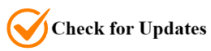# Digital Nomads' Leisure Time and Examination of Recreation Perceptions

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Abstract: This research aims to examine the leisure and recreation perceptions of individuals who live their lives as digital nomads. In the research, 'case study' method, which is one of the qualitative research methods, was used. The research consists of 14 individuals who continue their lives as digital nomads. The voluntary consent form was approved by the individuals participating in the research. The digital nomads whose voluntary consent form was approved were asked to answer the questions in the personal information form. Participants who answered the personal information form were asked to answer the interview questions. Nvivo data analysis software was used in the data analysis of the research. As a result of the research, it was revealed that individuals who continue their lives as digital nomads are aware that they continue their lives as 'digital nomads'. It was determined that individuals who live their lives as digital nomads define themselves with concepts such as thrill-seeking, mobility, learning by doing, continuous development, desire to succeed, happiness, socialisation, entrepreneurship and time management. It has been determined that individuals who continue their lives as digital nomads take part in sportive (physical) recreation, cultural recreation and touristic (tourism) recreation activities in their occupational choices. It has been revealed that digital nomads give place to the concepts of freedom, comfort, happiness and high energy as a difference between doing their professions in a fixed lifestyle. Digital nomads are constantly travelling and can work in any environment where the internet is available by adopting an online working method during their travels. It is thought that digital nomads who both make a living and travel the world can play an important role in strengthening the unity of definition as a new profession in the sector as business data recreation.

Keywords: Digital nomad, leisure, recreation.

1. Introduction

Survival, one of the most basic instincts of humanity, has always existed since the day humanity existed. Despite the difficult conditions of the geographies where people have lived throughout their lives and the various disasters they have faced throughout their lives, they have managed to survive in line with the opportunities they have (Acar, 2021). While trying to survive against the disasters, human beings have continued their lives as nomads in order to meet their own needs and live in a safe environment (Akgül, 2006). Nomadic societies have brought along certain mobilizations in continents. People's search for new places, increasing needs and insufficient natural resources have forced people to migrate (Tan, 2013). Throughout world history, migrations between continents have sometimes accelerated and sometimes slowed down. There has never been a period when the concept of migration has disappeared (Karakaya, 2020). Today, military forces emerging with the developing technology, the population of large countries increasing day by day and the desire to have various underground resources have brought wars. These wars have brought security problems especially in countries in the Middle East (Ertan & Ertan, 2017). This increasing insecurity in the Middle East

has forced people in that region to migrate to neighbouring countries. During these migrations, Turkey has become a stopover for mass migration (Demirhan & Aslan, 2015).

In the 18th century, the Industrial Revolution, which started in England, also brought the era of mechanization. The industrial revolution gradually started to show its effect all over the world. The age of mechanization has reduced the need for manpower and brought social changes (Şahin, 2019).

The period between 1860-1900 is called the Second Industrial Revolution. The Second Industrial Revolution is a period in which many new technologies emerged. The inventions that emerged with this technology are the harbingers of the period that will last for approximately 70 years (Atkenson & Kehoe, 2001). Today, the Third Industrial Revolution welcomes us. It is known as the progress of technology day by day, affecting the direction and form of production (Davutoğlu, 2020). In the 21st century, technology, which has become a part of our lives, has caused many changes. It shows that we have stepped into the digital age, which is the new age with the changing world (Saykılı, 2019).

The digital age, which is a new era, has an important place in the working lives of individuals. New business lines have also emerged with digitalization. One of these business lines is digital nomadism (İmamoğlu & Barutçu, 2023). Digital nomadism is people who do not have a working connection with the office; instead, they are people who freely decide where to work. Digital nomads who carry their computers with them can easily handle their work in any environment where the internet is available (Hannonen, 2020). Individuals living as digital nomads do not have time and space restrictions. They can access the files they need at any time (Makimoto, 2013).

The advancement of technology and the use of these technological products in daily life increase the popularity of individuals living as digital nomads' day by day (Nash, 2018). The increasing number of individuals living their lives as digital nomads has become a very important resource for states. Countries want to increase their capital, countries want to promote more and compete to attract digital nomads to their countries for their economic policies (Busuttil, 2021).

