



SPORMETRE

The Journal of Physical Education and Sport Sciences
Beden Eğitimi ve Spor Bilimleri Dergisi



DOI: 10.33689/spormetre.1696644
Research Article

Geliş Tarihi (Received): 30.05.2025

Kabul Tarihi (Accepted): 13.10.2025

Online Yayın Tarihi (Published): 30.12.2025

AN EXAMINATION OF SELF-EFFICACY, HAPPINESS, AND STRESS LEVELS OF INDIVIDUALS ENGAGED IN PICKLEBALL ACTIVITIES RECREATIONALLY IN THE SOUTHEASTERN ANATOLIA REGION

Mihraç Köroğlu^{1*}, Nuri Muhammed Çelik¹, Burcu Yentürk¹, Fikret Soyer²

¹ Batman University, Faculty of Sports Sciences, Batman, TÜRKİYE

² Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University, Faculty of Sports Sciences, Bişkek, KIRGIZİSTAN

Abstract: Recreational sports like Pickleball are increasingly recognized for their role in enhancing psychological well-being. However, research examining their psychosocial impact in regional contexts such as Southeastern Türkiye remains limited. This study aimed to investigate the self-efficacy, happiness, and stress levels of individuals participating in recreational Pickleball activities and to explore their associations with sociodemographic characteristics. A total of 494 individuals (248 females, 246 males) from five provinces participated in this quantitative study. Data were collected using the General Self-Efficacy Scale, Oxford Happiness Questionnaire–Short Form, Perceived Stress Scale, and a demographic information form. Analyses were conducted with SPSS 23 using parametric (t-test, ANOVA) and non-parametric (Mann–Whitney U, Kruskal–Wallis H) tests based on data distribution ($p < .05$). Results showed that self-efficacy levels significantly differed by age, residence, occupation, Pickleball involvement, and exercise history. Happiness levels were associated with gender, age, province, occupation, and activity duration, while stress levels varied based on province, occupation, and sport frequency. These findings highlight the importance of sociodemographic factors—especially age, residence, and income status—in shaping psychological outcomes through recreational sports. The results may offer valuable insights for both academic research and the design of inclusive, well-being-focused sport programs in underserved regions.

Keywords: Pickleball, self-efficacy, happiness, stress, recreational sports

GÜNEYDOĞU ANADOLU BÖLGESİNDE REKREATİF OLARAK PICKLEBALL ETKİNLİĞİNE KATILAN BİREYLERİN ÖZYETERLİLİK, MUTLULUK VE STRES DÜZEYLERİNİN İNCELENMESİ

Öz: Rekreatif sporların psikolojik iyilik hâli üzerindeki etkileri giderek daha fazla önem kazanmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, Pickleball gibi yeni nesil sporların psikososyal etkileri özellikle bölgesel bağlamlarda sınırlı olarak araştırılmıştır. Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türkiye'nin Güneydoğu Anadolu Bölgesi'nde rekreatif amaçlı Pickleball etkinliklerine katılan bireylerin öz-yeterlik, mutluluk ve stres düzeylerini incelemek ve bu değişkenlerin sosyodemografik özelliklerle ilişkisini değerlendirmektir. Nicel araştırma deseniyle yürütülen çalışmaya, beş farklı ilden toplam 494 birey (248 kadın, 246 erkek) katılmıştır. Veriler; Genel Öz Yeterlik Ölçeği, Oxford Mutluluk Ölçeği – Kısa Form, Algılanan Stres Ölçeği ve demografik bilgi formu ile toplanmıştır. SPSS 23 programı kullanılarak yapılan analizlerde, verilerin dağılımına bağlı olarak parametrik (t-testi, ANOVA) ve non-parametrik (Mann–Whitney U, Kruskal–Wallis H) testler uygulanmış, anlamlılık düzeyi $p < .05$ olarak belirlenmiştir. Bulgular; öz-yeterlik düzeylerinin yaş, ikamet edilen il, meslek, Pickleball oynama durumu, spor geçmişi ve egzersiz sıklığına göre anlamlı farklılık gösterdiğini ortaya koymuştur. Mutluluk düzeylerinin cinsiyet, yaş, il, meslek ve fiziksel aktivite süresiyle ilişkili olduğu; stres düzeylerinin ise ikamet edilen il, meslek ve egzersiz sıklığına göre farklılaştığı belirlenmiştir. Sonuç olarak, öz-yeterlik, mutluluk ve stres düzeylerinin belirli sosyodemografik değişkenlere göre anlamlı biçimde farklılık gösterdiği ve özellikle yaş, ikamet edilen il ve gelir düzeyi gibi faktörlerin etkili olduğu görülmektedir. Bu bulguların, rekreatif sporların bireysel iyi oluş üzerindeki rolünü anlamaya yönelik gelecekteki çalışmalara katkı sağlaması beklenmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Pickleball, öz-yeterlik, mutluluk, stres, rekreatif spor



*Corresponding Author: Mihraç KÖROĞLU, Dr. Öğr. Üyesi, mhrackoroglu@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

The development of recreation in the modern sense started with the “Playground Movement” in the United States of America and initially emerged in the form of playground programs for children’s leisure time (Stormann, 1991). Nowadays, recreation is not only an activity area for children but has also become a concept that offers important opportunities for adults. Although there are various approaches and definitions of recreation, it is evident that the evolving understanding of recreation over time and the accumulation of cultural experiences have significantly contributed to this process (Gürbüz & Henderson, 2014; Parr & Lashua, 2004).

