



## The mediating role of motivation in the effect of leisure barriers on life satisfaction in campus recreation participation

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### Abstract

This study examines the relationship between leisure time barriers that affect university students' participation in campus recreation activities and life satisfaction and evaluates the mediating role of motivation in this process. Statistical analyses applied to the data obtained within the scope of the research were carried out using the SPSS statistical package program. 335 university students participated in the study. In the first part of the research, a personal information form was used, in the second part, the recreational activity motivation scale developed by Özant et al. (2024), in the third part, the life satisfaction scale developed by Diener et al. (1985) and adapted to Turkish by Köker (1991), and in the last part, the leisure time barriers scale adapted to Turkish culture by Yılmaz and Altunöz (2025) for campus recreation was used. The data obtained with the scales were analyzed using descriptive statistics, t-test, One-Way ANOVA and Pearson correlation test. The findings show that leisure time barriers are a determining factor on participation in campus recreation and that these barriers are negatively correlated with life satisfaction. In addition, it was determined that motivation plays a mediating role in the relationship between leisure time barriers and life satisfaction. The study suggests that strategies should be developed to reduce leisure time barriers in order to increase university students' participation in recreational activities and support their life satisfaction.

**Keywords:** Recreation, leisure time barriers, life satisfaction, motivation

### Kampüs Rekreasyonlarına Katılımda Serbest Zaman Engellerinin Yaşam Doyumu Üzerindeki Etkisinde Motivasyonun Aracı Rolü

#### Öz

Bu çalışma, üniversite öğrencilerinin kampüs rekreasyon faaliyetlerine katılımını etkileyen serbest zaman engelleri ile yaşam doyumu arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemekte ve bu süreçte motivasyonun aracı rolünü değerlendirmektedir. Araştırma kapsamında elde edilen veriler için uygulanan istatistiksel analizler, SPSS istatistik paket programı vasıtasıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışmaya 335 üniversite öğrencisi katılım sağlamıştır. Araştırmanın ilk bölümünde kişisel bilgi formu, ikinci bölümünde Özant vd. (2024) geliştirdiği rekreasyonel etkinlik motivasyonu ölçeği, üçüncü bölümde Diener vd. (1985) tarafından oluşturulmuş ve Türkçe 'ye uyarlaması Köker (1991) tarafından gerçekleştirilmiş yaşam tatmini ölçeği ve son bölümde ise Yılmaz ve Altunöz (2025) tarafından Türk kültürüne uyarlanan kampüs rekreasyonu için serbest zaman engelleri ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Ölçekler ile elde edilen veriler, betimsel istatistikler, t-testi, One-Way ANOVA ve Pearson korelasyon testi kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Bulgular, serbest zaman engellerinin kampüs rekreasyonlarına katılım üzerinde belirleyici bir faktör olduğunu ve bu engellerin yaşam doyumu ile negatif yönlü ilişkili olduğunu göstermektedir. Ayrıca, motivasyonun, serbest zaman engelleri ile yaşam doyumu arasındaki ilişkide aracı bir rol üstlendiği belirlenmiştir. Çalışma, üniversite öğrencilerinin rekreasyon faaliyetlerine katılımını artırmak ve yaşam doyumlarını desteklemek amacıyla serbest zaman engellerini azaltmaya yönelik stratejilerin geliştirilmesi gerektiğini önermektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Rekreasyon, serbest zaman engelleri, yaşam doyumu, motivasyon

#### Introduction

The campus plays a significant role, not only as an environment where academic education is provided but also as a space where students can distance themselves from the stress of daily life, boost their motivation before classes, establish social interactions to form new friendships, and contribute to their cultural development through various activities (Arıcı, 2022). While the academic success of university students is crucial, their psychosocial development and overall life satisfaction are also of great importance. Therefore, campus recreational activities enhance students' quality of life by providing support in areas such as social interaction, physical activity, and stress management. For example, since regular physical activity will have a positive effect



on physical, psychological and social health, activities related to physical activity and informational meetings on the effects of physical activity can be organized (Arslan Kabasakal, 2024). However, barriers to free time significantly impact university students' participation in campus recreational activities (Sariakçalı et al., 2021; Ceylan et al., 2022; Ceylan & Küçük 2022; Yılmaz & Altunöz, 2025). These barriers, which encompass individual, environmental, and structural factors, create a serious obstacle to the students' efficient use of their leisure time (Alexandris & Carroll, 2022).

