

## Examining the Relationship Between Life Satisfaction and Tennis As a Serious Leisure Activity

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### ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to examine the relationship between life satisfaction and tennis as a serious leisure activity.

Research sample consists of 150 club athletes who are actively interested in tennis, 87 of whom are male athletes while 63 of whom are female athletes (age=20,512 + 1,721).

In order to achieve the objective of the research, "Serious Leisure Time Scale" developed by Gould et al. (2008) and "Life Satisfaction Scale" developed by Diener et al. (1985) and adapted into Turkish by Köker and Yetim (1991) were employed in the study.

In the analysis and interpretation of the data, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, t-test and Pearson Correlation were used. Significance was taken as  $P < 0.05$  and  $P < 0.05$ . SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) package program was used in assessing the data and finding the calculated values.

At the end of this study, a positive linear relationship was detected between the level of serious leisure time and the level of life satisfaction. In other words, the higher the level of serious leisure time is, the higher the level of life satisfaction will become among students.

**Keywords:** Leisure time, tennis, life satisfaction

### INTRODUCTION

When the relevant literature is examined, it stands out that serious leisure activity is a concept which is referred to with different names and includes different concepts (Gould, 2005).

The Serious Leisure theory defines voluntariness in the leisure activities and brings an initiative. Those taking part in the voluntary activities to spend their leisure time play a role in constituting the community involvement, civilian labour force and social capital (Stebbins, 2009). At this point, it is stated that the volunteers who sacrifice their leisure time in such issues as career, personal development and social integration have made significant contributions to the development of Western community in social and economic aspects (Stebbins, 2009). Making a general classification for the leisure activities, Stebbins divided leisure activities into "serious leisure" and "casual leisure". In the studies that he conducted in 1977, 1980, 1982, 1992 and 1996, he examined the nature of the serious leisure activities psychologically, socio-psychologically and sociologically. The first distinguishing feature is the perseverance in relation to the activity carried out in the leisure.

Although the participants of the leisure activities generally leave with pleasing memories, they may subject to such stresses as stage fright, embarrassment, freezing cold weather conditions, anxiety and fear, fatigue, injury etc. Thus, sticking to an activity necessitates coping with the challenges of that activity and perseverance along with the positive emotions that it evoked. Advancing towards the hazard, supporting a losing team and showing perseverance in order to tackle the challenges of an activity or a problem encountered are essential features distinguishing the serious leisure from casual leisure (Akyıldız, 2013).

In this respect, it is thought that serious leisure level may have a significant impact on feeling satisfied with the life.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Sample

Research sample consists of 150 club athletes who are actively interested in tennis, 87 of whom are male athletes while 63 of whom are female athletes ( age=20,512 + 1,721).

### Data Collection

“Serious Leisure Scale” developed by Gould et al. (2008) and “Life Satisfaction Scale” developed by Diener et al. (1985) and adapted into Turkish by Köker (1991) and Yetim (1991) were used in order to achieve the objective of this study.

### Statistical Analysis

Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, t-test and Pearson correlation test were used in the analysis and interpretation of the data and significance was accepted as  $P < 0.05$ . SPSS (statistical package for social sciences) package program was used in assessing the data and finding the calculated values.

## FINDINGS

**Table 1. t test results of the tennis players in relation to their serious leisure and life satisfaction levels by the variable of sex**

	Sex	N	Mean	Stand ard Deviation	T
Serious Leisure Level	Male	87	6,7470	1,587 2	-1,751
	Femal e	63	7,1332	1,114 5	
Life Satisfaction Level	Male	87	5,4212	1,313 0	-1,397
	Femal e	63	5,7103	1,159 3	

\* $P < 0.05$

When the Table 1 is examined, it is seen that the difference between the serious leisure score averages of male and female tennis players [t value = -1,751  $P > 0.05$ ] is not significant. Considering the score averages, serious leisure score average of male players is = 6.7470 while that of female players is =7.1332.

It is also clear that the difference between the life satisfaction level score averages of male and female tennis players is not significant [t value = -1,397  $P > 0.05$ ]. While the life satisfaction score average of male players is = 5.4212, that of female players is =5.7103.

**Table 2. t test results of the tennis players in relation to their serious leisure and life satisfaction levels by the variable of marital status**

	Marital Status	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	T
Serious Leisure Level	Married	44	5,8640	1,5561	-5,783*
	Single	106	7,4331	1,0997	
Life Satisfaction Level	Married	44	4,9443	1,2814	-3,942*
	Single	106	5,7910	1,1619	

\*P&lt;0.05

When the Table 2 is examined, it is seen that the difference between serious leisure level score averages of married and single tennis players is significant [t value = -5,783 P<0.05]. Considering the score averages, serious leisure score average of married players is = 5.8640 while that of single players is =7.4331.

It is also seen that difference between the life satisfaction score averages of married and single players is not significant [t value = -3,942 P>0.05]. Considering the score averages, while the life satisfaction score average of married players is =4.9443, that of single players is =5.7910.

**Table 3. t test results of serious leisure and life satisfaction levels of tennis players by the variable of age**

	Age	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	T
Serious Leisure Level	Under the age of 18	63	7,6040	0,9121	6,043*
	At the age of 18 and above	87	6,4061	1,5062	
Life Satisfaction Level	Under the age of 18	63	6,0230	1,0897	4,207*
	At the age of 18 and above	87	5,1948	1,2573	

\*P&lt;0.05

When the Table 3 is examined, it is seen that the difference between the serious leisure score averages of both groups is significant [t value = -5,783 P<0.05]. Considering the average values, the serious leisure score average of tennis players aged under 18 is =7.6040 while that of tennis players aged 18 and above is =6.4061.

The table also shows that the difference between life satisfaction score averages of both groups is not significant [t value = -3,942 P>0.05]. Considering the average values, while the life satisfaction score average of tennis players aged under 18 is =6.0230, that of tennis players aged 18 and above is =5.1948.

**Table 4. Pearson Correlation test results in relation to the serious leisure level and life satisfaction level of tennis players**

		Life Satisfaction
Serious Leisure Level	Pearson Correlation	0,474**
	N	150
	P	0,000

**\*\*P<0.01**

Table 4 indicates that there is a positive linear relationship between the serious leisure level and life satisfaction level.

In other words, it can be said that life satisfaction levels will rise in tennis players in parallel to their increasing serious leisure levels.

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

When the results obtained in the present study were considered, it was seen that the variable of sex did not have a statistical difference. It could be stated that the variables of marital status and age showed statistical differences. In terms of relationality, a positive linear relationship was detected between serious leisure level and life satisfaction level and statistically significant findings were obtained.

In the light of these findings, as it was stated by Neugarten (1961), levels of participation in physical activities and leisure activities also influence the life satisfaction as well as the socio-demographic factors such as age, health, sex and marital status (Karataş, 1988; Karataş et al., 1989).

A positive linear relationship was detected between the serious leisure level and life satisfaction level. In other words, it can be said that the life satisfaction levels of tennis players will rise in parallel to their increasing serious leisure levels. In terms of rationality, a study carried out on the elderly provided evidence showing that old people who are really active (hobbies, social relations and exercises etc.) are happier than the others (Kelly et al., 1987). According to this approach, if the individual focuses on important activities, happiness comes out by itself (Diener, 1984).

Accordingly, it is thought that tennis is associated with life satisfaction as a serious leisure activity.

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