The increase in digitalization day by day and people who are bored with monotonous working life have created a new order in business life where they want to travel and earn money. The desire of people to make good use of their leisure time, which has become more differentiated with the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, has created an opportunity for digital nomads (Yılmaz & Gürbüz, 2023).

With the industrial revolution, the decrease in the need for manpower and the shortening of working hours have led to an increase in people's free time. Leisure time is the time outside the working hours (Demir & Demir, 2006). Leisure time is also very important for the welfare of people and the functioning of society (Mullens & Glorieux, 2023). People prepare themselves for the next day by utilizing their leisure time with recreational activities to get rid of the tiredness of the day, to get away from monotonous life and to get away from stress during the day (Tütüncü et al., 2011).

Recreational activities contribute to emotional stability in people, maintaining well-being during the day, self-esteem and a sense of well-being. Recreational activities contribute positively to the physical health, mental health, mental health and spiritual health of individuals (Ibhafidon et al. 2021). People need recreational activities to support and protect physical health, to strengthen socialization, to reveal talents, to work efficiently in the field of work and to be happy in life (Yaylı, 2024).

The number of digital nomads living in various parts of the world is increasing day by day with the development of technology. Digital nomads, who can work in any environment where there is internet, have emerged as a new line of business. In this study, it is thought that it will add a different perspective and innovation to the field.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Research Group

The study group of the research consists of digital nomads, who are individuals who work online while maintaining a lifestyle based on travel, where the boundaries between work, leisure and travel disappear (Reichenberger, 2018). The digital nomads in the research group were reached via messages from social media platforms (Instagram, YouTube, etc.). A total of 14 participants voluntarily participated in the research. Of these participants, 14 people (11 male, 3

female) were participants. The most important issue taken into consideration while including the participants in the research is that they volunteer to participate and continue their lives as digital nomads.

2.2. Research Design

In this study, in which the leisure and recreation perceptions of digital nomads are examined, 'case study', one of the qualitative research methods, was used. Case study has a rich history dating back to well-known theorists such as Piaget, Freud and Darwin. Case study provides an in-depth understanding of the situation by using various data collection tools (interviews, observations, reflective diaries) and different perspectives (child, teacher, parent, researcher) to capture the perspectives of various participants (Mills et al, 2009). Case study can be defined as an intensive study conducted with a person or a group and aiming to generalize about more than one data. Case study can also be defined as an intensive and systematic investigation of an individual or a group in which the researcher examines data on various variables in depth (Heale & Twycross, 2017).

2.3. Data Collection

In this study, data collection consisted of 2 stages in total. The interviews were conducted over the internet and recorded. In the first stage, before starting the interviews with the participants, the participants were informed about the general and subject headings of the research. Afterwards, the interview started by asking for permission to record the interview. The 'Voluntary Consent Form', which provides general information about the research and undertakes that the data will not be processed and used for any purpose other than scientific purposes, was presented to the participants who accepted the interview, and their approval was obtained. In the second stage, the participants who participated in the study were asked to provide information about themselves and the 'Personal Information Form' questions, which included demographic information. This information form includes questions such as age, gender, marital status, education level. In the third stage, 'Interview Questions' prepared in a semi-structured manner were transferred to the participants. In general, the questions prepared to understand the examination of digital nomads' perceptions of leisure and recreation were directed to the participants.

2.4. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using NVivo qualitative data analysis software and presented in tables, graphs and models in the findings section. The data obtained from descriptive responses and observer interviews were analyzed in NVivo 10 qualitative data analysis software.

2.5. Validity and Reliability

Validity deals with the accuracy of the results of the research or the ability to solve problems. Validity in qualitative research is to solve the problem of the researched subject as objectively as possible. The degree to which the data reflects the actual situation is important. Addressing the research problem as a whole or focusing on all the features of the phenomenon under study are important validity criteria (Baltacı, 2019). The main purpose of research in qualitative study is the researcher himself. The data obtained in the research cannot be consistent and reproducible. Even if the research is repeated by other researchers, it is not possible to obtain the same results even under similar conditions and conditions (Yağar & Dökme, 2018). Reliability means that the findings and interpretations of the research are the product of a consistent process. The process of obtaining the findings should be as clear and reproducible as possible. This issue is closely related to qualitative research (Arastaman et al. 2018).

