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ARTICLE

Research

Leisure attitude, perceived freedom in leisure within married couples
Merve Beyza AKGUL* and Ezgi ERTUZUN

19
Leisure attitude, perceived freedom in leisure within married couples

Merve Beyza AKGUL1* and Ezgi ERTUZUN2

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Studies show that most people see marriage and children as an important part of their future, and view marriage as playing a crucial role in meeting their needs for companionship and emotional security. One of the factors found to play an important role in marriage is leisure which may influence and strengthen married couples interaction. The aim of this study was to determine the relationship between Perceived Freedom in Leisure and Leisure Attitude within married couples. The sampling of the study consisted of a total of 206 married lecturers enrolled in Gazi and Selcuk University. Participants completed the Leisure Attitude (LAS), Perceived Freedom in Leisure (PFL) Scales. In conclusion, it was found that there was a positive linear relationship between perceived freedom in leisure and leisure attitude subscale (Cognitive, Affective, Behavioural) scores for married couples. Furthermore, Leisure attitude affects perceived freedom leisure positively and significantly within married couples (R=0.615). Married couples’ leisure attitude explained 38 % of their perceived freedom in leisure.

Key words: Leisure, leisure attitude, perceived freedom in leisure, married couples.

INTRODUCTION

Generally, individual’s personality, social background, living environment and work environment may influence his/her leisure cognition, motivation, expectation, perceived freedom, and hobby, which also affect the choosing and mode of leisure participation. Thus, during a process of leisure activity, the subjective sensation, experience or individual’s social background may extensively influence the individuals’ participative motivation, expectation and attitude toward leisure (Rue, 2005). The existing research shows that leisure is related to marital satisfaction (Crawford et al., 2002; Johnson et al., 2006), marital cohesion and adaptability, as well as family functioning (Zabriskie and McCormick, 2001). Marital satisfaction has been defined as ‘an individual’s emotional state of being content with the interactions, experiences, and expectations of his or her married life’ (Ward et al., 2009, p.415). It was suggested that by spending time together, family members bond, improve communication and learn to adapt to stressful situations (Johnson et al., 2006; Kelly, 1997; Shaw, 1997). One

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early framework for examining couples and their leisure was developed by Orthner and Mancini (1990). They identified three types of couple leisure (individual, parallel, and joint), defined by the level of interaction between spouses, and found joint leisure activities were positively correlated with marital satisfaction. On the other hand, individual activities negatively affected marital satisfaction, while the effect of parallel activities varied with the stages of marriage and with gender (Johnson et al., 2006). Locke (1951) compared happily married couples and divorced couples and found that happily married couples are more likely to agree on recreation needs and the value of spending time together.

However, more recent studies have shown that the relationship between the types of leisure activities and marital satisfaction is not always unequivocal. According to Baldwin et al. (1999), leisure is not always associated with marital distress either. Their study indicated when individual leisure of one spouse was supported by the other spouse, satisfaction with marriage did not decrease. It has also claimed that it is not activity itself but rather an attitude and perceptions of the activity that affect marital satisfaction (Johnson et al., 2006).

**Leisure attitude within married couple**

Many early studies posited that selection of a mate is based on compatibility of partners, which is often a function of similar values and attitudes (Cate and Lloyd, 1988). Attitude is generally attributed to an individual and defined as a tendency which regularly forms his thoughts, emotions and behaviors about a psychological object (Kagitçibasi et al., 2010). These tendencies are products of the society he is included and his own socio-cultural environment. People can display similar attitudes with other people by adapting to this environment. Over time, as the partners exist and interact in the same context and are exposed to similar influences, their attitudes are likely to become more similar (Kenny, 1996).

In terms of leisure, this means each of us can develop a certain attitude toward leisure in general or toward a specific leisure activity. For example, one married couple may choose joint leisure activities (sailing together or paddling a canoe) over individual leisure activities. Attitudes also may develop as the result of engaging in certain activities (Cordes and Ibrahim, 2003).

