

## EFFECTS OF RECREATION SERVICES OFFERED BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT ON QUALITY OF LIFE: A FACTOR ANALYSIS APPLICATION

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**Abstract:** It is known that majority of world's population have been living in cities. It is known that leisure time and recreation activities occupy a substantial place in elimination of many problems, even prevention of their formation, encountered in urban life. In this direction, the local authorities have been empowered within framework of the laws to offer the services related to recreation services of people. Therefore, there are important responsibilities of municipalities related to recreation services.

In this study, the impact of recreation activities over living quality – oriented opinions of those who utilize the life quality – oriented recreation activities offered by Ankara Metropolitan Municipality at the Family Life Center and Ladies Club has been investigated and it has been tried to set down the recreative factors that directly or indirectly influence the living quality of the participants.

Among the sensations, the participants have felt when performing such activities “psychological relaxation factor and psychological satisfaction factor”; as for the benefits of the recreational activities “personal and social development factor, increment factor in social awareness, psychological development factor plus happiness and success” become prominent. As to the impact of recreational activities over living quality, “life quality improvement factor” ranks first.

**Keywords:** Recreation, Life Quality, Factor Analysis

### INTRODUCTION

In Turkey, 75.5% of the population lives in cities ([www.tuik.gov.tr](http://www.tuik.gov.tr)). And it should be known that the urban living conditions have been increasingly becoming heavier, exerting pressure on the urban people and adversely affecting their life qualities.

Although life quality concept frequently contained in the literature extensively during recent years, “the meaning it comprises may exhibit a very distinctive range from situation of income up to ability of reaching health service” (Telatar, 2007,4). For example; World Health Organization defining the health as; not only the absence of disease and disability but also a full physical, social and mental health; as to life quality “as the perception of person's own situation within its culture and system of values” ([www.who.int/en](http://www.who.int/en)). The researches carried out have revealed that also the subjective perceptions of persons become effective on the life quality as well as the material facilities they have. In a research carried out worldwide, the percentage of the persons who have placed economic issues in the first row in Latin American countries is rather high in comparison to European states. However, the life satisfaction percentages of these countries have been found to be as high as European countries' (Narrated by: Kaya, 2006,6,13).

Recreation defined to be “the activities which enables the person to be spiritually and physically restructured and refreshed and may be voluntarily chosen” by the person (West & Bucher, 1995, 14); it is important for it supports education, economic and cultural development, promotes working efficiency; an essential area preservation and repair of physical, spiritual and mental health and development of new generation from all perspectives and also for the harmful behaviors from perspective of individual and society not to establish during leisure times owned (Arslan, 1996, 1). To these requirements, promoting the life quality of peoples today living in depression has been added.

Among the elements adversely or affirmatively affecting the life quality, the returns of urbanization and static lifestyle occupy an important place. Rapid urbanization brings along “failure to urbanize”, alienation against work and society and isolation; motionless, static and anti-social lifestyle; as a whole, it causes a lot of problems to be experienced from the physical and spiritual standpoints as well; moreover, when the unemployment, abundance of poor and deprived groups and economic inefficiencies in the developing countries like Turkey, the requirement felt against recreation activities is being felt much more. Increase in pressure elements and severity of economical conditions and business life doubtlessly adversely affect the life quality of humans as well. These challenges are more precise in cities where population is dense (Arslan, 2010, 9).

It is being considered that the relevant article was addressed to recreation facilities and participation status hereof as one of the most important indicators that affect the life quality; that there is an interaction between recreation and life quality (Baker and Palmer, 2006, 396; Iwasaki, 2007, 234; Öztürk, 2006, 49, 57; Kaya, 2006, 3).

For a long time, exceeding recent 100 years in USA, also the pretension of Municipalities that they would create leisure time and recreation service – purpose local parks or recreation sections has been mostly being based on positive contribution of recreation to the life quality. Many researchers stand up for that the recreation services and their programs are the necessary service that could upgrade life quality of the society (Baker and Palmer, 2006, 396).