Pickleball is defined as a racket sport that is a mixture of tennis, badminton, and table tennis and is generally considered a low-intensity exercise type, especially since it is mostly preferred by older individuals (Casper & Jeon, 2019). It is widely accepted as one of the fastest growing sports in North America. One of the biggest advantages of pickleball is that it is easy to learn and play for individuals of all ages and different physical capacities. In addition to being relatively low-cost, the game offers great practicality as it can be set up quickly on a hard surface (Wray et al., 2021). The small size of the courts reduces the physical load on the players compared to sports such as tennis, which creates a more inclusive playing environment. Thanks to these features, pickleball has become one of the most social sports for people of all ages, offering the opportunity to participate in social and competitive sports, especially for individuals with limited mobility (Buzzelli and Draper, 2020).

In foreign sources, the term “perceived self-efficacy” is frequently used, whereas in Turkish studies, terms such as “self-efficacy”, “self-efficacy perception”, “self-efficacy belief” and sometimes “competence expectation” are generally preferred (Nakip, 2015). Albert Bandura is a psychologist known for his work in the field of social learning. The concept of self-efficacy is based on the social learning theory developed by Bandura. Social learning theory argues that the development of individuals is shaped not by external factors but by their internal systems. This theory suggests that while environmental factors influence an individual’s behavior, internal factors — including cognitive processes, self-efficacy beliefs, and the ability to learn through observation — are also critically important. According to Bandura, self-efficacy beliefs about one’s abilities are critical in shaping behavior and influencing motivation. This internal system includes the individual’s beliefs, expectations, and goals, and includes the individual’s ability to influence their behavior and change their environment. The self-system includes the concept of self-efficacy that sustains the continuity and motivation of the individual’s behaviors (Yıldırım, 2012).

The word happiness is used in different ways. The broadest sense of the term is that it is used in the image of an umbrella as everything that is good. Considered in this sense, it is often used interchangeably with “well-being” and refers to social well-being as well as individual well-being. The word is also used in the more specific sense of “subjective enjoyment of life”. It conceptualizes happiness as the degree to which an individual evaluates the overall quality of his or her life as positive. In other words, it is the rate at which people enjoy the life they lead (Veenhoven, 2014; Veenhoven, 1984). The concept of happiness is related to many concepts (Buettner, 2011). In recent years, with increasing studies, recreational activities carried out in free time, which have many physical, mental, and social benefits for individuals, are seen as an important factor in individuals’ happiness levels (Lepp, 2018). In many studies, it is seen that recreational activities carried out in free time have a direct positive effect on the happiness levels of individuals and are seen as a very important tool in creating socially happy individuals (Demirel, 2019; Liu & Da, 2020).

The word stress was derived from the Latin word “*estricia*” as “stress” in the English language, and over time it entered our language. In the 17th century, it was associated with meanings such as disaster, calamity, trouble, and sorrow, while in the 18th and 19th centuries, the meanings changed and it was used in concepts related to people, objects, organs, or mental structure in meanings such as power, pressure, force. The word stress is also defined as the state of “protecting one’s integrity” and “making an effort to return to one’s original state” (Baltaş & Baltaş, 2002). Stress is a process of adaptation to internal or external conditions that cause tension by affecting both the physical and psychological health conditions of people (Güney, 2007). In a broader definition, stress is the behavioral and physical change of the individual due to psychological, physiological, or physical effects originating from the environment or the individual himself/herself, and the force that causes the organism to be affected, first psychologically and then physically (Gümüştekin & Öztemiz, 2004).

METHOD

Research Model

In our study, the correlational survey model was used to determine the self-efficacy, happiness, and stress levels of participants who participated in recreational pickleball activities in the Southeastern Anatolian region. The correlational survey model is a survey model used to determine the existence of change and differentiation between two or more variables. In this model, it is tried to determine how there is a differentiation in the variables and whether the variables change together (Karasar, 2011).

Study Population and Sample

The population of the study consists of participants who live in the provinces of Batman, Bitlis, Gaziantep, Mardin, and Şanlıurfa in the Southeastern Anatolia Region and are interested in pickleball sports. The sample consisted of 495 participants living in these five provinces and engaged in this sport. Participants were convened during pickleball promotional events held in their respective provinces, and data were collected directly from these individuals. Table 1 shows the demographic information of the participants.

As shown in Table 1, the sample consisted of 248 female participants (50.2%) and 246 male participants (49.8%). Regarding age distribution, 198 participants (40.1%) were aged 18–20, 166 (33.6%) were aged 21–23, 70 (14.2%) were aged 24–26, 18 (3.6%) were aged 27–30, and 42 (8.5%) were aged 31 and above. In terms of geographical distribution, 268 participants (54.3%) resided in Batman, 8 (1.6%) in Bitlis, 74 (15%) in Gaziantep, 52 (10.5%) in Mardin, and 92 (18.6%) in Şanlıurfa. Occupational status analysis revealed that 62 participants (12.6%) were coaches, 20 (4%) were physicians, 4 (0.8%) were civil servants, 284 (57.5%) were students, 102 (20.6%) were teachers, 10 (2%) were police officers, and 12 (2.5%) were self-employed. Prior experience with pickleball indicated that 300 participants (60.7%) had played the sport before, while 194 (39.3%) had not. Based on the duration of engagement in sports, 106 participants (21.5%) had 0–1 year of experience, 78 (15.8%) had 2–3 years, 138 (27.9%) had 4–5 years, and 172 (34.8%) had 6 years or more. Regarding weekly exercise frequency, 188 participants (38.1%) exercised 1–2 days per week, 192 (38.9%) exercised 3–4 days, 58 (11.6%) exercised 5–6 days, 26 (5.3%) exercised daily, and 30 (6.1%) did not engage in regular physical activity.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the participants