In this context, studies in the literature show that the primary factors preventing university students from participating in recreational activities include lack of time, academic workload, financial limitations, and insufficient social support (Yıldırım & Karakaya, 2020). Furthermore, research on the impact of campus recreation on university students' life satisfaction reveals that recreational activities increase overall happiness, assist with stress management, and strengthen social bonds (Yan et al., 2023). Previous studies have indeed demonstrated that participation in recreational activities positively affects life satisfaction (Huang, 2003; Iwasaki & Schneider, 2003). In this regard, evaluating the effects of campus recreation on students is of critical importance for universities to enhance their student support programs.

The concept of leisure time refers to the period outside of work, during which an individual is completely free from obligations and engages in activities of their own choosing with full intrinsic motivation. It is the time when a person is truly free from their professional life (Amoako-Tuffour & Martínez-Españeira, 2012; Tezcan, 1994; Gkiotsalitis & Stathopoulos, 2016). However, various factors hinder individuals from effectively utilizing this free time. In this context, motivation emerges as a decisive factor in overcoming leisure time barriers. Motivation can encourage individuals to participate in recreational activities, thus enhancing the positive effects of such activities on life satisfaction. In particular, high levels of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation encourage greater participation in leisure activities, while low motivation levels can perpetuate these barriers (Deci & Ryan, 2013; Iso-Ahola, 1999). Accordingly, universities aim to encourage regular participation in physical activities through the recreational events they organize on campus, thereby reducing stress, supporting personal development, and enhancing motivation levels among students, academic staff, and employees (Önder, 2003).

In recent years, especially after 2020, various studies on participation in campus recreation have been conducted both nationally and internationally (Yılmaz & Altunöz, 2025; Beşikçi, 2020; Uslu, 2023; Lee et al., 2020; Önen, 2023; Yayla, 2022; Yağar et al., 2023). The results of these studies indicate that participation in campus recreational activities plays a critical role in reducing university students' leisure time barriers and enhancing their life satisfaction. However, there is a limited amount of comprehensive research on how motivation acts as a mediator in this relationship.

Therefore, the main objective of this study is to examine the impact of leisure time barriers encountered by university students in their participation in campus recreation on life satisfaction, and the mediating role of motivation in this process. The study aims to make significant contributions to understanding how campus recreational activities support students' psychosocial well-being and how the motivational factor influences the relationship between leisure time barriers and life satisfaction. In doing so, it seeks to provide findings that can help universities enhance the effectiveness of their campus recreation programs.

## Materials and Methods

### Research Model

This study employs a relational survey model. This model is a research approach aimed at determining the common change relationship or degree of change between two or more variables (Karasar, 2015).

### Study Group

In this study, the sampling method used was convenience sampling. The research group consists of 335 students, including 242 females and 93 males, aged 18 and above, who are enrolled at a state university in the Aegean region and voluntarily agreed to participate in the study.

### Data Collection Tools

In this study, the data were gathered using a personal information form, the *Recreational Activity Motivation Scale* developed by Özant et al. (2024), the *Life Satisfaction Scale* created by Diener et al. (1985) and adapted into Turkish by Köker (1991), and the *Leisure Time Barriers Scale for Campus Recreation* adapted to Turkish culture by Yılmaz and Altunöz (2025).



### Personal Information Form

The "Personal Information Form" created by the researchers was designed to collect demographic data such as gender, body weight, place of residence, and frequency of exercise.

**Recreational Activity Motivation Scale:** The *Recreational Activity Motivation Scale* was developed to identify individuals' motivation for participating in recreational activities. This scale, created by Özant et al. (2024), has undergone validity and reliability studies. The scale consists of 39 items and 4 subdimensions. The scale uses a 5-point Likert-type rating (1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree). The lowest possible score from the scale is 39, and the highest possible score is 195, where higher scores indicate higher motivation for recreational activities.

**Life Satisfaction Scale:** The *Life Satisfaction Scale* was developed by Diener et al. (1985) and adapted into Turkish by Köker (1991). This scale reflects an individual's perception of overall life satisfaction and measures how they assess their own life. The 5 positively worded items of the scale are answered using a 5-point Likert-type scale. Higher scores from the scale indicate greater perceived life satisfaction. The item-test correlation of the Turkish form ranges from 0.71 to 0.80, while the test-retest reliability coefficient was found to be 0.85 (Ünal et al., 2001).

**Leisure Time Barriers Scale for Campus Recreation:** The *Leisure Time Barriers Scale for Campus Recreation* was developed to identify the factors that prevent university students from using the campus facilities for sports, social, and cultural activities and participating in these events. The original form was created by Powers et al. (2019), adapted to campus recreation by Goins (2020), and culturally adapted to Turkish by Yılmaz & Altunöz (2025) with validity and reliability studies completed. The scale consists of 25 items and 6 subdimensions. It uses a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree).