In this sense of responsibility, it has been observed that many municipalities have been offering recreation service to the people. Also one of the local managements offering the recreation service in a widespread manner is Ankara Metropolitan Municipality. The purpose of the study is to determine the recreational factors taking role in life quality of individuals who have been making use of the recreation services of Ankara Metropolitan Municipality.

## **METHOD**

The cosmos of this research is composed of 32,261 adults who have participated in the activities from Lady Clubs and Family Life Centers belonging to Ankara Metropolitan

Municipality in year 2010 ([www.ankara.bel.tr](http://www.ankara.bel.tr)). With 5% tolerance, 384 participants have been deemed adequate for the aspect of representation of cosmos (Özdamar, 2003,118).

In acquisition of data, quinary Likert scale has been employed. The Crombach alpha value has been computed to be (.965). Factor analysis has been applied to the data obtained and Varimax and Quartimax factor rotation has been applied to ensure conceptual integrity.

## FINDINGS

**Table 1. Factor Analysis Related to Sensations Felt When Performing Activities**

	Variance %	Cumulative %		Factor Load Value	
				1	2
Psychological relaxation factor	60,420	60,420	Feeling herself / himself happier	0.815	
			Distancing from daily life concerns	0.809	
			Feeling refreshing	0.804	
			Distancing from stress of life	0.797	
			Sensational relaxation	0.775	
			Boredom adjunction	0.733	
			Repose	0.702	
Psychological Satisfaction factor	7,212	67,632	Experiencing sensation of being admired		0.909
			Living sensation of achievement		0.776
			Experiencing sensation of freedom		0.645
			Forgetting negations in life		0.621
			Feeling herself / himself more confident		0.504
			Entertainment		0.499

In consequence of factor analysis carried out in order to determine what people feel while taking part in the activities, it has been set down that the sensations the persons felt while participating in the activities united on two basic factors. According to the density of the sensations, these sensations are called as; psychological relaxation factor and psychological satisfaction.

“Psychological relaxation” is the most important factor among the sensations felt during activities. Looking at the weights of the items over this factor, “Feeling herself / himself happier, Distancing from daily life concerns, Feeling refreshing, Distancing from stress of life, Sensational relaxation, Boredom adjunction, Repose” have been found to be more important.

“Second substantial factor felt most densely among activities performed is the “psychological satisfaction”. According to this, when looked at the density of the sensations the participants have felt while performing the activities, it is seen that “Experiencing sensation of being admired, Living sensation of achievement, Experiencing sensation of freedom, Forgetting negations in life, Feeling herself / himself more confident, Entertainment” step forward.

**Table 2. Recreation Activity Benefits - Related Factor Analysis**

	Variance %	Cumulative %		Factor Load Value							
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Personal and social development and its factor	55,106	55.106	Discovering different skills	0.753							
			Creative development		0.704						
			Development of social communication skill			0.688					
			Social environment development				0.685				
Increase factor in social awareness	5.729	60.835	Being more sensitive to social problems	0.813							
			Increase in environmental awareness		0.787						
			More expectations from Municipality			0.773					
			Devotion increase to city lived in				0.741				
			Being more disposed in making contribution to social disputes resolution						0.738		
Psychologic progression factor	3.990	64.825	Psychological rehabilitation	0.755							
			Physical health rehabilitation		0.711						
			Perceiving life more optimistically			0.695					
			Abortion of monotonous life				0.685				
			Handling challenges more comfortably					0.641			
			Being at peace with oneself more							0.438	
			Increased self-confidence								0.408
Happiness and achievement sensation factor	3.712	68.537	Being more satisfied from physical appearance	0.814							
			Being happier		0.751						
			Being more successful at school and / or working life			0.725					

As a result of the factor analysis performed, it has been found out the benefits persons think are achieved by the recreation activities to them combined on four basic factors. According to the importance degree of the benefits their participation to the recreation activities, these factors are named as “Personal and social development and its factor, Increase factor in social awareness, Psychological progression factor, Happiness and achievement sensation factor”.