	Variables	Number	%
Gender	Female	248	50.2
	Male	246	49.8
Age	18-20	198	40.1
	21-23	166	33.6
	24-26	70	14.2
	27-30	18	3.6
	31 and above	42	8.5
	Province of residence	Batman	268
Bitlis		8	1.6
Gaziantep		74	15.0
Mardin		52	10.5
Şanlıurfa		92	18.6
Profession	Coach	62	12.6
	Doctor	20	4.0
	Officer	4	0.8
	Student	284	57.5
	Teacher	102	20.6
	Police	10	2.0
	Self-employment	12	2.5
Prior Pickleball Experience	Yes	300	60.7
	No	194	39.3
Years of Sports Involvement	0-1 years	106	21.5
	2-3 years	78	15.8
	4-5 years	138	27.9
	6 years and above	172	34.8
Frequency of Regular Exercise	1-2 days a week	188	38.1
	3-4 days a week	192	38.9
	5-6 days a week	58	11.6
	Every day	26	5.3
	Not at all	30	6.1

Data Collection Tools

The General Self-Efficacy Scale was created by Sherer and his team in 1982 and originally included 23 items. The initial analysis of the scale identified two underlying factors: General Self-Efficacy (with 26.5% of the variance explained and a Cronbach's alpha of 0.86) and Social Self-Efficacy (accounting for 8.5% of the variance, Cronbach's alpha = 0.71). The first factor was labeled General Self-Efficacy because its items were not tied to any specific behavioral area. The Social Self-Efficacy factor reflects the individual's perception of competence in social environments. The original version of the scale had a 14-point structure, whereas it was transformed into a five-point Likert-type form in subsequent revisions (Sherer & Adams, 1983). In this study, the scale was used in a Likert format, where responses ranged on a five-point scale between "not at all" and "very well" to the question "How well does this describe you?". The score for each question ranges from 1-5. Items 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16 and 17 are reverse scored. General Self-Efficacy Scale: This scale was developed by Sherer et al. (1982) to assess the self-efficacy beliefs of individuals and initially consisted of 23 items. The factor analysis of the scale yielded a two-factor structure: General Self-Efficacy (explained variance 26.5%, Cronbach's alpha=0.86) and Social Self-Efficacy (explained variance 8.5%, Cronbach's

alpha=0.71). The General Self-Efficacy factor is so named because it does not directly refer to a specific behavioral domain. The Social Self-Efficacy factor reflects individuals' expectations of competence in social environments. The original form of the scale was a 14-point scale, which was later transformed into a five-point Likert-type scale (Sherer & Adams, 1983). The total score that can be obtained from the scale varies between 17 and 85, and higher scores indicate that the individual's self-efficacy belief is stronger. Based on the psychometric evaluations, it was stated that it would be appropriate to use the scale, especially the General Self-Efficacy Subscale, alone (Sherer et al., 1982; Sherer & Adams, 1983). In a study conducted on the Spanish version, it was found that the psychometric properties of the General Self-Efficacy Scale were stronger than those of the Social Self-Efficacy Scale (Lopez-Torrecillas et al., 2006). In Türkiye, Gözüm and Aksayan (1999) conducted the Turkish adaptation of the scale consisting of 23 items. Subsequent studies led to a revision of the scale, reducing the number of items to 19 (Özalp-Türetgen, 2005). The factor structure of this scale, however, did not fully overlap with the original scale and some items did not fit with the factors. It was therefore suggested that it would be healthier to make an assessment based on the total score of the scale instead of the General Self-Efficacy and Social Self-Efficacy dimensions. However, in other studies in the literature, it is seen that these two dimensions are considered separately and factor analyses are performed separately (Sherer & Adams, 1982; Sherer et al., 1983; Cutler, 2005). In this study, it was preferred to examine the 17-item General Self-Efficacy Scale (Magaletta & Oliver, 1999), which is widely used. The validity of the General Self-Efficacy Scale and its correlations with other scales were found to be statistically significant. The reliability of the scale was confirmed, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.80 for internal consistency. Additionally, the test-retest reliability coefficient was calculated as 0.69 based on data obtained from a subsample of 236 participants who were reached for a second measurement.

Oxford Happiness Questionnaire - Short Form (OHQ-Short Form): This scale was developed by Hills and Argyle (2002) to measure the happiness levels of individuals. The 8-item short form had a high correlation with the 29-item original form ($r=0.93$, $p<.001$). The scale was adapted into Turkish by Doğan and Çötök (2011). The exploratory factor analysis revealed that the scale had a single-factor structure with 7 items explaining 39.74% of the total variance with an eigenvalue of 2.782. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis indicate that the scale's structure is psychometrically valid ($\chi^2/df = 2.77$, AGFI = 0.93, GFI = 0.97, CFI = 0.95, NFI = 0.92, IFI = 0.95, RMSEA = 0.074). Correlations with the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985), Life Orientation Test (Scheier & Carver, 1985), and Zung Depression Scale (Zung, 1965) were examined to assess the criterion-related validity of the scale. The results were $r=0.61$ ($p<.001$), $r=0.51$ ($p<.001$) and $r=-0.48$ ($p<.001$), respectively. The reliability analysis of the scale showed that the internal consistency coefficient was 0.74 and the test-retest reliability coefficient was 0.85. In this study, the internal consistency coefficient of the OHQ-S was calculated as 0.73. The internal consistency coefficient of the scale was calculated as .74. The corrected item-total correlation coefficients ranged between .36 and .55. In the present study, the internal consistency coefficient of the OMÖ-K was found to be .73.