2.6. Ethics Committee Permission

'Ethics Committee Approval' (Date: 31.01.2023, Number: E.476679) was obtained from Manisa Celal Bayar University Institute of Social Sciences Ethics Committee. Before data collection, participants were thoroughly informed about the study through a detailed presentation and subsequently provided written consent. The research was carried out in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the Declaration of Helsinki.

3. Results

In this part of the study, the personal characteristics of the participants such as age, gender, marital status, educational status, department studied, profession, years of profession, fields of occupation, areas of specialization, how many times

a year do you change destinations (destination) are presented in tables. In addition, descriptive analyses of the participants' perceptions of leisure and recreation are presented.

Table 1. Demographic information of digital nomad individuals

	Personal Feature	Number of Participants	%
	21 age	1	%6
	23 age	4	%27
	24 age	1	%7
	27 age	2	%13
Age Distribution	28 age	2	%13
	29 age	2	%13
	37 age	1	%7
	40 age	1	%7
	51 age	1	%7
Gender	Male	11	%79
	Female	3	%21
Marital Status	Single	9	%64
	Married	5	%36
Education Status	Primary School	1	%7
	High school	2	%14
	Licence	11	%79

Table 1 shows that the participants were between the ages of 21-51. Gender distribution of the participants It was determined that 3 of the participants were female and 11 of them were male. It was determined that 9 of the participants were single and 5 were married. It was determined that 1 of the participants graduated from primary school, 2 from high school, 2 from associate degree and 9 from bachelor's degree.

Table 2. Distribution of the participants according to their departments

	Personal Feature	Number of Participants	%
	Faculty of Sport Sciences	3	%25
	Computer Engineering	2	%17
	Machine Shipbuilding	1	%9
	Travel Management	1	%9
Study Department	Brand Communication	1	%8
	Industrial Engineering	1	%8
	Public Relations and Publicity	1	%8
	English Business	1	%8
	Electronics Department (Vocational High School)	1	%8
	Total	12	

Table 2, it is determined that 3 of the participants are studying Sports Sciences, 2 are studying Computer Engineering, 1 is studying Mechanical Engineering, 1 is studying Travel Management, 1 is studying Brand Communication, 1 is studying Industrial Engineering, 1 is studying Public Relations and Publicity, 1 is studying English Business Administration, 1 is studying Vocational High School, 1 is studying primary school and 1 is studying active university education.

Table 3. Frequency of national and international destinations of the participants

Participant	National	International
K1	4	—
K2	4	—
K3	3	—
K4	10	—
K5	More than 20	20
K6	8	—
K7	15	—
K8	—	10
K9	—	10
K10	10	10
K11	30	30
K12	More than 20	12
K13	10	15
K14	10	5

Table 3, the distribution of the participants according to the number of times a year you change your destination (destination) nationally/internationally is determined.

3.1. Findings Related to Participants' Perceptions of Leisure and Recreation
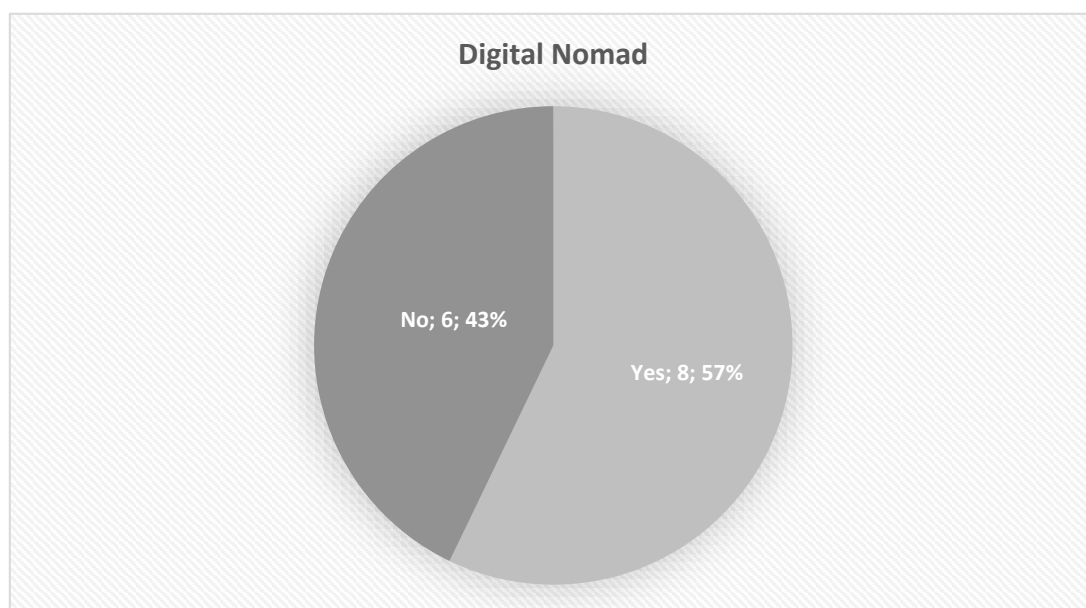
Graphic 1. Digital nomad awareness

