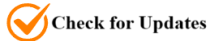


The Relationship Between Individuals' Perceived Health Outcomes in Recreation and Their Levels of Psychological Resilience

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Abstract: The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between individuals' perceived health outcomes of leisure activities and their psychological resilience levels. The study, based on a correlational survey model, was conducted with individuals who use recreational areas in Sakarya. The sample consisted of 493 participants, 261 women and 232 men, selected through convenience sampling. Data were collected using a Personal Information Form, the Perceived Health Outcomes of Recreation Scale, and the Psychological Resilience Scale. Pearson correlation and regression analyses were employed. The analysis results revealed a low, positive, and statistically significant relationship between the psychological experience factor of perceived health outcomes and psychological resilience. Furthermore, psychological experience was found to significantly predict psychological resilience. In conclusion, the study demonstrates that the positive psychological experiences individuals gain through recreational activities can enhance their psychological resilience levels. This finding highlights that psychological experience makes a significant contribution to resilience among the various influencing factors.

Keywords: Recreation, perceived health outcomes, psychological resilience.

1. Introduction

Leisure activities have become increasingly popular in recent years. Their accessibility, appeal across different age groups, contribution to healthy living, and role in promoting overall well-being enhance their significance. In industrialized, overcrowded, and concrete-dominated urban environments, individuals often seek opportunities for leisure as a means to escape stress, noise, physical fatigue, and other factors that diminish quality of life (Çoruh, 2019). Within this context, leisure and health perception have emerged as critical elements for maintaining a healthy and long life. Health perception refers to an individual's evaluation of their own health status through thoughts, emotions, biases, and expectations (Dursun et al., 2019).

Leisure activities are defined as the time individuals freely choose to engage in activities that are independent of obligations or external demands. In other words, leisure represents time that individuals can allocate according to their personal preferences. Such activities play a vital role in improving quality of life, supporting physical health, strengthening social relationships, and fulfilling self-actualization needs (Morse et al., 2021).

Recent studies have consistently highlighted the positive association between physical activity and health outcomes (Han et al., 2021; Lee et al., 2023; Michèle et al., 2019). Research conducted across different cultural contexts further supports this connection, emphasizing that leisure-time activities constitute a significant determinant of health promotion and well-being (Nielsen et al., 2021). Individuals encounter various situations in their daily lives. While some of these situations have positive effects on life, others may generate negative impacts. Positive experiences are often remembered as feelings of happiness, peace, and security, whereas negative experiences may manifest as stress, anxiety, worry, and fear. Research has shown that negative emotional states are more memorable than positive ones and exert a stronger influence on individuals' psychological well-being (Akçay & Çoruk, 2012; Aren & Akgüneş, 2018).

Psychological resilience refers to the ability to cope with challenging circumstances such as stress, trauma, and adverse life events (Rutter, 1987). Beyond this, the need for recreation—entertainment and relaxation—cannot be reduced to a single motivation for participation (Çuhadar et al., 2019). Individuals engage in recreational activities with the aim of achieving progress in physical, mental, and social domains, enhancing their living standards, and improving their overall well-being (Birol & Aydın, 2020). This aspect of recreational activities contributes to strengthening individuals' psychological resilience and helps them cope more effectively with negative emotional states.

Perceived health outcomes refer to individuals' subjective evaluations regarding their physical, mental, and social health (Warburton & Bredin, 2017). When individuals actively participate in recreational activities, particularly those that support cognitive and social development, their engagement may yield several positive outcomes. These include maintaining and improving physical and mental health, leading a healthier lifestyle, aiding in the treatment processes of various chronic diseases, reducing obesity problems, decreasing sedentary behaviors, and enhancing socialization. Such benefits are considered to contribute to an overall increase in quality of life (Dinç et al., 2018).

Recreational activities—especially sport-oriented ones—not only help individuals protect their physical health but also contribute to their mental well-being, thereby improving their living standards and positively influencing their levels of happiness (Weinberg & Gould, 2023; Yıldız & Ekici, 2017; Şimşek et al., 2020). From this perspective, leisure activities are increasingly recognized as an important means of strengthening physical health while also offering social and psychological benefits (Koç et al., 2024).

In light of this background, the aim of the present study is to examine the relationship between individuals' perceived health outcomes from recreational activities and their levels of psychological resilience. The study is expected to contribute to the development of strategies for enhancing public health and mental well-being, while also underscoring its importance by serving as a reference for future research.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Research Design

This study utilized the “correlational survey” model, a type of survey model. The correlational survey model is defined as a scientific approach that aims to reveal the relationship or effect between two different quantitative variables (Fraenkel et al., 2012).