Since attitude, which is an invisible concept, causes specific visible behaviors, leisure time attitude of individuals can be understood as a result of observing these behaviors. For couples, this may begin in courtship as they identify and cultivate shared leisure interests that continue into marriage (Orthner et al., 1994). Similar or compatible leisure attitudes and interests appear to affect marital satisfaction. It is difficult to examine a single leisure construct independently of others as each represents only a portion of the leisure experience. Leisure attitudes, beliefs and perceptions influence leisure behavior and experience (Mannel and Keliber, 1997). Affective and cognitive leisure attitude contribute to leisure participation and satisfaction (Ragheb and Tate, 1993).

**Perceived freedom in leisure within married couples**

Perceived freedom is defined “as a state in which the person feels that what he/she is doing is done by choice and because one wants to do it” (Neulinger, 1981). Constraints such as inadequate resources, transportation, money and time are believed to reduce perceived freedom in leisure. Leisure constraints could be seen as an accumulation of factors that prevent the individual from participating in leisure activities, decrease the number of repetitions, break the motivation to participate in activities and decrease the degree of satisfaction expected from these activities (Jackson and Henderson, 1995; Jackson and Scott, 1999). According to Kalmijn et al. (2001), children serve as a time constraint, and they particularly limit the opportunities for couples to be away from home at the same time.

On the other hand, perceived control in the leisure setting is an important element of perceived freedom in leisure (Ellis and Witt, 1994). As Jackson et al. (1993) mentioned, successful negotiation of constraints may enhance the leisure experience. Kenny (1996) stated that one person’s behavior or characteristic influence the other person. Therefore, one partner’s display of a negative leisure attitude may alter the other partner’s action or attitude about leisure. If partners have supportive leisure attitudes and interests, satisfaction and leisure freedom are enhanced (Siegenthaler and O’Dell, 2000).

**Purpose of the study**

If the development of leisure attitudes and perceived leisure freedom are influenced through interactions with married couples, one might theorize that married couples would have similar views. The purpose of this study was to explain attitudes about leisure and perceived freedom in leisure within married couples. Therefore, we formulated one research question and three research hypotheses were generated for this research question.

Research Question: To what degree are leisure attitudes and perceived freedom in leisure consistent within married couples?

H1: There will be significant and positive relationships between Leisure Attitude subscale (Cognitive, Affective, Behavioral) scores for married couples.

H2: There will be significant and positive relationships between perceived freedom in Leisure Scale for married
couples.
H3: Leisure attitude affects perceived freedom in leisure positively and significantly within married couples.

METHOD

Sample
Participants were drawn from a random convenience sample of married lecturers enrolled in Gazi and Selcuk University (n=206) in Turkey. For the calculation of sample size, the standard deviations of total Leisure Attitude Scale (LAS) subscales (12-60) were accepted as 10-point and 6-point differences LAS subscales scores for married couples would be significant. Also, the same calculating was done for the mean of perceived freedom in leisure (PFL) scores. Standard deviation of the mean PFL was accepted as 1-point and 0.55- point difference was considered mean PFL score for married couples. Examining LAS subscale and PFL standard deviations in previous studies, it was taken estimated standard deviation point for keeping the larger study (Akgul and Yenel, 2014; Lapa, 2012; Agyar, 2014). So, it was determined that each group should have at least 87 subjects with a 95% confidence interval for PFL scores as seen in Table 1. As 103 couples participated in this study, the result might be generalized to population. Sample size was calculated by Minitab Statistical Package Program (Minitab Inc, 2005).

Instrument

The questionnaire used in this study consisted of three parts. These were 'Personal Information Form', 'Leisure Attitude Scale' and 'Perceived Freedom in Leisure Scale'.

Personal Information Form This part consisted of demographic questions such as sex, age, education, duration of marriage and employment status (Table 2).

Leisure Attitude Scale (LAS) is a 36-item instrument of three subscales that examine various aspects of attitude. The Cognitive subscale contains 12 items related to knowledge about leisure and beliefs about its value. The Affective subscale contains 12 items related to liking, disliking and other feelings about leisure activities. The behavioral subscale contains 12 items related to past, present, and intended actions with regard to leisure activities and experiences (Ragheb and Beard, 1982). Each subscale was analyzed individually. Ragheb and Tate (1993) found that cognitive and affective leisure attitude have different impacts on participation and satisfaction. LAS is added to Turkish literature after being conducted of validity and reliability studies by Akgul and Gurbuz (2010) and it includes 36 questions and three sub-dimensions.