### Data Analysis

The statistical analyses of the data collected in this study were conducted using the SPSS 25.0 statistical software. Z-scores and box plots were examined to identify univariate outliers, and 3 observations identified as outliers were excluded from the data set, with the remaining 335 data used for analysis. To check the normal distribution, the skewness and kurtosis coefficients were evaluated, and the values were found to be between -1.5 and +1.5. For the statistical evaluation of the data, descriptive statistics, t-tests, One-Way ANOVA, Pearson Correlation test, and Tukey test were employed.

### Results

Table 1. Distribution of scores for the leisure time barriers scale for campus recreation, life satisfaction scale, and recreational activity motivation scale

Dimensions	N	Mean	S	Skewness	Kurtosis	Min	Max
LTBSCR (Total)	335	66.20	11.96	-0.208	0.588	32.00	104.00
LSS (Total)	335	14.18	3.81	-0.084	0.028	5.00	25.00
Internal Motivation	335	51.20	10.08	-0.191	0.571	15.00	75.00
Benefit	335	54.08	10.78	-0.153	0.735	16.00	80.00
Amotivation	335	14.57	3.12	0.159	0.534	5.00	25.00
External Motivation	335	9.59	2.32	-0.123	-0.105	3.00	15.00
RAMS (Total)	335	128.70	21.53	-0.222	1.249	40.00	195.00

In the table above, the distribution of scores for the Leisure Time Barriers Scale for Campus Recreation, Life Satisfaction Scale, and Recreational Activity Motivation Scale are provided. The Leisure Time Barriers Scale measures factors that hinder students' participation in recreational activities on campus, while the Life Satisfaction Scale assesses students' overall life satisfaction. The Recreational Activity Motivation Scale evaluates the degree of motivation students have to engage in recreational activities. Each scale's minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation values have been summarized for a clearer understanding of the data distribution.



Table 2. Descriptive statistics for the dimensions of the leisure time barriers scale for campus recreation (ltbscr), life satisfaction scale (lss), and recreational activity motivation scale (rams)

Dimensions	Gender	N	Mean	SD	Df	t	p
<b>LTBSCR (Total)</b>	Female	242	66.78	11.38	333	1.431	0.15
	Male	93	64.69	13.30			
<b>LSS (Total)</b>	Female	242	14.24	3.79	333	0.485	0.62
	Male	93	14.02	3.90			
<b>Internal Motivation</b>	Female	242	51.54	9.62	333	1.011	0.31
	Male	93	50.30	11.19			
<b>Benefit</b>	Female	242	54.32	10.17	333	0.656	0.51
	Male	93	53.46	12.27			
<b>Amotivation</b>	Female	242	14.53	3.03	333	-0.367	0.71
	Male	93	14.67	3.37			
<b>External Motivation</b>	Female	242	9.53	2.27	333	-0.759	0.44
	Male	93	9.75	2.45			
<b>RAMS (Total)</b>	Female	242	129.21	19.86	333	0.699	0.48
	Male	93	127.37	25.45			

The analyses indicate that there were no significant differences in the scores obtained from the Leisure Time Barriers Scale for Campus Recreation and the Life Satisfaction Scale based on the participants' gender. No significant differences were found in the overall scores of the Recreational Activity Motivation Scale as well as in the dimensions of internal motivation, benefit, amotivation, and external motivation based on gender.

**Table 3.** Differences in scores for the leisure time barriers scale for campus recreation, life satisfaction scale, and recreational activity motivation scale based on employment status.

Dimensions	Employment Status	N	Mean	SD	Df	t	p
<b>LTBSCR (Total)</b>	Yes	52	66.17	12.02	333	-0.22	0.98
	No	283	66.21	11.97			
<b>LSS (Total)</b>	Yes	52	13.82	3.81	333	-0.735	0.46
	No	283	14.25	3.82			
<b>Internal Motivation</b>	Yes	52	48.98	11.52	333	-1.731	0.08
	No	283	51.60	9.76			
<b>Benefit</b>	Yes	52	51.34	12.15	333	-2.002	<b>0.04</b>
	No	283	54.59	10.46			
<b>Amotivation</b>	Yes	52	14.23	3.19	333	-0.866	0.38
	No	283	14.63	3.11			
<b>External Motivation</b>	Yes	52	9.34	2.30	333	-0.846	0.39
	No	283	9.64	2.33			
<b>RAMS (Total)</b>	Yes	52	123.17	23.88	333	-2.024	<b>0.04</b>
	No	283	129.72	20.96			

The analyses indicate that there were no significant differences in the scores obtained from the Leisure Time Barriers Scale for Campus Recreation and the Life Satisfaction Scale based on the participants' employment status. However, significant differences were found in the scores obtained from the Recreational Activity Motivation Scale in the benefit dimension. No significant differences were observed based on employment status in the internal motivation, amotivation, and external motivation dimensions.

