Contents lists available at Red & River Publications

International Journal of Eurasia Social Sciences

Journal Homepage: www.rrpubs.com/index.php/ijoess

*Research Article/Araştırma Makalesi*

# Do reasons for participation in recreational activities shape social health? A study on youth

**Ramazan Özavci[1]*, Abdulmenaf Korkutata[2]**

[1] *Department of Sport Science, Bingöl University, Bingöl, Postcode, 12000, Türkiye*
[2] *Department of Sport Science, Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Çanakkale, Postcode, 17000, Türkiye*

## Abstract

In the modern world, participation in recreational activities is recognized as a determinant of individuals' psychosocial development and overall well-being. Particularly during young adulthood, the impact of recreational processes on social health outcomes is of critical importance for understanding social adaptation processes. This study examines the predictive effect of reasons for participation in recreational activities on the social health levels of young individuals residing in the province of Bingöl. The study employed the relational survey model, one of the quantitative research methods, with data obtained from 423 participants reached through the convenience sampling method. Sample adequacy was tested using the G*Power software, which confirmed that the reached sample size was sufficient for statistical power. Data analysis included descriptive statistics, Pearson Correlation, and Multiple Linear Regression analyses. Statistical significance levels were set at $p<0.05$ and $p<0.01$. According to the analysis results, significant positive correlations were identified between social health and all sub-dimensions of recreational reasons. The regression model was found to be statistically significant ($p<0.05$), explaining 28.1% of the total variance in social health. While the strongest predictor of social health was the "Social Component" (β=.283), this was followed by the "Competence-Mastery" and "Stimulus-Avoidance" dimensions. In contrast, the "Intellectual Motivation" dimension was found to have no significant predictive effect on social health ($p>0.05$). It was determined that social interaction, competence acquisition, and avoidance-oriented recreational tendencies are significant predictors of social health levels among youth; however, intellectual motivations do not provide a unique contribution to this process. This indicates that the social health levels of young people are shaped through dynamics focused on extroverted interaction and tangible skill acquisition rather than intrinsic-cognitive gains in recreational preferences.

**Keywords:** Social Health, Recreational orientations, youth, avoidance, competence

# *Rekreasyonel aktivitelere katılım nedenleri sosyal sağlığı şekillendirir mi? Gençlere yönelik bir araştırma*

## *Öz*

*Modern dünyada rekreasyonel etkinliklere katılım, bireylerin psikososyal gelişimleri ve genel iyilik halleri üzerinde belirleyici bir unsur olarak kabul edilmektedir. Özellikle genç yetişkinlik döneminde rekreasyonel süreçlerin sosyal sağlık çıktıları üzerindeki etkisi, bireylerin toplumsal uyum süreçlerini anlamlandırmak açısından kritik bir öneme sahiptir. Bu araştırma, Bingöl ilinde yaşayan genç bireylerin rekreasyonel aktivitelere katılım nedenlerinin sosyal sağlık düzeyleri üzerindeki yordayıcı etkisini belirlemek amacıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Nicel araştırma yöntemlerinden ilişkisel tarama modelinin kullanıldığı çalışmada, veriler kolayda örnekleme yöntemiyle ulaşılan 423 katılımcıdan elde edilmiştir. Örneklem yeterliliği G-Power programı ile test edilmiş ve ulaşılan sayının istatistiksel güç için yeterli olduğu saptanmıştır. Verilerin analizinde tanımlayıcı istatistikler, Pearson Korelasyon ve Çoklu Doğrusal Regresyon analizleri uygulanmıştır. İstatistiksel sonuçlarda anlamlılık düzeyi $p<0,05$ ve $p<0,01$ olarak dikkate alınmıştır. Analiz sonuçlarına göre; sosyal sağlık ile rekreasyonel motivasyonun tüm alt boyutları arasında pozitif yönlü anlamlı ilişkiler saptanmıştır. Kurulan regresyon modelinin istatistiksel olarak anlamlı olduğu ($p<0,05$) ve sosyal sağlıktaki toplam varyansın %28,1'ini açıkladığı belirlenmiştir. Sosyal sağlık üzerinde en güçlü yordayıcı etkinin "Sosyal Bileşen" (β=0,283) alt boyutunda olduğu görülürken, bunu "Yetkinlik Hakimiyeti" ve "Kaçınma Motivasyonu" boyutları takip etmiştir. Buna karşın, "Entelektüel Motivasyon" boyutunun sosyal sağlık üzerinde anlamlı bir yordayıcı etkisi saptanmamıştır ($p>0,05$). Gençlerin sosyal sağlık düzeyleri üzerinde sosyal etkileşim, yetkinlik kazanımı ve kaçınma odaklı rekreasyonel yönelimlerin anlamlı birer yordayıcı olduğu, buna karşın entelektüel motivasyonun bu süreçte özgün bir katkı sağlamadığı saptanmıştır. Bu durum, gençlerin sosyal sağlık düzeylerinin desteklenmesinde rekreasyonel tercihlerin içsel-bilişsel kazanımlardan ziyade, dışa dönük etkileşim ve somut beceri edinimi odaklı dinamikler üzerinden şekillendiğini göstermektedir.*

***Anahtar Kelimeler:*** *Sosyal Sağlık, Rekreasyonel yönelimler, gençler, kaçınma, yetkinlik*

*Corresponding author
*E-mail address:* ramazanozavciii@gmail.com (Özavci R)

https://doi.org/10.70736/ijoess.2334
Received 20 January 2026; Received in revised form 3 April 2026; Accepted 24 August 2026
Available online 25 September 2026
e-ISSN: 2146-1961/ ©2026 by the authors. Licensee Red & River Publications, Rize, Türkiye.
This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0).