Perceived Freedom in Leisure Scale 'PFL' is developed by Witt and Ellis (1985) and it is added to Turkish literature after being conducted of validity and reliability studies by Yerlisu and Agyar et al. (2011). It includes 25 questions and two sub-dimensions. Cronbach alpha reliability for the PFL was 0.90. PFL is a five point Likert type scale and the highest point to be got from the scale is 125 and the lowest point is 25. In this study centered on married couples similarities in overall perceived freedom in leisure;

Overall alpha reliability for the LAS was 0.97. Alpha reliabilities for the Cognitive, Affective, and Behavioral subscales were 0.81, 0.92, and 0.91, respectively. LAS is a five point Likert type scale and the highest point to be got from the scale is 180 and the lowest point is 36. For this study, Cronbach alpha was found as 0.96.

Table 1. Sample size calculations for the hypothesis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>No of question</th>
<th>Actual Range</th>
<th>Sd</th>
<th>Previous Surveys Sd</th>
<th>Significant differences of between male and female</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cog. Leisure Attitude</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12-60</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.75</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aff. Leisure Attitude</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12-60</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.54</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beh. Leisure Attitude</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12-60</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.32</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Freedom in Leisure</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25-125</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.60-0.74</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of study participants (N=206).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presence of Children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>available</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>64.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unavailable</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>35.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>academics</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>very bad</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bad</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>medium</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>44.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>44.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>very good</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>very low</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>low</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>35.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Leisure Time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>medium</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>36.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>very high</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall alpha reliability for the LAS was 0.97. Alpha reliabilities for the Cognitive, Affective, and Behavioral subscales were 0.81, 0.92, and 0.91, respectively. LAS is a five point Likert type scale and the highest point to be got from the scale is 180 and the lowest point is 36. For this study, Cronbach alpha was found as 0.96.
Table 3. Mean scores of leisure attitude, perceived freedom leisure by married couples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Married couple member</th>
<th>Cog LAS Mean score±sd</th>
<th>AFF LAS Mean score±sd</th>
<th>Beh LAS Mean score±sd</th>
<th>PFL Mean score±sd</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male (N=103)</td>
<td>49.07±9.09</td>
<td>46.90±8.82</td>
<td>41.92±9.20</td>
<td>88.59±1.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female (N=103)</td>
<td>50.34±8.47</td>
<td>47.82±8.29</td>
<td>42.77±7.80</td>
<td>89.93±1.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test</td>
<td>Z = -0.920</td>
<td>Z = -0.890</td>
<td>t = -0.711</td>
<td>Z = -0.511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>0.358</td>
<td>0.374</td>
<td>0.478</td>
<td>0.609</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Correlational matrix of leisure attitude and perceived freedom leisure for $H_1$ and $H_2$ (N=206).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spearman Correlation</th>
<th>Cog LAS</th>
<th>AFF LAS</th>
<th>Beh LAS</th>
<th>PFL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cog LAS</td>
<td></td>
<td>.810(**)</td>
<td>.520(**)</td>
<td>.449(**)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFF LAS</td>
<td>.810(**)</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.612(**)</td>
<td>.553(**)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beh LAS</td>
<td>.520(**)</td>
<td>.612(**)</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.545(**)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PFL</td>
<td>.449(**)</td>
<td>.553(**)</td>
<td>.545(**)</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Therefore, we analyzed only the total PFL score. For this study, Cronbach alpha was found as 0.95.

**RESULTS**

The results of the study are presented in the order of the research question and corresponding hypothesis.

**Research Question:** To what degree are leisure attitudes and perceived freedom in leisure consistent within married couples?

Table 3 presents mean scale scores and diversity between male and female. As shown in Table 4, the three LAS subscales and PFL are all significantly and positively correlated (p<.001). The literature previously reviewed suggests that married couples influence the attitudes and actions of one another. Therefore, married couples were formed by pairing individuals: husband/wife dyads.