**Table 4.** Differences in scores for the leisure time barriers scale for campus recreation, life satisfaction scale, and recreational activity motivation scale based on the enjoyment of time spent on campus.



Dimensions	Enjoyment of Time Spent	N	Mean	SD	Df	t	p
LTBSCR (Total)	Yes	201	64.18	11.89	333	-3.855	<b>0.00</b>
	No	134	69.23	11.46			
LSS (Total)	Yes	201	14.86	3.75	333	4.087	<b>0.00</b>
	No	134	13.16	3.69			
Internal Motivation	Yes	201	52.95	9.26	333	3.975	<b>0.00</b>
	No	134	48.57	10.71			
Benefit	Yes	201	56.04	10.29	333	4.178	<b>0.00</b>
	No	134	51.14	10.88			
Amotivation	Yes	201	14.56	3.18	333	-0.100	0.92
	No	134	14.59	3.05			
External Motivation	Yes	201	10.09	2.14	333	4.962	<b>0.00</b>
	No	134	8.85	2.39			
RAMS (Total)	Yes	201	132.79	20.76	333	4.372	<b>0.00</b>
	No	134	122.56	21.29			

The analyses indicate that there were significant differences in the scores obtained from the Leisure Time Barriers Scale for Campus Recreation and the Life Satisfaction Scale based on the participants' enjoyment of time spent on campus. Significant differences were found in the scores obtained from the Recreational Activity Motivation Scale in the dimensions of internal motivation, benefit, and external motivation. However, no significant differences were observed in the amotivation dimension based on the enjoyment of time spent on campus.

**Table 5.** Differences in scores for the leisure time barriers scale for campus recreation, life satisfaction scale, and recreational activity motivation scale based on participation in campus recreation activities in the last month.

Dimensions	Campus Recreation Act	N	Mean	SD	Df	t	p
LTBSCR (Total)	Yes	74	64.72	11.50	333	-1.203	0.23
	No	261	66.62	12.08			
LSS (Total)	Yes	74	14.48	3.74	333	0.769	0.44
	No	261	14.09	3.84			
Internal Motivation	Yes	74	56.94	8.45	333	5.819	<b>0.00</b>
	No	261	49.57	9.92			
Benefit	Yes	74	59.85	10.00	333	5.424	<b>0.00</b>
	No	261	52.45	10.45			
Amotivation	Yes	74	14.41	3.41	333	-0.489	0.62
	No	261	14.62	3.04			
External Motivation	Yes	74	10.60	2.17	333	4.349	<b>0.00</b>
	No	261	9.31	2.29			
RAMS (Total)	Yes	74	140.63	18.83	333	5.642	<b>0.00</b>
	No	261	125.32	21.08			

The analyses indicate that there were no significant differences in the scores obtained from the Leisure Time Barriers Scale for Campus Recreation and the Life Satisfaction Scale based on the participants' participation in campus recreation activities in the last month. However, significant differences were found in the scores obtained from the Recreational Activity Motivation Scale in the dimensions of internal motivation, benefit, and



external motivation. No significant differences were observed in the amotivation dimension based on participation in campus recreation activities in the last month.

**Table 6.** Differences in scores for the leisure time barriers scale for campus recreation, life satisfaction scale, and recreational activity motivation scale based on the number of recreation activities participated in during the last month

	Factor	SS	SD	SM	F	p	AF
<b>LTBSCR (Total)</b>	Between Groups	75.382	2	37.691	.262	0.77	
	Within Groups	47761.406	332	143.860			
	Total	47836.788	334				
<b>LSS (Total)</b>	Between Groups	20.916	2	10.458	.716	0.49	
	Within Groups	4851.610	332	14.613			
	Total	4872.525	334				
<b>Internal Motivation</b>	Between Groups	2015.040	2	1007.520	10.465	<b>0.00</b>	1-2,3
	Within Groups	31964.560	332	96.279			
	Total	33979.600	334				
<b>Benefit</b>	Between Groups	1648.945	2	824.473	7.352	<b>0.00</b>	1-2,3
	Within Groups	37233.544	332	112.149			
	Total	38882.490	334				
<b>Amotivation</b>	Between Groups	10.038	2	5.019	.511	0.60	
	Within Groups	3259.771	332	9.819			
	Total	3269.809	334				
<b>External Motivasyon</b>	Between Groups	69.143	2	34.571	6.606	<b>0.00</b>	1-2,3
	Within Groups	1737.454	332	5.233			
	Total	1806.597	334				
<b>RAMS (Total)</b>	Between Groups	7642.346	2	3821.173	8.612	<b>0.00</b>	1-2,3
	Within Groups	147317.397	332	443.727			
	Total	154959.743	334				