Perceived Stress Scale: The Perceived Stress Scale developed by Cohen, Kamarck, and Mermelstein (1983) to measure the stress levels of the participants was adapted to the Turkish population by Yerlikaya and İnanç (2006). The validity and reliability analyses showed that the psychometric properties of the scale were adequate and Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated as 0.84. The scale measures the stress levels of the participants with a 5-point Likert-type rating scale. Response options range from "Never (0)" to "Very often (4)". Seven of the

scale items are reverse-coded because they contain positive statements. In this study, the 8-item version of the Perceived Stress Scale was used. Previous studies have examined the validity and reliability of the Perceived Stress Scale. The significance of the difference between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups was tested using the Student's t-test. The results revealed a statistically significant difference between the two groups ($t = 12.49$, $p < .001$), indicating that the Hopelessness Scale effectively discriminates between them.

Item correlations (intercorrelations) were assessed by calculating the item-total correlation coefficients, which reflect the relationship between scores obtained from individual items and the total scale score. The lowest item-total correlation coefficient was found to be .076, while the highest was .719. The internal consistency of the scale was reported with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .84, and the test-retest reliability coefficient, based on two measurements conducted two days apart, was calculated as .85.

Data Analysis

SPSS program was used to analyze the data from the scales filled out by the participants and data analysis was carried out with descriptive statistics, frequency tables, reliability analysis, normality test, and difference tests. The conformity of the items of the scales to the normal distribution was evaluated through skewness and kurtosis values. It is stated that skewness and kurtosis values should be within certain ranges to show that the data exhibit a normal distribution. Tabachnick and Fidell (2013) suggest that these values should be between +1.5 and -1.5, while George and Mallery (2010) state that +2.0 and -2.0 are acceptable limits. Table 2 presents the findings of the normality test.

Table 2. Normality test

	Mean	Std. Dev.	Skewness	Kurtosis
Self-efficacy	2.68	0.23	0.51	3.45
Happiness	3.50	1.35	-0.37	3.13
Stress	21.14	0.31	0.04	-1.09

Normality test results show that the skewness and kurtosis values of the Self-Efficacy Scale and Happiness Scale data do not conform to the normal distribution. Therefore, nonparametric tests such as Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis H were preferred to analyze the data of these scales. On the other hand, the data of the Stress Scale were found to be normally distributed, and t-test and ANOVA tests were applied in the analysis of this scale. The validity and reliability of the scales used in the study have been supported by previous studies. In this study, reliability and validity analyses were conducted for the applied sample. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to determine the reliability level of the scales. Cronbach's alpha is one of the most widely used methods for calculating internal consistency and is suitable for variables with two or more categories (Akbulut, 2010). Reliability analyses for all variables in the scales were conducted using the SPSS 24.0 program and Table 3 presents the Cronbach's Alpha values.

Table 3. Reliability results from self-efficacy, happiness, and stress scale

Scale Name	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Self-efficacy	.714	17
Happiness	.866	29
Stress	.732	8

In the reliability analyses conducted for the Self-Efficacy, Happiness, and Stress Scale, Cronbach’s Alpha Reliability Coefficient was examined. Table 3 shows that these scales are considered reliable since $\alpha > 0.70$.

FINDINGS

Examination of participants’ self-efficacy, happiness, and stress levels by gender variable

Table 4. The results of the Mann-Whitney U test of self-efficacy and happiness levels according to gender variable

	Gender	N	Rank Average	Rank Total	U	p
Self-efficacy	Female	248	240.16	59560.00	28684.00	0.25
	Male	246	254.90	62705.00		
Happiness	Female	248	226.89	56268.00	25392.00	0.01
	Male	246	268.28	65997.00		

* $p < 0.05$

Participants’ self-efficacy levels did not show a significant difference in terms of gender variable ($U=28684.00$, $p > .05$). There was a significant difference between happiness levels and gender variable ($U=25392.00$, $p < .05$). Considering the mean ranks of the gender variable groups, it was observed that the mean happiness of male participants was higher than that of female contributors.

Table 5. T-test results of stress levels according to gender variable

	Gender	N	\bar{X}	S	sd	t	p
Stress	Female	248	21.75	7.10	492	1.97	0.05
	Male	246	20.53	6.80			

* $p < 0.05$

The stress scale means scores of the participants do not show a significant difference in terms of gender $t(492) = 1.97$, $p > .05$. The stress levels of female participants ($X=21.75$) were higher than those of male participants ($X=20.53$).

Examination of participants’ self-efficacy, happiness, and stress levels by age variable

Table 6. Kruskal Wallis-H-Test results of self-efficacy and happiness levels according to age variable

	Age	N	Rank Mean	sd	χ^2	p	Significant Difference
Self-efficacy	18-20 (A)	198	260.02	4	32.37	0.00	A-C, A-E, B-C, B-E, C-E, D-E
	21-23 (B)	166	234.43				
	24-26 (C)	70	298.61				
	27-30 (D)	18	262.61				
	Over 30 (E)	42	148.50				
Happiness	18-20 (A)	198	261.83	4	17.85	0.01	A-B, B-C, B-D
	21-23 (B)	166	210.61				
	24-26 (C)	70	274.96				
	27-30 (D)	18	292.61				
	Over 30 (E)	42	260.64				

* $p < 0.05$

When the self-efficacy scale averages were analyzed in terms of age variable, a significant difference was observed $\chi^2(sd=4, n=494) = 32.37$, $p < 0.05$. Mann-Whitney U tests conducted to find out between which groups the significant difference in self-efficacy between age groups is between revealed that the self-efficacy levels of the participants in the 18-20 (A) age group

were higher than those in the 24-26 (C) age group and those in the 30+ (E) age group. Again, the self-efficacy levels of the participants in the 21-23 (B) age group were higher than those in the 24-26 (C) age group and those in the 30+ (E) age group. The self-efficacy levels of participants aged 24-26 (C) were higher than those of participants aged 27-30 (D) and over 30 (E).