**H1:** There will be significant and positive relationships between Leisure Attitude subscale (Cognitive, Affective, Behavioral) scores for married couples. This hypothesis was supported. Cognitive, affective and behavioral leisure attitude scores were positively and significantly correlated for married couples.

**H2:** There will be significant and positive relationships...
between perceived freedom in leisure for married couples. This hypothesis was supported. Husband/wife dyad scores were positively and significantly related (Table 5).

Leisure attitude affects perceived freedom in leisure positively and significantly within married couples ($r=0.615$). Married couples' leisure attitude explained range of 38% their perceived freedom in leisure. The regression assumptions were tested about normality of residuals. However, assumptions were violated. Consequently, PFL has not seen dependent significantly on LAS subscales.

H3: Leisure attitude affects perceived freedom in leisure positively and significantly within married couples. This hypothesis was supported. It was determined that there is a positive correlation between LAS and PFL ($r=0.615$; $p<.01$). However, PFL has not seen dependent on LAS subscales.

### DISCUSSION

This study examined the relationship between leisure attitude and perceived freedom in leisure within married couples. Accordingly; It was found that leisure attitude and perceived freedom in leisure is positively and significantly correlated within married couples. Couples were the most likely to have similar scores on the leisure attitudes and perceived freedom in leisure. This situations are parallel to the previous studies. Siegenthaler and O’Dell (2000) researched the relationship with various family dyads (husband-wife, parent-child, etc.). In this study, they posited that leisure attitude, leisure satisfaction and perceived freedom in leisure is positively and significantly correlated within married couples. This is consistent with the idea that in long-term relationships, partners attitudes tend to merge (Kenny, 1996; Rusbult and Arriaga, 1997). It is also possible that the couple dyads’ similar views about leisure played a role in the development and continuation of their marriages (Cate and Lloyd, 1988; Hill, 1988; Orthner et al., 1994). Gerson(1960) reported that marital satisfaction of college couples is enhanced by similar leisure attitudes. Hill (1988) posited that shared leisure time provides opportunities for enjoyable interaction between spouses as a result couples are drawn closer together, which strengthens the marriage. As considered in association with the positive correlations of couples for perceived freedom and leisure attitudes, the number of years married supports the idea of a relationship between shared views about leisure and marital longevity (Iso-Ahola, 1995). Findings from the current study provide additional support to such previous works. Considering the traditional culture; Turkish family members are likely to participate in family leisure activities ignoring their personal preferences but regarding the family’s preferences (Uskul et al, 2004). Aslan (2009) indicated that there is a significant and positive relationship between family leisure enjoyment and family satisfaction from mother, father and youth perspectives. It may be explained that leisure attitude and enjoyment is similar to leisure satisfaction and also perceived freedom in leisure.

In conclusion, this current study found that married couples' leisure attitude explained range of approximately half of their perceived freedom in leisure but it has noot seem dependent on LAS subscales. Moreover, leisure attitude and perceived freedom in leisure is positively and significantly correlated within married couples. In other words, we can say that being married influence individuals’ attitudes and perceived freedom in leisure or married couples have similar views about leisure. It is important to state that although leisure awareness in Turkish society may not be developed as in Western societies, spending time with the family or spouse has always been valued as a part of their traditional structure (Aslan, 2009). So, it appears that activities, interests, and knowledge may vary greatly within couples, yet the enjoyment received and the sense of control over the experience are similar.

Additional study is recommended to further examine the role of married couples in determining attitudes, values and beliefs about leisure. Moreover, time-series studies within married couples would be helpful in defining at what point attitudes form, merge and separate. Sample group can be enlarged to enable more complete analysis and to carry out completion of the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression coefficient</td>
<td>30.625</td>
<td>5.675</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>0.136</td>
<td>1.394</td>
<td>0.165</td>
<td>0.378</td>
<td>40.892</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>0.266</td>
<td>2.442</td>
<td>0.015</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral</td>
<td>0.288</td>
<td>3.855</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
questionnaire with individual interviews.

**Conflict of Interests**

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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