Groups: 1: Never, 2: 1-2 times, 3: 3-5 times

The analysis shows that there was no significant difference in the scores obtained from the Campus Recreation Free Time Barriers Scale and the Life Satisfaction Scale based on the number of recreational activities participants participated in during the last month. However, significant differences were found in the scores for the overall Recreational Activity Motivation Scale, as well as in the intrinsic motivation, benefits, and extrinsic motivation sub-dimensions. On the other hand, no significant difference was observed in the score for the demotivation sub-dimension based on the number of recreational activities attended in the last month.

According to the Tukey test results conducted to identify the source of the differences between the groups:





- **Overall Recreational Activity Motivation Scale:** A statistically significant difference was found between those who participated in "None" (M: 125.41, SD: 21.87) and "1-2 times" (M: 134.88, SD: 17.67), as well as between "None" (M: 125.41, SD: 21.87) and "3-5 times" (M: 137.09, SD: 22.64), with the differences favoring the "1-2 times" and "3-5 times" groups, respectively.
- **Intrinsic Motivation dimension:** A statistically significant difference was found between those who participated in "None" (M: 49.50, SD: 10.20) and "1-2 times" (M: 54.37, SD: 8.78), as well as between "None" (M: 49.50, SD: 10.20) and "3-5 times" (M: 55.50, SD: 9.23), with the differences favoring the "1-2 times" and "3-5 times" groups, respectively.
- **Benefit dimension:** A statistically significant difference was found between those who participated in "None" (M: 52.55, SD: 10.83) and "1-2 times" (M: 56.94, SD: 8.75), as well as between "None" (M: 52.55, SD: 10.83) and "3-5 times" (M: 58.00, SD: 12.68), with the differences favoring the "1-2 times" and "3-5 times" groups, respectively.
- **Extrinsic Motivation dimension:** A statistically significant difference was found between those who participated in "None" (M: 9.28, SD: 2.33) and "1-2 times" (M: 10.19, SD: 2.10), as well as between "None" (M: 9.28, SD: 2.33) and "3-5 times" (M: 10.37, SD: 2.37), with the differences favoring the "1-2 times" and "3-5 times" groups, respectively.

**Table 8.** Distribution of campus recreation leisure time barriers scale, life satisfaction scale, and recreational activity motivation scale scores by average time spent on a recreational activity

	Factor	SS	SD	SM	F	p	AF
LTBSCR (Total)	Between Groups	96.928	3	32.309	.224	0.88	
	Within Groups	47739.860	331	144.229			
	Total	47836.788	334				
LSS (Total)	Between Groups	93.612	3	31.204	2.161	0.09	
	Within Groups	4778.913	331	14.438			
	Total	4872.525	334				
Internal Motivation	Between Groups	5610.366	3	1870.122	21.820	0.00	1-2,3
	Within Groups	28369.234	331	85.708			
	Total	33979.600	334				
Benefit	Between Groups	4902.022	3	1634.007	15.917	0.00	1-2,3
	Within Groups	33980.467	331	102.660			
	Total	38882.490	334				
Amotivation	Between Groups	40.007	3	13.336	1.367	0.25	
	Within Groups	3229.802	331	9.758			
	Total	3269.809	334				
External Motivasyon	Between Groups	163.044	3	54.348	10.945	0.00	1-2,3
	Within Groups	1643.553	331	4.965			
	Total	1806.597	334				
RAMS (Total)	Between Groups	21755.147	3	7251.716	18.020	0.00	1-2,3
	Within Groups	133204.597	331	402.431			
	Total	135379.744	334				



Total	154959.743	334
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Groups: 1: 30 less than, 2: 30-60 sec, 3: 1-2 hours, 4: 2 more than hours

The analyses show that there is no significant difference in the scores of the participants for the Campus Recreation Leisure Time Barriers Scale and Life Satisfaction Scale based on the average time spent on a recreational activity. However, significant differences were found in the overall scores of the Recreational Activity Motivation Scale, as well as in the intrinsic motivation, benefit, and external motivation dimensions. On the other hand, no significant difference was found in the lack of motivation dimension based on the average time spent on a recreational activity.