“Personal and social development factor” is the most important factor among the benefits obtained from the activities. Looking at the weights of the items over this factor, upon having participated recreation activities, it is seen that the benefits of “Discovering different skills, Creative

development, Development of social communication skill and Social environment development” have gained weight.

Second substantial factor acquired among activities is the “Increase factor in social awareness”. The participants express that they have acquired more benefits of “being more sensitive versus social issues, increase in environmental awareness, more expectations from municipality, devotion increase to city lived in Being more disposed in making contribution to social disputes resolution” for the sake of having participated activities.

The third important factor in the benefits of our activities is "psychological development" factor. Within the psychological development factor “Psychological rehabilitation, Physical health rehabilitation, Perceiving life more optimistically, Abortion of monotonous life, Handling challenges more comfortably, Being at peace with oneself more, Increased self-confidence” stand out.

The fourth important factor among the benefits obtained from the activities is the “happiness and achievement” factor. According to the importance degree of the benefits ensured by the participation of persons to the recreation activities within these factors, the benefits of “being more content from the physical, becoming happier, being more successful in school and/or work life” benefits which stand out.

**Table 3. Factor Analysis Related to Impact of Recreation Activities Participation On Life Quality**

	% of Variance	Cumulative %		Factor Load Value	
				1	2
Life quality increment factor	55,571	55,571	Participation to activities increased my life quality	0.862	
			More frequent participation to activities shall promote my life quality much more		0.828

As a result of the factor analysis carried out in order to determine the influence of participating the recreation activities to the life quality, it has been observed that the most important factor affecting participation of persons to the recreation activities is “Life quality increment factor”. When look at the weights of the items on this factor, according to importance, it is sighted that the opinion of “participation to activities increased my life quality and More frequent participation to activities shall promote my life quality much more” gain weight.

## CONCLUSION

The affirmative sensations felt during participation to the recreation activities directly influence the life quality in positive direction. People take part in the activities for distinctive reasons and look forward to this participation. As to the best side of this waiting is that, whenever the humans save time out of their daily obligations for themselves, they return work having been refreshed. To some degree, recreation recreates man (Lieberman, 1998,3). Triggering the positive spiritual state, recreation

activities make positive effects on the health. It helps overcoming isolation and decrease negative effects of stress on health thus, makes contribution to the wellness, of humans, due to this, makes contribution to life quality (Coleman and Iso-Ahola, 1993; Gobster,2005,368; Sivan and Ruskin,2000,1; www.questia.com).

Also Baker and Palmer (2006, 396) emphasize that participation to the recreation activities a great deal of affirmative benefits such as mostly repose, entertainment, self-development and cultural awareness, self-confidence, self-admiration, friendship, sense of belonging, physical fitness and independency. The findings of the research are also in direction that recreation activities provide such benefits. What is more, these benefits are the benefits that could not be easily acquired otherwise and enhance life quality. Here, it reveals once again how participation to the recreation activities is important.

In addition, the outcomes of the study show that the recreation activities have a specific role related to participation of society. "Participation; is that the humans become interactive subjects in their own living areas – related decisions and operations and actions." "Participation; enhances that people think over their living areas – related challenges and make attempt and take over responsibility. And this turns people into being aware of their issues and responsibilities" (Miser, 2000, 8-11). Thanks to the recreation activities people participated, enhance their awareness levels related to their own living spaces, become more sensitive against issues and responsibilities This situation exhibits that participation to the recreation activities is not only important from individual dimension but also social dimension from the perspective of life quality.

Increasing dissatisfaction, stress, challenge, immobility, deprivation from creativity and alienation is known that these today constitute the structure of many societies across the globe. Today, these typical characteristics is likely be softened by means of leisure time behaviors and the leisure time and recreation activities are being perceived to be source to be able to improve life quality (Sivan and Ruskin, 2000,1). To enable more effective utilization of these benefits, Municipalities are should increase the services of this nature and carry out all necessary arrangements to be able to bring the participation of people to the highest level.

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