



### Why people participate leisure time physical activity: a Turkish perspective

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#### Abstract

This study was conducted for the assessment of why people participate leisure time physical activity and examine the differences in participation motives with regard to some demographic variables. Simple random sampling method was used in this study. The sample consisted of 146 female (Mage = 21.60 ± 2.01) and 167 male (Mage = 22.23 ± 2.21) randomly selected voluntary university students from different state universities in Ankara. In this study, the Personal Demographic Information Form (PDIF) and “Measure of Recreational Exercise Motivation (REMM)” scale (Roger and Morris, 2003) that adapted in to Turkish “The Physical Activity and Leisure Motivation Scale (PALMS)” by Aşçı et al. (2012) was administered on the participants. PALMS scale consisted of 34 items and following 8 subscales: (a) Mastery, (b) Physical condition, (c) Social relation, (d) Psychological condition, (e) Appearance, (f) Others’ expectations, (g) Enjoyment, (h) Competition. Descriptive statistics, MANOVA, and Pearson Correlation analysis were used to analyze the collected data. As a result MANOVA analysis indicated overall significant main effect of gender and frequency of exercise participation on “PALMS” scores. Furthermore, analysis indicated a significant and positive relationship between age and subscales of “Others’ Expectations” of the “PALMS”. Overall, the descriptive analysis showed that “Physical Condition” regarded as the most important factors that motive to exercise participation. The “Others’ Expectation” was the least important motive.

**Keywords:** Recreation, physical activity, leisure participation, motivation

## **INTRODUCTION**

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Recreation refers to psychological and physical renewal of participants, and makes them relaxed, refreshed, and enables to cope with mediocrity and challenges by providing the lifestyle varieties (Jensen and Naylor, 1999). Besides, recreation experiences create opportunities to seek out various psychological, physical and social benefits which effect participants' quality of life and life satisfaction (Malanorouzi et al., 2014; Küçükkılıç et al., 2013; Stumbo and Peterson, 2004). In addition, as we already know that regular leisure time physical activities have many benefits for increasing physiological and psychological wellbeing (Kilpatrick et al., 2010; Kimball and Freysinger, 2003; Zuzanek et al., 1998). According to Paterson and Stumbo (2004), these benefits are as follows; reduce the many health problems such as high blood pressure and heart disease; gain the strength towards life situations that effect the life negatively like smoking and obesity; develop the skills to prevent, manage and cope with stress; and provide increasing the opportunity self-knowledge, self-discovery and self-realization.

Although, there is plenty of study in the literature which were indicated the benefits of participation in physical activity on health and fitness (Hamer et al., 2002), most of the people in the world don't participate physical activity in recommended level (Rhodes and Dean, 2009; Güngörmüş, 2007). Therefore, it is important to understand reasons which lead the individuals to physical activity (Gürbüz and Henderson, 2014; Rogers and Morris, 2003). Because of the uncertainty of the valid reasons for participation, often directs researchers to ask "Why do people participate?," "Why do people not participate?" or "What encourages people to participate?" (Kim et al., 2011). The answers to these questions have explained in the literature with the "motivation" concept.

The term "motivation" was originally derived from the Latin word "movere", which means "to move" (Steers and Porter, 1987), and it is defined as "process of creating a behavior in the organism through incentives" (Doğan, 2005). Leisure motivation has been defined as "a need, reason, or satisfaction that stimulates involvement in a leisure activity" in 1980 by early pioneer Crandall (Cited by Chen and Pang, 2012). Ryan and Deci (2000) has been defined the leisure motivation has been defined as a self-determined construct. This construct was divided into three categories: intrinsic, extrinsic, and amotivation.

*Intrinsic* motivation is defined as the tendency to find out new challenges, bear down someone to his/her true capacity, explore, and learn. *Extrinsic* motivation is defined as the ability to perform in an activity and acquire a separable outcome and finally *Amotivation* is defined as the inability or reluctance to participate in leisure activity (Beggs et al., 2014).

Ryan and Deci (2000) underlined that motivation concept is directed positively to human life or is fulfilled basic psychological needs of individuals, can facilitate both enhanced human achievements and well-being. This determination of Ryan and Deci makes quite clear that why motivation concept is frequently used in the sport psychology and recreation psychology literature (Mutlu, et al., 2011). For example; Carroll and Alexandris (1997) indicated importance of motivation to overcome the leisure constraints and find out positive relationship between the participation frequency and motivation level of sample and Lavarie (1998) emphasized that motivators to leisure physical activity are varying among the consumers like healthy aging, weight control, avoiding the stress, having a good time, meeting the new people. As you see that besides the importance of the leisure physical activity, understanding the leisure motivators too important because it is recognized that there are a lots of reasons for someone participating, or not participating in leisure activities (Fawcett et al., 2016).