2.2. Research Group

The research population consisted of individuals who use recreational areas in Sakarya. In selecting the sample, the technique of sampling from different populations was used, and it was decided to work with the population corresponding to the largest population (Yazıcıoğlu & Erdoğan, 2014). Based on this, a total of 493 individuals, 261 women and 232 men, selected through convenience sampling (Karagöz, 2017), voluntarily participated in the study. The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 75, with an average age of 33.28.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the participants (N = 493)

Gender	n	%
Female	261	52.9
Male	232	47.1
Total	493	100.0

When the table 1 is examined, it is seen that 52.9% of the participants were female (n = 261) and 47.1% were male (n = 232).

2.3. Data Collection Tools

Data for the study were obtained using a Personal Information Form, the Perceived Health Outcomes in Recreation Scale, and the Psychological Resilience Scale.

2.3.1. Personal information form

A personal information form consisting of three questions was used in the study to learn about the age, gender, and frequency of participation in recreational activities of the individuals.

2.3.2. Perceived health outcomes in recreation scale

This scale, designed to measure the perceived health outcomes of individuals participating in recreational activities, consists of 16 items across three subscales. This 7-point Likert-type scale was developed by [Gomez et al. \(2016\)](#) and adapted into Turkish by [Yerlisu Lapa et al. \(2020\)](#). The internal consistency coefficients of the subscales were calculated as follows: psychological experience subscale (.89), prevention of a worse condition subscale (.81), and improved condition subscale (.91). The items related to the subscales of the scale are as follows: psychological experience subscale (items 1-7), prevention of a worse situation subscale (items 8-12), and improved situation subscale (items 13-16). In the current study, the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for the sub-dimensions of the scale were calculated as follows: .819 for the psychological experience sub-dimension, .789 for the prevention of a worse condition sub-dimension, and .867 for the improved condition sub-dimension.

2.3.3. Short psychological resilience scale

The Short Psychological Resilience Scale (KPSÖ), developed by Smith et al. (2008) to determine the psychological resilience levels of individuals participating in recreational activities and adapted into Turkish by [Doğan \(2015\)](#), was used. The scale consists of 6 items on a 5-point Likert scale. A high score on the scale indicates that the participant has high psychological resilience. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the scale was found to be .83 ([Doğan, 2015](#)). In the current study, the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for the sub-dimensions of the scale was calculated as .842.

2.4. Data Collection

The data collection process lasted approximately four months, from January to April 2025. During data collection, participants were provided with detailed information and informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time.

2.5. Data Analysis

IBM SPSS 26 program was used to analyze the data in this study. The normality of the dataset was examined prior to statistical analyses, and skewness and kurtosis values were found to be within the range of -2 to +2, which is considered indicative of normal distribution in the literature ([George & Mallery, 2019](#)). Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and regression analyses were employed, and the significance level was set at $p < .05$.

2.6. Ethical Approval

The necessary ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Ethics Committee of Sakarya University of Applied Sciences, with the decision dated 12.12.2024 and numbered 51/25. All procedures were conducted in accordance with the principle of voluntary participation and adhered strictly to ethical standards. The research was carried out in line with the Directive on Scientific Research and Publication Ethics of Higher Education Institutions and the ethical principles of the Declaration of Helsinki. Prior to data collection, participants were fully informed about the purpose and procedures of the study and subsequently provided written consent.

3. Results

Table 2. Results of the relationship between perceived health outcomes in recreation and psychological resilience

Variable		The Realization of Psychological Experience	Preventing a Worse Situation	Improved Condition
Psychological Resilience	r	,108	,007	,057
	p	,016*	,883	,209

The Pearson correlation analysis in [Table 2](#) revealed a low-level significant positive relationship between the occurrence of psychological experiences and psychological resilience ($r=.108$; $p=.016$).

Table 3. Regression analysis results related to psychological resilience

Model	B	Std. Error	β	t	p
Constant	16.482	0.972	---	16.957	0.000
The Realization of Psychological Experience	0.441	0.183	0.108	2.411	0.016
R = 0.11 Adjusted R ² = 0.02 F(1,491) = 5.813 p = 0.016					
Dependent variable: <i>Psychological Resilience</i>					
Method: Stepwise					

The results of the simple linear regression analysis in Table 3 show that the regression model is significant. The analysis revealed that the occurrence of psychological experience ($\beta = 0.108$; $t = 2.411$; $p = 0.016$) has a positive and significant predictive power on psychological resilience. It can be stated that 2% of the variance in psychological resilience is explained by perceived health outcomes in recreation.