Tukey test results for identifying the source of differences between groups:

- **Recreational Activity Motivation Scale:** There was a statistically significant difference between the groups of less than 30 minutes (Mean: 119.73, SD: 20.53) and 30-60 minutes (Mean: 135.85, SD: 19.81), as well as between less than 30 minutes (Mean: 119.73, SD: 20.53) and 1-2 hours (Mean: 137.81, SD: 16.57), both in favor of the 30-60 minutes and 1-2 hours groups.
- **Intrinsic Motivation:** A statistically significant difference was found between the less than 30 minutes (Mean: 46.70, SD: 9.43) and 30-60 minutes (Mean: 54.79, SD: 9.41) groups, as well as between less than 30 minutes (Mean: 46.70, SD: 9.43) and 1-2 hours (Mean: 56.05, SD: 7.63) groups, both in favor of the 30-60 minutes and 1-2 hours groups.
- **Benefit:** There was a statistically significant difference between the less than 30 minutes (Mean: 49.86, SD: 10.06) and 30-60 minutes (Mean: 57.46, SD: 10.17) groups, as well as between less than 30 minutes (Mean: 49.86, SD: 10.06) and 1-2 hours (Mean: 58.54, SD: 9.49) groups, both in favor of the 30-60 minutes and 1-2 hours groups.
- **External Motivation:** A statistically significant difference was found between the less than 30 minutes (Mean: 8.82, SD: 2.12) and 30-60 minutes (Mean: 10.13, SD: 2.24) groups, as well as between less than 30 minutes (Mean: 8.82, SD: 2.12) and 1-2 hours (Mean: 10.47, SD: 2.22) groups, both in favor of the 30-60 minutes and 1-2 hours groups.

**Table 8:** The relationship between campus recreation leisure time barriers scale, life satisfaction scale, and recreational activity motivation scale scores

	LTBSCR	LSS	RAMS
LTBSCR	1		
LSS	-.105	1	
RAMS	.064	.266*	1

To analyze the relationship between participants' campus recreation leisure time barriers, life satisfaction, and recreational activity motivations, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used. Based on the findings obtained, a positive and significant relationship was found between the Life Satisfaction Scale and the Recreational Activity Motivation Scale ( $r: 0.266$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). In other words, as participants' life satisfaction levels increased, a corresponding increase in their recreational activity motivations was observed.

## Discussion

This study was conducted to examine the relationship between leisure time barriers and life satisfaction, which affect university students' participation in campus recreation activities, and to assess whether motivation plays a mediating role in this relationship. The findings revealed that leisure time barriers are a determining factor in participation in campus recreation activities and have a negative impact on life satisfaction. Furthermore, it was determined that motivation plays a mediating role in the relationship between leisure time barriers and life satisfaction.





The analysis results show that there were no significant differences in campus recreation leisure time barriers and life satisfaction based on the participants' gender. Additionally, no statistically significant differences were found in the general level of recreational activity motivation, nor in the dimensions of intrinsic motivation, benefit, demotivation, and extrinsic motivation based on gender. These findings indicate that gender does not have a determining impact on the variables examined. Beşikçi et al. (2020) studied the effects of leisure time barriers, facilitators, and satisfaction of recreational practices in university campuses and concluded that students who regularly participated in campus recreation activities experienced fewer leisure time barriers and greater life satisfaction. On the other hand, Karadeniz et al. (2019) found, contrary to our study, that female students had more positive leisure time attitudes than male students and that differences existed between faculties. In another study in the literature, the relationships between coping with leisure time barriers, life satisfaction, and body image were examined among university students, and the results indicated that students who coped effectively with leisure time barriers had higher levels of life satisfaction and body image (Kaas, 2016). There are studies (Altunay, 2015; Aydın, 2022; Balcı et al., 2003; Ekinci et al., 2014; Arslan et al., 2018; Bosna et al., 2018; Bulut & Koçak, 2016; Akyüz & Türkmen, 2016; Karadeniz et al., 2019; Keser, 2005; Codinan & Pestana, 2019; Lauderdale et al., 2015) that have reached similar and different conclusions to our study. These findings indicate that there is a general trend in the literature regarding the impact of campus recreation participation on individuals' life satisfaction, but the effects of leisure time barriers and variables such as gender can vary depending on the studies. It is believed that the different results obtained may be related to cultural, demographic, and university-specific factors. On the other hand, studies that reach similar results strengthen the general academic trend supporting the positive impact of recreational activities on individuals' psychological and social well-being.