When the happiness scale averages were analyzed in terms of age variable, a significant difference was observed $\chi^2(sd=4, n=494) = 17.85, p < 0.05$. As a result of the sequential Mann-Whitney U tests conducted to find out between which groups the significant difference between age groups happiness is, the participants in the 18-20 (A) age group are higher than those in the 21-23 (B) age group. Again, according to the results of the analysis, it was observed that the happiness levels of the participants aged 21-23 (B) were higher than the participants aged 24-26 (C) and 27-30 (D).

Table 7. ANOVA test results of stress levels according to age variable

	Source of Variance	Sum Squares	sd	Mean Squares	F	p
Stress	Between-group	117.25	4	29.31	0.60	0.66
	Within-group	23864.25	489	48.80		
	Total	23981.51	493			

* $p < 0.05$

Table 7 shows that there is no significant difference in the results of the ANOVA test of the stress levels of the participants according to the age variable, $F(4,494) = 0.60, p > 0.05$.

Examination of participants' self-efficacy, happiness, and stress levels by province of residence variable

Table 8. Kruskal Wallis-H-Test results of self-efficacy and happiness levels according to the province of residence variable

	Province of residence	N	Rank Mean	sd	χ^2	p	Significant Difference
Self-efficacy	Batman (A)	268	228.66	4	11.69	0.02	A-C, A-E
	Bitlis (B)	8	319.50				
	Gaziantep (C)	74	273.47				
	Mardin (D)	52	256.62				
	Şanlıurfa (E)	92	270.07				
Happiness	Batman (A)	268	246.38	4	22.65	0.00	A-B, A-D, A-E, B-C, B-E, C-D, D-E
	Bitlis (B)	8	361.50				
	Gaziantep (C)	74	245.74				
	Mardin (D)	52	310.19				
	Şanlıurfa (E)	92	206.83				

* $p < 0.05$

When the self-efficacy scale averages were analyzed in terms of the province of residence variable, a significant difference was observed $\chi^2(sd=4, n=494) = 32.37, p < 0.05$. The results of the Mann-Whitney U test conducted to find out between which groups there is a significant difference between the self-efficacy levels and the province of residence groups show that the

self-efficacy levels of the participants living in Batman (A) are lower than the participants living in Gaziantep (C) and Şanlıurfa (E).

When the happiness scale averages were analyzed in terms of the province of residence variable, a significant difference was observed $\chi^2(sd=4, n=494) = 22.65, p < 0.05$. As a result of the sequential Mann-Whitney U tests conducted to find out between which groups there is a significant difference between the happiness levels and the province of residence groups, the happiness level of the participants living in Batman (A) province was found to be lower than the participants living in Bitlis (B) and Mardin (D) provinces, and higher than the participants living in Şanlıurfa (E) province. It was observed that the happiness levels of the participants living in Bitlis (B) province were higher than the participants living in Gaziantep (C) and Şanlıurfa (E) provinces. It was observed that the happiness levels of the participants living in Mardin (D) province were higher than those living in Gaziantep (C) and Şanlıurfa (E) provinces.

Table 9. ANOVA test results of stress levels according to the province of residence variable

	Source of Variance	Sum Squares	sd	Mean Squares	F	p
Stress	Between-group	2426.08	4	606.52	13.76	0.00
	Within-group	21555.42	489	44.08		
	Total	23981.51	493			

Table 9 shows that the mean stress scores of the participants differ by the province of residence. $F(4,489) = 13,76, p < 0,05$ values indicate that this difference is statistically significant.. According to the results of the post-hoc (Tukey HSD) test, it was determined that the stress levels of the participants living in Gaziantep (C) were lower than those living in Batman (A) and Şanlıurfa (E) (Gaziantep $\bar{X} = 16.60$; Batman $\bar{X} = 22.25$; Şanlıurfa $\bar{X} = 22.45$).

Examination of participants' self-efficacy, happiness, and stress levels by profession variable

Table 10. Kruskal Wallis-H-Test results of self-efficacy and happiness levels according to profession variable

	Profession	N	Rank Mean	sd	χ^2	p	Significant Difference
Self-efficacy	Coach (A)	62	263.18	7	15.77	0.01	A-B, B-D,
	Doctor (B)	20	142.50				
	Officer (C)	4	179.00				
	Student (D)	284	257.18				
	Teacher (E)	102	239.74				
	Police (F)	10	189.90				
	Self-employment (G)	12	249.33				
Happiness	Coach (A)	62	201.05	7	28.97	0.00	A-B, A-D, A-E, B-D, B-E, B-G, E-F
	Doctor (B)	20	354.90				
	Officer (C)	4	249.50				
	Student (D)	284	239.94				
	Teacher (E)	102	285.56				
	Police (F)	10	173.10				
	Self-employment (G)	12	225.33				

* $p < 0.05$

When the self-efficacy scale averages were analyzed in terms of the profession variable, a significant difference was observed $\chi^2(sd=4, n=494) = 15.77, p < 0.05$. Mann Whitney U test results were analyzed to find out between which occupational groups the significant difference

was found. The self-efficacy levels of the participants who were doctors (B) were lower than the self-efficacy levels of the participants who were coaches (A) and students (D). Happiness scale averages show a significant difference in terms of profession variable $\chi^2(sd=4, n=494) = 28.97, p < 0.05$.