In Graph 1, it is seen that 57% of the participants are aware of 'digital nomad' and 43% are not aware of 'digital nomad'. Participants' awareness of "Digital Nomad" is presented below.

> *I don't like sitting, staying calm and staying still for a long time, so I am constantly moving. I see myself as a digital nomad (P1). It makes us adapt the work we do more and become more digital nomads (P3). I have been living as a digital nomad for 8 years (P7). I can do different jobs in different parts of the world. Digital nomadism actually respects this a little bit (P11). In terms of digital nomadism, we can actually consider video work as an area of expertise in the last period (P12).*
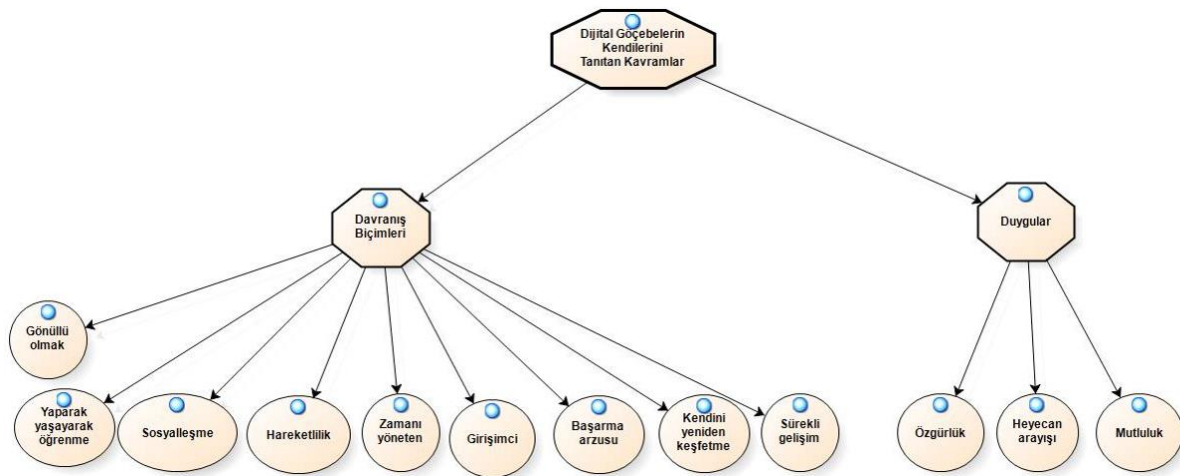
Figure 1. Concepts that recognize digital selves

The concepts that the participants introduced themselves are given in model 1. The statements of the participants about their personal characteristics are presented below.

Statements of the participants about the concept of happiness; I can travel alone, which is personal to me, and at the same time, while travelling, I can fulfil my hobby, earn money and provide for the house. I think he lives a happier life by doing 3-5 things together (P7). I am happy, I have a flexible way of working and we have a versatile job (P5).

The statements of the participants about freedom; I am already happy because I feel free and I want to do these things (P2). I experience freedom by travelling and since I ride a motorbike independently, I do not have the obligation to have 4-5 people following me like a car (P7).

Desire to succeed; if a man is successful in something, he must love it (P4).