The analysis results indicate that there were no significant differences in leisure time barriers and life satisfaction based on the participants' employment status. However, a significant difference was observed in the benefit dimension of the recreational activity motivation scale. On the other hand, no statistically significant differences were found in the dimensions of intrinsic motivation, demotivation, and extrinsic motivation based on employment status. Çakır et al. (2016) examined public employees' leisure time barriers and life satisfaction levels and found no significant differences between employment status and these variables. This result supports the findings of our study, while Coşkun (2021), in a study titled *The Participation of Turkish Society in Leisure Time Activities: Motivation and Barriers*, concluded that employment status affects motivation for leisure time activities, that employed individuals face more barriers in participating in leisure activities, and their motivations differ. This result differs from the findings of our study. There are studies in the literature with different sample groups (Lin et al., 2021; Li, 2021; Chick et al., 2015). The reason for this discrepancy could be attributed to differences in how individuals use their leisure time, the living conditions of the sample groups, individuals' demographic characteristics, and socio-cultural factors.

The analysis also revealed that there were significant differences in the total scores of the campus recreation leisure time barriers scale and the life satisfaction scale based on the participants' enjoyment of their time on campus. Additionally, significant differences were found in the overall score of the recreational activity motivation scale and the subdimensions of intrinsic motivation, benefit, and extrinsic motivation. However, no statistically significant difference was observed in the demotivation dimension based on the participants' enjoyment of their time on campus. Campus recreation is an important factor influencing university students' participation in leisure activities. In this context, various studies have examined the relationships between students' enjoyment of time on campus, leisure time barriers, life satisfaction, and motivations. Some of the results align with the findings of our study, while others present different outcomes (Beşikçi, 2020; Gürbüz et al., 2020; Sevic & Eskiler, 2020). These studies demonstrate that campus recreation programs play a significant role in reducing leisure time barriers and increasing life satisfaction among students.

The analysis results indicate that there were no significant differences in leisure time barriers and life satisfaction based on participants' frequency of participation in campus recreation activities over the last month. However, significant differences were found in the overall score of the recreational activity motivation scale, as well as in the intrinsic motivation, benefit, and extrinsic motivation dimensions. On the other hand, no statistically significant differences were observed in the demotivation dimension based on the frequency of participation in campus recreation activities over the last month. Labuschagne (2021) found no significant relationship between the frequency of campus recreation activity participation and life satisfaction. Bosna et al. (2018) examined the factors that hinder students at Üsküdar University from participating in recreation activities and concluded that there were no significant differences in the factors affecting the participation of students in recreational activities. Bulut and Koçak (2016) found that the biggest barrier to female students' participation in campus recreation activities was insufficient facilities. Studies conducted with different university students have shown



that participation in campus recreation activities varies depending on factors such as age, gender, socioeconomic status, regional differences, academic achievement, psychological well-being, social engagement, motivation levels, leisure time barriers, social interactions, and other factors (Köse & Yerlisu Lapa, 2018; Demirel & Harmandar, 2009; Arslan et al., 2018; Solakumur et al., 2019; Soyer et al., 2017; Karadeniz et al., 2019; Çimen & Sarol, 2015; Akkaşoğlu & Akyol, 2018; Arslan Kabasakal & Satılmış, 2024). These findings suggest that while participation in campus recreation activities has a significant impact on individuals' motivation levels, it does not always create a distinct difference in terms of life satisfaction and leisure time barriers. Studies conducted at different universities indicate that participation in campus recreation activities varies depending on various individual and environmental factors. In particular, variables such as age, gender, socioeconomic status, academic achievement, and psychological well-being directly influence individuals' decisions to participate in recreational activities.

The analysis also revealed that there were no significant differences in leisure time barriers and life satisfaction based on the number of recreational activities participants attended in the last month. However, significant differences were observed in the overall motivation level and in the intrinsic motivation, benefit, and extrinsic motivation dimensions. The results showed significant differences in motivation between individuals who did not participate at all and those who participated 1-2 times and 3-5 times. Particularly, it was determined that the groups with more frequent participation had higher motivation levels. However, no significant differences were observed between groups in terms of demotivation. These findings indicate that participation in campus recreation activities increases individuals' motivation, but it does not have a direct determining effect on leisure time barriers and life satisfaction. Our study found that participation in recreational activities created significant differences in the intrinsic motivation, benefit, and extrinsic motivation dimensions. Similarly, a study conducted with students at Üsküdar University found that students' motivations for participating in recreational activities varied depending on gender, university, and activity type (Akyüz et al., 2023). In our study, it was noted that participants' leisure time barrier scores did not show significant differences based on the frequency of participation in recreational activities. This finding aligns with the results of a study conducted at Üsküdar University, which concluded that there were no significant differences in the factors that hinder students' participation in recreational activities (Bosna et al., 2017). Some studies indicate that participation in recreational activities may have positive effects on students' academic success. For example, one study stated that university students' participation in recreational activities for up to 4 hours per day could positively affect their academic success (Göksu, 2019). In conclusion, the findings of our study show that participation in campus recreation activities has a significant impact on individuals' motivation levels but does not directly change leisure time barriers and life satisfaction.