The Mann-Whitney U test conducted to see between which groups this significant difference was between showed that the happiness levels of coach (A) participants were lower than those of doctor (B) and teacher (E) participants. The happiness levels of the participants who were doctors (B) were higher than those of the participants who were students (D), teachers (E), and self-employed (G). Participants who were teachers (E) were also found to have higher levels of happiness than participants who were police officers (F).

Table 11. ANOVA test results of stress levels according to profession variable

	Source of Variance	Sum Squares	sd	Mean Squares	F	p
Stress	Between-group	1005.68	6	167.61	3.55	0.00
	Within-group	22975.82	487	47.18		
	Total	23981.506	493			

* $p < 0.05$

Table 11 shows that there is a significant difference when the mean stress scores of the participants are analyzed in terms of occupational variable, $F(4,489) = 3.55, p < 0.05$. The results of the posthoc (tukey hsd) conducted to find out between which variables this difference was showed that the stress levels of coach (A) ($X=18,25$) participants were lower than those of student (D) ($X=21,66$) and teacher (E) ($X=22,00$) participants.

Examination of participants' self-efficacy, happiness, and stress levels by pickleball experience variable

Table 12. The results of the Mann-Whitney U test of self-efficacy and happiness levels according to pickleball experience variable

	Pickleball Participation	N	Rank Average	Rank Total	U	p
Self-efficacy	Yes	300	272.13	81638.00	21712.00	0.00
	No	194	209.42	40627.00		
Happiness	Yes	300	235.13	70540.00	25390.00	0.17
	No	194	266.62	51725.00		

* $p < 0.05$

The self-efficacy levels of the participants showed a significant difference in terms of whether they had played pickleball before ($U=21712,00, p < .05$). Considering the self-efficacy levels according to the variable of whether they have played pickleball before or not, the self-efficacy levels of the participants who played pickleball were higher than the participants who did not play pickleball.

There was no significant difference between happiness levels and the variable of whether they had played pickleball before ($U=25390,00, p > .05$).

Table 13. T-test results of stress levels by pickleball participation variable

	Pickleball Participation	N	\bar{X}	S	sd	t	p
Stress	Yes	300	21.49	6.95	492	1.38	0.16
	No	194	20.61	6.99			

*p<0.05

The stress scale means scores of the participants do not show a significant difference in pickleball participation $t(492) = 1.38, p > .05$.

Examination of participants’ self-efficacy, happiness, and stress levels by duration of involvement in sports variable

Table 14. Kruskal Wallis-H-Test results of self-efficacy and happiness levels by the duration of involvement in sports variable

	Doing Sports	N	Rank Mean	sd	χ^2	p	Significant Difference
Self-efficacy	0-1 year (A)	106	203.56	3	15.90	0.01	A-B, A-C, A-D
	2-3 years (B)	78	269.91				
	4-5 years (C)	138	271.34				
	6 years and above (D)	172	245.29				
Happiness	0-1 year (A)	106	255.22	3	10.54	0.01	A-B, B-D
	2-3 years (B)	78	199.45				
	4-5 years (C)	138	255.69				
	6 years and above (D)	172	257.97				

*p<0.05

When the mean scores of the self-efficacy scale and the duration of the participant’s involvement in sports were examined, a significant difference was observed $\chi^2(sd=3, n=494) = 15.90, p < 0.05$. Mann-Whitney U test was conducted to find out which sport the significant difference was between. The self-efficacy levels of the participants who practiced sports for 0-1 year (A) were lower than those who practiced sports for 2-3 years (B), 4-5 years (C) and 6 years or more (D).

When the mean scores of the happiness scale and the duration of the participant’s involvement in sports were examined, a significant difference was observed $\chi^2(sd=3, n=494) = 10.54, p < 0.05$. Considering the results of the sequential Mann-Whitney U test conducted to find out between which groups there is a significant difference, it was seen that the happiness levels of participants who have been doing sports for 2-3 years (B) were lower than those who have been doing sports for 0-1 year (A) and those who have been doing sports for 6 years or more (D).

Table 15. ANOVA test results of stress levels according to the duration of the participant’s involvement in sports variable

	Source of Variance	Sum Squares	sd	Mean Squares	F	p
Stress	Between-group	286.42	3	95.47	1.97	0.12
	Within-group	23695.09	490	48.36		
	Total	23981.51	493			

*p<0.05

Table 15 shows that there is no significant difference in the results of the ANOVA test of the stress levels of the participants according to the duration of the participant's involvement in sports variable, $F(3,494) = 1.97$, $p > 0.05$.

Examination of participants' self-efficacy, happiness, and stress levels by duration of weekly sports practice variable

Table 16. Kruskal Wallis-H-Test results of self-efficacy and happiness levels by the duration of weekly sports practice variable

	Doing Sports	N	Rank Mean	sd	χ^2	p	Significant Difference
Self-efficacy	1-2 days (A)	188	248.90	4	14.24	0.00	B-E, C-E
	3-4 days (B)	192	231.55				
	5-6 days (C)	58	247.47				
	Every day (D)	26	252.04				
	Not at all (E)	30	336.90				
Happiness	1-2 days (A)	188	224.91	4	17.64	0.00	A-C, A-D, A-E, B-E,
	3-4 days (B)	192	243.63				
	5-6 days (C)	58	275.36				
	Every day (D)	26	292.04				
	Not at all (E)	30	321.37				

* $p < 0.05$

When the mean scores of the self-efficacy scale and the weekly duration of sports practice variable were examined, a significant difference was observed $\chi^2(sd=4, n=494) = 14.24$, $p < 0.05$. Mann-Whitney U test was conducted to find out between which weekly duration of sports practice there was a significant difference. It was observed that the self-efficacy levels of participants who did not do sports at all (E) were higher than those who did sports 3-4 days a week (B) and 5-6 days a week (C).

