrated that the recreational activities participation frequency varies according to demographic variables, including gender (Demirbaş, 2020; İskender et al., 2015; Müderrisoğlu & Uzun, 2004; Önaç et al., 2018), age (Demirbaş, 2020; İskender et al., 2015), education level (İskender et al., 2015), marital status (Demirbaş, 2020), length of residence (Önaç et al., 2018) and income level (Demirbaş, 2020; Müderrisoğlu & Uzun, 2004; Önaç et al., 2018). Considering the evidence mentioned above, the study's findings can corroborate these findings.

The study demonstrated a significantly high positive correlation between recreational activities participation frequency and recreation area preferences. In previous studies, the relationship between sporting activities participation frequency and recreation area preference has been established (Kırtepe et al., 2017; Öztürk, 2022; Şimşek & Kırtepe, 2023). This study reveals new findings regarding the relationship between the frequency of participation and recreation area preference according to different activity types. The study demonstrated a strong positive relationship between staff opportunities and participation in travelling and other individual activities and a strong positive relationship between intellectual and artistic/cultural activities participation frequency. The relationship between recreation area preferences and the frequency of participation in the types of recreational activities in the other sub-dimensions was found to be low-medium.

5.1. Theoretical Implications

This study's findings highlight the relationship between urban residents' socio-demographic characteristics, their preferences for recreational areas, and frequency of recreational activity participation. The primary determinants of recreation area preference are the diversity of sporting activities and the availability of physical facilities. The study suggests new insights into the influence of various factors on local people's preferences regarding recreation areas. These factors include the partner with whom local

people visit the recreation area, the time they participate in the activity, the activity period, and their perceptions of the adequacy of the recreation area/facilities. The partner with whom local people visits the recreation area has been found to influence the importance attached to various factors. Those who participate in activities with family and relatives tend to emphasise staff facilities and activity diversity more. Similarly, individuals who engage in weekend leisure activities tend to prioritise sporting diversity and physical facilities. Furthermore, the perceived importance of the variables influencing recreation area preferences has increased proportionately to the time spent in activities and the perceived adequacy of the recreation areas/facilities.

The study presents novel findings regarding the influence of various factors on recreational activities participation frequency. These factors include the occupational group of the local population, the partner with whom they visit the recreation area, the time spent participating in the activity, the duration of the activity, and their perceptions of the adequacy of the recreation area/facilities. The occupational group of the local people is a significant factor influencing the type of activities in which they engage. For instance, government officials and students tend to participate in intellectual activities, while self-employed individuals and tradespeople participate in other activities at a higher rate. Participation in recreational activities is relatively low overall, although participation with relatives is more frequent. Voluntary recreation activities are more frequently participated in on weekdays. Furthermore, the frequency of participation in activities has been found to increase depending on the perception of individuals that recreation areas/opportunities are sufficient.

The positive correlation between recreation area preferences and participation frequency reinforces that well-designed, accessible spaces can promote regular engagement. This relationship between preferences and activity levels emphasizes the need for recreation areas to provide physical, social, and psychological benefits, addressing various aspects of well-being. The strong connection between preferences and socio-demographic attributes also suggests that creating recreational opportunities aligned with users' specific life circumstances can increase participation, supporting their quality of life. Moreover, the study introduces a detailed categorization of activity types—such as nature-based, intellectual, artistic-cultural, and voluntary—and their distinct associations with recreation area preference dimensions. These results underline that not only general participation but also the specific nature of the activity plays a crucial role in shaping preference structures. The nuanced differentiation observed, for example, in the weaker link between voluntary activity participation and physical facilities, versus the stronger correlation between intellectual/artistic activities and staff adequacy, adds a new layer to our understanding of how recreation space features align with activity types. This provides a theoretical foundation for activity-type-specific recreation planning.

5.2. Practical Implications

The study provides actionable insights for the design of inclusive, appealing, and widely used recreational spaces for urban planners, recreation leaders, and policymakers. The study underscores the pivotal role of sports diversity and the availability of physical amenities in shaping the preferences regarding recreational areas. Furthermore, customising recreation areas based on demographic insights can encourage repeat visits and meet various recreational needs. Given that income and occupation influence recreational preferences, providing affordable and diverse recreational options is essential to fostering inclusivity. Recreation areas with affordable and accessible features can foster community integration. Recreation areas can provide inclusive environments that attract a diverse population by offering a range of intellectual, social, cultural, and physical activities within one location.

By grasping how demographic variables influence the preferences associated with the use of recreational areas and the level of participation in activities within these areas, those responsible for formulating policy and those engaged in urban planning can create recreational spaces that enhance individual well-being and support social inclusivity. By prioritising the diversity of sports, natural settings, accessibility and public awareness of facility adequacy, it can foster higher engagement, improving community health and cohesion. The study presents a foundation for future research and practical applications, supporting the

strategic design and management of recreational spaces that align with the preferences of a diverse urban population and thus contribute to the overall quality of life and social inclusivity.

In practical terms, the findings also suggest the need to move beyond one-size-fits-all recreational design. For example, nature-based and travel activities are more common among men, while intellectual and artistic activities attract more educated and professionally active users. As such, tailoring specific zones within a single recreational area—such as quiet reading corners with art exhibits for intellectual users, alongside natural trails and sports fields—can support varied user demands within shared public spaces. Additionally, since participation significantly increases with perceived adequacy, visual cues of facility quality (e.g., visible cleanliness, clear signage, staff presence) should be integrated as a strategic design element to reinforce positive perception and boost use.

5.3. Limitations and Future Research

The study is limited by residents of the central districts of Şanlıurfa province, which limits the generalisability of its findings to other regions. Further research could address this limitation by including samples from various geographic locations, thus validating the findings and exploring regional differences in recreation preferences. Additionally, the participants were selected via convenience sampling, and the study relied on self-reported data, which may be subject to response bias. The utilisation of longitudinal methodologies and observational data collection in future studies could enhance the reliability of results and facilitate a more profound understanding of changes over time in recreation preferences. Moreover, the study focused on socio-demographic characteristics, recreation preferences and participation frequency. It would be advantageous for future research to investigate additional psychological and social factors, such as personality traits, mental health status and social networks, which may influence recreation preferences and participation. Additionally, further research could explore causal relationships through experimental designs to determine the impact of specific recreational facilities on well-being outcomes.

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