Despite of the importance of the leisure activity participation motivators, we can say that the researchers give study short shrift about the leisure (Gürbüz and Henderson; 2013) and specially leisure participation motivators in Turkey (Emir et al., 2014). But it is obviously important to make clear the motivators that lead to people leisure physical activity with variety of leisure studies. Therefore, this study was conducted for the assessing why people participate leisure time physical activity and examine the differences in participation motives with regard to some demographic variables.

## ***MATERIAL and METHOD***

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The purpose of this descriptive study was to assess the motivators of leisure time physical activity of university students and examine the differences in participation motives according to the some demographic variables.

## Participants

Simple random sampling method was used in this study. The participants of this descriptive research consisted of 146 female ( $M_{age} = 21.60 \pm 2.01$ ) and 167 male ( $M_{age} = 22.23 \pm 2.21$ ) university students were randomly selected from 3 different state universities in Ankara. Voluntary university students in the sample were from different faculty, gender, income, age, profession and leisure activity participation frequency.

## Data Collection Instrument

In this study, the Personal Demographic Information Form (PDIF) and “Measure of Recreational Exercise Motivation (REMM)” scale (Roger and Morris, 2003) short version was adapted in to Turkish “The Physical Activity and Leisure Motivation Scale (PALMS)” by Aşçı et al. (2012) was administered on the participants. The PDIF was developed in order to learn about some demographic variables of participants like age, gender, participation frequency. PALMS scale consisted of 34 items and following 8 subscales: (a) Mastery 4 items, (b) Physical condition 4 items, (c) Social relation 5 items, (d) Psychological condition 4 items, (e) Appearance 4 items, (f) Others’ expectations 3 items, (g) Enjoyment 5 items, (h) Competition 5 items. All items were measured and sorted using a five-point Likert scale “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”.

## Data Collection Procedure

This research was conducted in 2014-2015 academic calendar. The PALMS was administrated to participants in their leisure activity settings especially before the leisure activity period. Incomplete inventories were eliminated from the study. In overall, the data were analyzed for the 313 inventories that were returned from the participants.

## Statistical Analysis

The descriptive statistical methods were used in the analyses of the demographic variables; percentage, mean and standard deviation. In order to determine the main effect of gender on the subscales of PALMS MANOVA test, and to analyze relationship between age and PALMS subscales Pearson Correlation analysis were used. Cronbach’s alphas were calculated for the subscales in order to evaluate their internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha value for 313 participants was changing between ( $\alpha$ ): 0.62 – 0.92 for this study. Reliability coefficients is providing the information for internal consistency. In this study internal consistency of 8 sub-dimensions was excellent or just over the questionable level.

## RESULTS

The participants of this study were 146 female and 167 male voluntary university students whose ages were changed between 18 years old and 31 years old and their main age  $21.60 \pm 2.01$  for female and  $22.23 \pm 2.21$  for males respectively. Most of the participants were 4<sup>th</sup> class students (% 46.6) and 181 participants (%57.8) were participated leisure time physical activity “sometimes”. Finally, their physical activity preferences were vary between individual activities (%61.3) and group activities (38.7).

Distribution of scale score results of the sub dimensions of PALMS is illustrated in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Distribution of scale score

Dimensions	Number of Items	N	Mean	Sd
Mastery	4	313	3.74	0.92
Physical condition	4	313	4.28	0.96
Social relation	5	313	3.26	0.99
Psychological condition	4	313	3.94	0.95
Appearance	4	313	3.73	0.95
Others' expectations	3	313	2.75	1.01
Enjoyment	5	313	3.72	0.82
Competition	5	313	3.13	1.06

According to the results of descriptive statistics, the top rated dimension was the psychological condition ( $M=3.94$ ) and the low rated dimension was the others' expectations ( $M=2.75$ ).

The main effects of gender on the subscales of PALMS was tested by MANOVA and results is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Distribution of scale score by gender

Dimensions	Female (N=146)		Male (N=167)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>Sd</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Sd</i>
<b>Mastery</b>	3.74	0.91	3.78	0.93
<b>Physical condition</b>	4.13	0.90	4.05	1.02
<b>Social relation</b>	3.15	1.04	3.36	0.94
<b>Psychological condition</b>	4.02	0.96	3.86	0.94
<b>Appearance</b>	3.60	0.97	3.84	0.93
<b>Others' expectations</b>	2.65	0.97	2.84	1.04
<b>Enjoyment</b>	3.74	0.77	3.69	0.86
<b>Competition</b>	2.92	1.07	3.31	1.02

MANOVA analysis indicated overall significant main effect of gender on the subscales of PALMS [ $\lambda=0.907$ ,  $F(8, 304)=3.912$ ,  $p<0.01$ ]. A follow-up univariate analysis indicated significant main effects for gender on the subscales of “Appearance” [ $F(1, 311)=4.466$ ,  $p<0.05$ ] and “Competition” [ $F(1, 311)=10.752$ ,  $p<0.01$ ]. The mean scores of male participants were higher than the females. MANOVA indicated significant main effect of frequency of exercise participation on “PALMS” scores [ $\lambda=0.815$ ,  $F(8, 304)=2.384$ ,  $p<0.05$ ].