Time management: I look at it more as time management (P10).
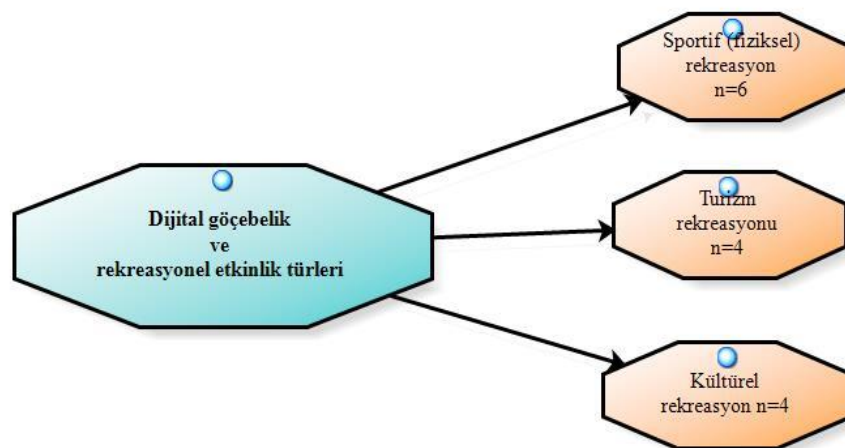
Figure 2. Participants' digital nomadism and recreational activity types

Model 2, it was determined that the concepts of sportive (physical) recreation, tourism recreation and cultural recreation were included among the digital nomad and recreational activity types. The statements of the participants about the activity types are presented below.

Statements of the participants about sportive (physical) recreation; I like to do sports and create opportunities for the sports I like and go to those regions and do them there (P2). We decide according to the season. The time we will do is very important for us because what we do is nature sports (P6). Statements of the participants related to tourism

recreation; Our priority is tourism during tourism (P5).   Statements of the participants related to cultural recreation; We also show it to people when we visit. People's favorite thing to see is the cultures in other countries (P8). Let's make a culture and art trip (P13).

Figure 3. 'I' as a digital nomad

Table 4. Concepts of 'I' as a Digital Nomad

	Free
	Mobile
	Having fun
	High Energy
	Comfortable
	I do not take orders
	Working on Myself
Concepts of 'I' as a Digital Nomad	I Earn More
	I Feel Like I'm Different
	Social
	Peacemaker
	Helpful
	Experiencing Life
	Happy
	Peace

The statements of the participants about the concept of freedom.

I am incredibly free, this freedom can be used in many different ways. You can be free in your social life, you can be free in your environment, freedom is all of these freedoms (P3). I can take my family and live in Van for 5 years, I can live in Balıkesir for 3 years. I can go abroad and live there. It gives me complete freedom (P7). I can do whatever I want, I am more free (P14). The statements of the participants about the concept of comfort; *We do whatever project we have in mind that day. Therefore, it has such a comfort (P4). Because I am very comfortable, I can do whatever I want, I get up at the time I want and go to bed at the time I want in the evening (P7).* The statements of the participants about the concept of happiness; *Absolutely happiness (P10). It allows us to do our work more happily (P11). It's really beautiful and happy for human beings (P12). I am more happy to live this way (P14).* The statements of the participants related to high energy: *I don't want to extinguish the energy in me, that's why I chose such a lifestyle (P2). I don't think I will ever, ever choose this fixed life to feel energized (P3).*

4. Discussion

When the information on demographic findings is evaluated in general, the digital nomadic individuals who participated in the research consist of a total of 14 individuals, 11 of whom are male and 3 of whom are female. It is seen that the ages of these individuals are between 21-51 years old.

It shows that the number of male participants in the research group is higher than the number of female participants and there is a difference between them. The main reason for this may be due to the difficulties of living as a digital nomad and the role of women in society. In the study conducted by Kılıç and Öztürk (2014), it is shown that women's workload at home is one of the obstacles to women's employment, and in the study conducted by Karatepe and Arıbaş (2017), the fact that business life is generally determined as male-dominated in society causes women to be put in the second plan in the business world and overlaps with the study.

There is variability in the age ranges of the participants. The main reason for this difference is that individuals in the research group have the opportunity to live as digital nomads at any age. The fact that individuals who are fond of traveling around the world, earning money and freedom want to live as digital nomads shows us that individuals of all ages can live as digital nomads.