4. Discussion

The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between individuals' perceived health outcomes of leisure activities and their psychological resilience levels. The findings of the study are discussed below in light of the relevant literature. When the correlation analysis was examined in line with the research data, a positive and significant relationship was observed between the psychological resilience variable and the sub-dimension of psychological experience realization. A review of the literature reveals that Beşikçi et al. (2021) noted a positive and significant relationship between the level of psychological resilience and the sub-dimensions of perceived health outcomes in recreation, namely the realization of psychological experience, prevention of a worse condition, and improved condition variables. The fact that only a meaningful connection was found with the psychological experience sub-dimension in this study indicates that the connection in question is limited. This situation may vary depending on the structure of the sample, age group, or type of activity. Avcı-Taşkıran and Gürbüz (2018) found a positive relationship between perceived freedom in leisure time and psychological resilience in their study. This finding supports the idea that leisure activities have a positive effect on individuals' psychological well-being. Similarly, Yılmaz et al. (2024) stated that as psychological resilience increases, Elçi et al. (2019) stated that as psychological experience increases, life satisfaction also increases. The findings of our study indicate that recreational activities may have an effect on individuals' quality of life and psychological well-being. This result is consistent with the findings of Kural and Aydın (2023), who revealed a positive and significant relationship between psychological satisfaction and psychological resilience during leisure time. These findings suggest that leisure activities can contribute to individuals' satisfaction, happiness, and psychological resilience. Various studies in the literature also support these findings. Aydan (2025) found a positive and significant relationship between perceived health outcomes in recreation and successful aging. Temel and Tükel (2021) noted a positive and significant relationship between the occurrence of psychological experience and happiness levels among recreational participants. Yurdakul et al. (2025) stated that therapeutic recreational interventions increase psychological well-being and self-esteem; reduce stress; and increase happiness, thereby providing a positive psychological experience. Sahin and Yalcın (2024) have noted that there is a positive and significant relationship between perceived recreational benefits and life satisfaction in recreational activities. Zwart and Ewert (2022) have emphasized that individuals perceive improvements in psychological and physical health as health outcomes of recreational participation. Additionally, as perceived health outcomes in recreation increase, motivation to participate in activities will also increase (Özant et al., 2025).

According to the results obtained from the studies, it has been determined that the occurrence of psychological experiences has a significant predictive power on psychological resilience in a positive direction. Various studies are available in the literature. Buchecker and Degenhardt (2015) noted that the concept of well-being, which increases with participation in recreational activities, positively affects psychological well-being and that leisure activities are an important factor in increasing psychological resilience. Similar findings were obtained in our study, and the fact that the dimensions of psychological experience are related to resilience supports this view. Soria et al. (2022) stated that participation in recreational activities positively affects psychological resilience and a sense of belonging. Although our study did not directly investigate a sense of belonging, it can be considered that it may contribute to a sense of social

connectedness related to psychological resilience. Taşdemir and Demirkan (2022) noted that psychological resilience levels affect perceived stress levels, and as psychological resilience increases, perceived stress decreases. Stress was not directly measured in our study. However, the prediction of psychological resilience suggests that this mechanism works in the opposite direction, meaning that positive experiences reduce stress levels through resilience. Similarly, Denovan and Macaskill (2016) noted that participation in leisure activities supports coping with stress and developing psychological resilience. Sarol et al. (2024) noted that participation in leisure activities positively affects perceived health outcomes, in this case, both happiness and resilience. Our study supports these views. However, the fact that only the 'psychological experience' sub-dimension was found to be statistically significant in our study suggests that other dimensions need to be examined more comprehensively. Yıldırım et al. (2024) stated that an increase in psychological resilience leads to an increase in psychological health. Researchers have noted that this result is an important factor in terms of individuals coping with difficulties, adopting a healthy lifestyle, maintaining psychological health, and increasing well-being. Bekar (2019) has stated that the psychological experience sub-dimension of perceived health outcomes in recreation explains motivation to participate in exercise. Kurkmazlı (2022) stated that the psychological experience, which is a sub-dimension of perceived health outcomes in recreation, positively affects happiness levels in recreational activity participation. While our study is consistent with these findings, it is believed that leisure activities are an important tool for strengthening the psychological resilience levels of young people.

5. Conclusions

In conclusion, the positive psychological experiences that individuals encounter during recreational activities may play a significant role in enhancing their psychological resilience. These findings highlight psychological experience as an important factor among the various variables influencing resilience. Based on these results, it is recommended that recreational programs incorporate activities specifically designed to foster positive psychological experiences. In particular, activities that focus on stress management, self-awareness, and the promotion of emotional well-being may effectively support participants' psychological resilience. Furthermore, conducting more detailed studies examining the relationship between psychological experience and resilience across different age groups and demographic backgrounds would provide a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of this topic.

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Declaration of Data Availability: The data are publicly available

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