When the mean scores of the happiness scale and the weekly duration of sports practice variable were examined, a significant difference was observed $\chi^2(sd=4, n=494) = 17.64$, $p < 0.05$. The Mann-Whitney U test conducted to see between which groups this significant difference was between showed that the happiness levels of those who do sports 1-2 days a week (A) were lower than those who do sports 3-4 days a week (B), every day (D) and never (E).

Table 17. ANOVA test results of stress levels according to weekly duration of sports practice variable

	Source of Variance	Sum Squares	sd	Mean Squares	F	p
Stress	Between-group	882.84	4	220.71	4.67	0.00*
	Within-group	23098.67	489	47.24		
	Total	23981.51	493			

* $p < 0.05$

Table 14 shows that there is a significant difference in the results of the ANOVA test of the stress levels of the participants according to the duration of the participant's involvement in sports variable, $F(3,489) = 4.67$, $p < 0.05$. The results of the posthoc (tukey hsd) conducted to find out between which variables this difference was showed that the stress levels of the

participants who did sports 1-2 days a week (A) ($X=22.43$) were higher than the participants who did not do sports regularly (E) ($X=17.13$).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this study, the data obtained from the scales were analyzed according to personal information to determine the self-efficacy, happiness, and stress levels of individuals participating in pickleball activity recreationally in the Southeastern Anatolia Region. The data obtained from the scales of the participants who participated in the study from Batman, Bitlis, Gaziantep, Mardin, and Şanlıurfa provinces were analyzed in the SPSS program, and data on gender, age, province of residence, profession, pickleball experience, duration and frequency of playing sports, self-efficacy, happiness, and stress were obtained. The results of this analysis showed that the self-efficacy levels of the participants showed a significant difference with age, province of residence, occupation, pickleball playing status, duration of involvement in sports, and frequency of playing sports. It was concluded that happiness levels showed a significant difference with the variables of gender, age, province of residence, occupation, duration, and frequency of practicing sports. It was observed that the stress levels of the participants showed a significant difference with the variables of province of residence, profession, and frequency of practicing sports.

There was no significant difference between the self-efficacy levels of the participants and the gender variable. Özen et al. (2014), in a study conducted with 86 university students, stated that gender difference did not have a significant effect on self-efficacy levels. Similarly, Yıldız et al. (2016) emphasized in their study with 90 university students that gender differences did not affect self-efficacy. Ayyıldız and Sunay (2021) concluded that there was no significant difference between self-efficacy and gender in a study conducted with 390 participants. The results of this study coincide with our study. There was a significant difference between self-efficacy and age variables. Nazarudin et al. (2014) concluded that self-efficacy levels vary according to age variables and there is a significant difference between them. In the study conducted by Diotaiuti et al. (2017) and Turgut (2020), it was concluded that there was a significant difference between self-efficacy and age variables. The findings of these studies are consistent with our study results.

In our study, a significant difference was observed between self-efficacy levels and occupation variables. The self-efficacy levels of the participants who were doctors were found to be lower than the self-efficacy levels of the participants who were coaches and students. There is a significant difference between self-efficacy levels and the variable of whether they have played pickleball before. Considering the self-efficacy levels according to the variable of whether they have played pickleball before or not, the self-efficacy levels of the participants who played pickleball were higher than the participants who did not play pickleball. There is a significant difference between the self-efficacy levels of the participants and the duration of their involvement in sports. The self-efficacy levels of the participants who practiced sports for 0-1 year were lower than those who practiced sports for 2-3 years, 4-5 years, and 6 years or more. The results of the studies show that practicing sports has a positive contribution on individual and psychological variables. In a study conducted by Yazar et al. (2020), it was found that students with physical activity had higher self-efficacy than students without physical activity. There is also a significant relationship between the self-efficacy levels of the participants and the weekly frequency of practicing sports.

It was determined that there was a significant difference between the happiness levels of the individuals participating in the study and the gender variable. The results of the analysis show that the mean happiness of male participants is higher than that of female participants. Similarly, in the study conducted by Aslan et al, a significant difference was found depending on the gender variable. In their study, Gülcan and Bal (2014) revealed that gender variable has a significant relationship with happiness and life satisfaction. On the other hand, Ulukan (2020) concluded that the happiness levels of women are higher than men. In the study conducted by Eroğlu and Parlar (2018), it was determined that gender did not have a significant effect on happiness perception. It was also observed that there was a significant difference between the happiness levels of the participants and the age variable. Gülcan and Bal (2014) determined that the age variable creates a significant difference in happiness and life satisfaction. Similarly, Özkara et al. (2015) found that there was a statistically significant difference in happiness levels according to gender in their study on students studying in the field of sports sciences. Bülbül and Giray (2011) found a significant difference between gender and happiness in their study.

In our study, the happiness levels of the participants show a significant difference in terms of the province they live in. The physical structure of cities directly affects sports habits. Factors such as population density and traffic, especially in big cities, can limit individuals' opportunities to play sports. On the other hand, more open spaces and sports facilities in small and quiet cities may increase physical activity. In conclusion, the physical and social characteristics of the city of residence are important factors affecting individuals' sporting habits and happiness levels. Cities developing sports infrastructure and providing opportunities for their residents to play sports will be effective in increasing the overall level of happiness. Participants' happiness levels show a significant difference in terms of occupation variables. Çetin (2024) found that the occupational variable created a significant difference in happiness levels in his study. This shows that there are significant differences in the happiness levels of different occupational groups. In another study conducted by Uzunbacak, Akçakanat, and Erhan (2019) with two different sample groups, it was concluded that occupation affects the level of happiness.