When other demographic characteristics of the participants are examined, it is seen that single participants include more people than married participants. In addition, considering the educational status of the participants, it is noteworthy that the number of individuals with bachelor's degree level education is high. Individuals who continue their lives as digital nomads continue their lives in various parts of the world. It is thought that these individuals change their locations frequently and continue their lives as single because they are fond of their freedom. Considering the cost of living, digital nomads are thought to continue their lives as single. In addition, since digital nomads do not dream of a future such as having a profession and doing the same job as in past generations, they do not prefer to establish a regular family life and prefer to live as single (Öztornacı, 2024). It is thought that the fact that the education level of digital nomads is high at the undergraduate level, that each of them is intellectually productive individuals as a literate person, and that their social media shares are high as a result of technological developments facilitate both the awareness of individuals in terms of the conditions they are in and the opportunity to meet and communicate with other people who share similar views with them (Ardatürk, 2022). It is seen that the frequency of national and international destinations of the participants is different. The main reason for this is thought to be that the frequency of destinations varies as each digital nomad decides how much he/she will move every year and the advantages that countries apply for digital nomads.

It was determined that the participants' awareness of "digital nomad" (Graphic 1) was higher than those who were not aware of it. It is thought that the main reason for this situation is that the concept of digital nomadism is more prominent today. In the study conducted by Karacaoğlan and Şahin (2016), it is seen that employees with higher levels of awareness provide more job satisfaction. Individuals with high job mindfulness prefer to face their negative experiences without prejudice rather than getting stuck in them. It has been concluded that employees with high levels of mindfulness increase their job satisfaction and job performance and reduce their turnover intentions (Yalçınkaya, 2020). The results of this study are consistent with the results of the studies conducted in the literature.

In the personal characteristics of the participants (Model 1), concepts such as happiness, rediscovering oneself, freedom, thrill-seeking, entrepreneur, desire to succeed, time management, mobility, continuous development, volunteering, socialization and learning by living by living were included. Individuals who are in a suitable profession willingly do their jobs in society, progress in their profession, and live happy and productive lives (Sarıkaya & Khorshıd, 2009). Freedom has become a concept that has concerned all humanity since the early ages. It means that human beings act independently of all kinds of external influences, based on their own will (Ayaz, 2021). In the study conducted by Sarıkaya and Khorshıd (2009), it was found that young people value freedom and make career choices accordingly. It is thought that individuals who continue their lives as digital nomads value their freedom and continue their lives in this way because they do not want to work in an office environment. The results of this study are consistent with the studies conducted in the literature.

The type that is based on physical exercise or recreational application of various sports branches and constitutes a large part of recreation activities is called sportive recreation (Birol & Karaküçük, 2014). In the study conducted by Gönen et

al. (2022), it was determined that they found it important to have paths such as walking, cycling and skating in recreation areas, and that it was important to provide opportunities to practice different sports branches. Tourism recreation is the recreational activities within the tourism product that digital nomads participate in to relax, spend their free time efficiently and be happy (Duman, 2024). It is thought that the main reason for this is that digital nomads want to see historical ruins, museums showing the cultures of the countries and works of art in the region and want to develop themselves culturally.

5. Conclusions

It has been revealed that individuals who are digital nomads have perceptions of leisure and recreation. In this study, examining all these concepts together will contribute to national and international researchers in terms of digital nomads' perceptions of leisure and recreation. The concept of digital nomadism can become widespread. The number of qualified academic and social studies can be increased. By reaching a higher number of digital nomads than the number of digital nomads reached, it may be possible to make a broad generalization. In the national literature, it is seen that studies evaluating digital nomads and leisure time are not at a sufficient level. Quantitative, qualitative and experimental studies can be conducted with more participants. Since data collection was conducted through interviews in the study, the activity areas were limited to the use of semi-structured order in order to facilitate observation and to facilitate the analysis of the data obtained. Studies can be conducted in unstructured areas with more participants using different observation methods. The results obtained from this research and similar studies can contribute to different approaches and planning. Research can be conducted on the effects of digital nomadism on different generations.

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