The analyses reveal that there were no significant differences in leisure time barriers and life satisfaction scores based on the average time participants spent in recreational activities. However, significant differences were found in the overall motivation level, as well as in the intrinsic motivation, benefit, and extrinsic motivation dimensions. Participants who engaged in longer activities exhibited higher motivation levels. Statistically significant differences were observed between participants who spent less than 30 minutes and those who spent 30-60 minutes or 1-2 hours on recreational activities, particularly in the motivation-related subdimensions. However, no significant differences were found in the demotivation dimension. These findings suggest that the duration of participation in recreational activities has an enhancing effect on individuals' motivation, but does not directly influence life satisfaction and leisure time barriers. In our study, a significant relationship was found between participation duration and motivation levels, with motivation increasing as the duration of participation grew. This result aligns with studies by Herbert et al. (2020) and Williams & Williams (2011), which similarly showed that longer participation in recreational activities boosts individuals' goal orientation and motivation levels. Additionally, the study by Saç and Par (2021) found that participation in leisure activities positively impacts individuals' leisure motivation, which parallels the positive relationship between motivation levels and participation duration observed in our study.

Furthermore, a significant positive relationship was found between participants' life satisfaction levels and their recreational activity motivation. This finding indicates that as participants' life satisfaction increases, so does their motivation to engage in recreational activities. The results underscore that life satisfaction is an important factor influencing individuals' participation in recreational activities and their motivation levels. Academic studies in the literature also demonstrate a positive and significant relationship between life satisfaction and recreational activity motivation. For example, Sarıcaoğlu (2011) states that engaging in regular physical activity enhances psychological well-being and positively impacts life satisfaction. . Studies on other samples show that there is a positive relationship between physical activity and quality of life (Arslan Kabasakal, 2025). Similarly, Demiral and Karakaş (2024) examined the effect of university students' participation in recreational activities on



happiness and found that both the duration and frequency of physical activity increased happiness levels. Additionally, Küçük Kılıç et al. (2016) highlighted that individuals attending summer sports schools exhibited a positive and significant relationship between their leisure satisfaction and life satisfaction levels. These findings suggest that the relationship between life satisfaction and recreational activity motivation is consistently positive in the literature.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

This study aimed to examine the impact of leisure time barriers on university students' participation in campus recreational activities, their life satisfaction, and the mediating role of motivation in this process. The findings revealed that leisure time barriers are a determining factor in students' participation in campus recreational activities and that these barriers negatively affect life satisfaction. Furthermore, motivation was found to significantly mediate the relationship between these variables.

The results of the study demonstrate that participation in campus recreational activities positively affects students' life satisfaction and overall well-being. Specifically, individuals with higher levels of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation were found to be more successful in overcoming leisure time barriers, leading to higher participation in recreational activities. However, no significant differences were observed in leisure time barriers and life satisfaction based on gender, age, or employment status within the study group. On the other hand, factors such as enjoyment within the campus environment, the frequency of participation in recreational activities, and the time spent in activities were positively related to motivation levels.

### Recommendations:

- Factors preventing students from participating in recreational activities due to their academic and social workload should be identified, and strategies should be developed to reduce these barriers. Flexible activity hours can be offered, especially for students facing time constraints due to intensive academic schedules.
- Mechanisms to enhance students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation should be developed. For instance, reward systems or participation certificates can be provided for students who regularly engage in recreational activities.
- University administrations should increase the variety of recreational activities available to students by expanding sports, arts, and social event spaces on campus. Such initiatives would enable students to make better use of their leisure time.
- Sports and cultural festivals that encourage social interaction could motivate students to participate in recreational activities.
- Guidance services should be provided in universities to educate students on leisure time management, and support programs should be developed for students who struggle to engage in recreational activities due to academic stress and social anxiety.
- Structural adjustments should be made to ensure that students can maintain a balanced life, continuing their academic success while also engaging in sports and cultural activities. Academic calendars and class schedules should be organized in a way that allows students to dedicate time to recreational activities.

In conclusion, university students' participation in campus recreational activities is a significant factor in enhancing their life satisfaction and contributing to their psychosocial development. Implementing policies that reduce leisure time barriers and increase motivation will help students maintain a healthier and more balanced university life. Future research should aim to analyze these relationships more comprehensively in different university environments and with larger participant groups.

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