The effects of participation frequency on the subscales of PALMS was illustrated in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Participation rate by variable frequency distribution of scale

Dimensions	Rare (N=53)		Sometimes (N=181)		Often (N=79)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>Sd</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Sd</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Sd</i>
<b>Mastery</b>	3.41	0.97	3.65	0.88	4.17	0.88
<b>Physical condition</b>	3.89	1.02	3.99	0.96	4.43	0.86
<b>Social relation</b>	3.14	1.15	3.21	0.96	3.46	0.93
<b>Psychological condition</b>	3.74	1.00	3.83	0.97	4.30	0.78
<b>Appearance</b>	3.45	1.01	3.63	0.94	4.16	0.80
<b>Others' expectations</b>	2.66	1.10	2.71	0.96	2.91	1.06
<b>Enjoyment</b>	3.45	0.87	3.67	0.81	4.00	0.72
<b>Competition</b>	2.81	1.21	3.07	0.97	3.48	1.06

According to the results of frequency of exercise participation also revealed a significant differences in the “Mastery” [ $F(2, 310)=13.808$ ,  $p<0.01$ ], “Physical Condition” [ $F(2, 310)=7.424$ ,  $p<0.01$ ], “Psychological Condition” [ $F(2, 310)=8.299$ ,  $p<0.01$ ], “Appearance”

[F(2, 310)=11.953,  $p<0.01$ ], “Enjoyment” [F(2, 310)=8.257,  $p<0.01$ ] and “Competition” [F(2, 310)=7.396,  $p<0.01$ ] subscales. As the frequency of exercise participation increased the mean scores increased.

## ***DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION***

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In the leisure literature findings of some studies showed that young people and university students participate less to leisure activities (Beulac et al., 2010; Kilpatrick, 2010). That’s why the purpose of this study was to assess the why university students participate leisure time physical activity and to examine the differences in participation motives with regard to some demographic variables.

Overall, the descriptive analysis showed that “Physical Condition” regarded as the most important factors that motive to physical activity participation. The “Others’ Expectation” was the least important motive (Table 1). In the Thesleffs’ (2014) study with dance students, "Enjoyment", "Mastery" and "Psychological Condition" dimensions were the top important motive factors, was determined. In this case, participants of the present study did not need to motive for a good performance like the Thesleffs’ (2014) participants, so we can say that motives to physical activity can be changed by person to person and their purpose.

MANOVA and following univariate analysis indicated significant differences between the genders (Table 2). Male had higher scores on the subscales of “Appearance” [F(1, 311)=4.466,  $p<0.05$ ] and “Competition” [F(1, 311)=10.752,  $p<0.01$ ] dimensions. Koivula (1999) established same results with our study. She found out that “competition” was more motivating factor in participation physical activity for male when compared female. Likewise, Kilpatrick et al. (2010) were determined that male were more highly motivated by performance and ego-related factors, such as strength and endurance and competition then the female. According to our findings and literature, we can say that “competition” dimension is strong motivator in participating physical activity especially for male.

According to frequency of exercise participation results also revealed significant differences except “social relation” and “others’ expectations” dimensions and the frequency of exercise participation increased the mean scores increased (Table 3). We can explain this situation by Chiu’s (2009) point of view; motivation is accepted as an important determinant for behavior. In leisure settings motivation for leisure physical activity is recognized the largest contributor

to the frequency and magnitude of participation. So that participation frequency is a result of motivation level and can create some differences in motivation dimensions. In addition, Emir et al. (2013) indicated that positive relationship between frequency of participation and motivation. When frequency of participation was increased, motivation points were increased.

Frequency of participation also effects moderately and highly involvement in a physical activity (Kyle et al., 2004) and loyalty to leisure sport centers (Bodet, 2012). These findings are important for companies working in this sector. So, we can say that to increase the participation frequency is important element for recreation service sector. Therefore, companies working in this sector should pay special attention to leisure participation motives, involvement and loyalty issues.

As a result, this descriptive research was showed that “physical condition” and “physiological condition” dimensions were the most important motivators for university students to participate the leisure physical activities and “mastery” and “enjoyment” dimensions were followed these dimensions. The same results were valid for the gender. This means physical wellbeing and physiological wellbeing is important for the physical activity participants. Literature for sport and leisure studies mostly indicated that physical activity participation has positive effect on physical and physiological wellbeing (Güngörmüş et al., 2014; Aaltonen et al., 2012; Çağlar et al., 2009). So, we can say that our findings is consistent with literature and this findings are also beneficial for leisure activity centers and organizations managers to organize their services.

Besides the findings we have to state that a methodological limitation of this study was that the sample size was relatively small and the entire sample was selected from only university students. Despite the sample limitations, this study provided some additional information to recreation literature. Future studies might be conducted with the participants from different exercise participation environments and promoted with qualitative studies to get the answer to the question “why people participate”.

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