There is no significant difference between the happiness levels of the participants and the variable of whether they had played pickleball before or not, but the happiness levels of the participants who had played pickleball before were found to be higher than those who had not. In our study, a significant difference was observed between the level of happiness and the duration of the participant's involvement in sports. Doğan et al. (2018) stated that individuals doing sports and increasing the duration of their involvement in sports have a positive effect on their happiness levels. Özgür (2021), when the relationship between the years of exercise and the happiness levels of the participants was examined in the study, it was found that there was a significant positive relationship between the years of exercise and the level of happiness, and in this context, as the years of exercise increased, the level of happiness increased. There was a significant difference between the happiness levels of the participants and the weekly duration of practicing sports. In the study conducted by Ulutaş (2019), it was aimed to examine the relationship between the frequency of exercise and happiness in individuals participating in exercise, and it was found that participants who exercised all week long had higher levels of happiness compared to participants who exercised only on weekdays or only on weekends. In another study conducted on individuals who regularly exercise in large-scale fitness centers, Özdemir (2019) found that the happiness levels of individuals who exercise every day are higher than the participants who exercise once a week.

In our research, no statistically significant difference was identified between participants' stress levels and their gender. Nonetheless, it was noted that female participants exhibited higher stress levels compared to their male counterparts. Similarly, Abbas (2020) reported no significant difference in perceived stress levels based on gender. Bayram et al. (2016) also found that students' stress scale scores did not vary according to gender, aligning with our findings. However, in contrast to our results, Hızıroğlu (2018) found a significant difference in perceived stress levels among students in the Faculty of Sports Sciences based on gender. In the study conducted by Lavoie and Douglas (2012), it was found that women experienced significantly higher levels of stress compared to men. When evaluating these findings, gender roles emerge as a potential explanatory factor, suggesting that the observed differences may be attributed to socially constructed gender expectations. Furthermore, in the study by Sonnentag and Fritz (2015), which examined the role of physical activity and recreation in stress reduction, notable differences were identified between male and female participants. Additionally, our study revealed no significant relationship between participants' stress levels and their age. This is consistent with the findings of Yılmaz (2023), who also reported no significant association between stress levels and age in his research. In a study conducted with football referees, Görün et al. (2020) found that the perceived stress levels of football referees did not differ between age groups (Görün vd., 2020). The conclusions of these studies are also consistent with our findings.

When the stress levels of the participants were analyzed in terms of the province of residence, a significant difference was observed. The stress levels of the participants living in Gaziantep province were found to be lower than those of the participants living in Batman and Şanlıurfa provinces. The stress levels of the participants in our study were examined in terms of occupational variables and a significant difference was observed. The stress levels of coach participants were found to be lower than those of student and teacher participants. The stress levels of the participants do not show a significant difference in terms of whether they have played pickleball before or not. There is no significant difference between the stress levels of the participants and the duration of practicing sports in our study. In the study conducted by Eraslan (2016), it was concluded that there was no statistically significant difference between the duration of athletes' interest in sports and their stress levels. Arslangörür and Çavuşoğlu (2023) concluded in their study that there was no significant difference between the stress levels of the participants and the years of practicing sports. Regular engagement in physical activity and exercise has been shown to effectively reduce negative emotional states such as stress, depression, and tension (Harvey, Hatch, Mykletun, Øverland, Wessely et al., 2017). These findings are consistent with our findings. However, İlhan (2021) found a significant difference between the stress levels of the participants and the year of practicing sports in his study. There was a significant difference between the stress levels of the participants and the weekly duration of practicing sports. In a study conducted by Kalkavan and Ayyıldız (2021), it was found that the perceived stress levels of the athletes participating in the study showed a significant difference according to the number of weekly training sessions. Atay (2023) stated that there was a significant difference in the stress levels of the participants in terms of the number of weekly trainings, and according to the results, the stress levels of the participants who trained 4 or more times a week were higher than the participants who trained 2 or 3 times a week. These results are in line with our findings.

Kim et al. (2020), Ryu et al. (2020), and Kim et al. (2021) analyzed the relationships between perceived stress, serious leisure, authenticity, participation, social capital, and happiness among older pickleball players. The findings of these studies indicated that participation, social capital, and serious leisure significantly predicted happiness. Moreover, both happiness and authenticity were found to reduce perceived stress.

Suggestions

1. The promotion and dissemination of emerging recreational sports such as Pickleball should be supported. Regional and national campaigns are encouraged to increase the visibility and accessibility of alternative sports.
2. Future studies should be conducted with larger sample groups representing different age and socioeconomic backgrounds. Including diverse variables such as gender, education level, and economic status would enhance the generalizability of the findings.
3. Longitudinal studies are recommended to examine the effects of long-term participation in Pickleball on individuals' self-efficacy, happiness, and stress levels. This would allow researchers to observe changes over time and identify potential long-term benefits.
4. It is suggested that Pickleball be integrated into recreational sports programs carried out by educational institutions and local governments. Projects initiated by municipalities, youth and sports directorates, or universities could contribute positively to individuals' physical and mental well-being.
5. The number of Pickleball coaches and the availability of appropriate facilities should be increased. Training programs for instructors and the establishment of accessible sports venues are necessary to expand participation in this sport.
6. In addition to psychological variables, the physiological effects of Pickleball should also be investigated. A holistic approach will help clarify the sport's overall contribution to individuals' development.

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