## INTRODUCTION

University students encounter various challenges, such as stress, anxiety, and mental fatigue stemming from academic and social demands, which underscores the increasing significance of their social and psychological health (Mahardika & Lahinda, 2025). In today's digitalized world, the risk of social isolation is increasing. Therefore, safe spaces for face-to-face interaction are more important than ever. Recreational participation contributes significantly to individuals' social development (Leeson et al., 2024); specifically, group-based activities facilitate the establishment of social bonds and the enhancement of social skills (Khalid & Sarfraz, 2019). Such activities play a vital role in fulfilling the need for socialization (Hekim, 2022). While recreational activities enhance students' subjective well-being and general quality of life, the time individuals allocate to themselves further strengthens their perceptions of happiness and life satisfaction (Kurkmazlı, 2022; Aksoy & Kılıçarslan, 2024). Furthermore, participation in recreational activities that involve physical movement not only promotes physical health but also provides extensive emotional and social benefits. Regular engagement in these activities is of critical importance for the sustainability of such emotional and social gains (Özkurt & Küçükibiş, 2024). The impact of leisure activities on health manifests through various mechanisms involving psychological, social, biological, and behavioral processes (Fancourt et al., 2021). In this regard, it must be emphasized that health is not limited solely to the physical dimension (Shannon, 1989). Indeed, being healthy cannot be defined exclusively by physical well-being, mental and social dimensions are recognized as integral parts of this holistic structure (Yuvalı, 2016).

Social health refers to the state where an individual's relationships are sufficient in both quantity and quality within their context to meet the need for forming meaningful social connections (World Health Organization, 2025). Theoretically, this concept can be associated with Social Capital Theory, as recreational spaces serve as fundamental venues where social networks, characterized by trust and reciprocity, are constructed. In this context, recreational activities are considered a vital tool for youth to strengthen their social connections and support their social health (Özden & Yaşartürk, 2024). Recreational activities, which play a critical role in preserving the social health levels of young people, provide a foundation for establishing strong societal bonds by deepening interpersonal social interaction (Rivera et al., 2022; Güzel, 2025). Group activities such as walks, cycling tours, team sports, and other physical activities offer participants both enjoyable experiences and the strengthening of their social bonds (Georgian & Lorand, 2016). However, the diversity of motives for youth participation in these activities necessitates an understanding of their determinant influence on the resulting social health outcomes. In this regard, studies on the recreational participation motivations of youth are of critical importance for increasing their involvement in such activities and encouraging the adoption of healthy lifestyles by supporting their holistic health (Özant et al., 2025). While recreational activities provide positive physical and psychological contributions to individuals (Sun, 2026), they enable participants to come together for a common purpose and interact, regardless of their differing social statuses or abilities (Tuncer, 2022). Furthermore, group activities, walks, and team sports strengthen individuals' social ties while contributing to an increase in life satisfaction (Budak & Yumuk, 2025); this process serves as a fundamental element supporting physical and mental well-being (Brown et al., 2026). The role of regular recreational participation in enhancing social relationships and improving general health outcomes is of strategic importance (Chang et al., 2014). Moreover, another study in the literature indicates that socially active recreational activities strengthen individuals' long-term mental well-being, whereas socially passive recreational activities increase the risk of psychological problems (Timonen et al., 2023). Additionally, sports participation has been reported to most commonly result in increased self-esteem, improved social interaction, and a reduction in depressive symptoms (Eime et al., 2013). Accordingly, a study in the literature revealed that motivations for participating in recreational activities are primarily based on psychological state, physical state, and enjoyment (Elmose-Østerlund et al., 2023). Viewed through the lens of Self-Determination Theory, the motivations of autonomy, competence, and relatedness that trigger recreational participation also determine the quality of the health gains achieved. The motivational force guiding an individual's behavior in interactions with the external world and peers is a fundamental element that directly influences the level of social health (Liang et al., 2025). Leisure activities, particularly recreation, are significantly associated with individuals' social health levels and positively influence their social well-being (Zare et al., 2025). The reasons for university students' participation in recreational activities are recognized as a critical determinant explaining their social health levels (Mutz et al., 2021). Existing studies indicate that the primary motivations for youth participation in recreational activities include seeking new experiences (Caldwell & Witt, 2011), enjoying nature (Zamora et al., 2021), and gaining self-confidence (Kovach, 2019; Sidi et al., 2017). Conversely, it is noteworthy that studies in the literature that holistically examine the predictive effect of these motivational elements on different dimensions of social health on an empirical basis are limited. Based on this point, it is crucial to examine the extent to which the reasons for youth participation in recreational activities determine their social health. All these findings constitute the fundamental rationale for this study, which aims to reveal the determinant role of university students' recreational participation reasons on their social health levels.

Although the relationships between the reasons for participation in recreational activities and social health outcomes have been addressed from various dimensions in the literature, it can be argued that the analysis of specific participation motives determining the social health levels of youth, particularly at the Bingöl scale, is underrepresented. In this context, determining the predictive effect of youth's leisure preferences on social health is of critical importance both for the development of local youth strategies for the region and for clarifying the theoretical standing of recreational participation regarding social health outcomes. The primary aim of this study is to determine the extent to which the reasons for participation in recreational activities among youth residing in the province of Bingöl predict their social health levels and to identify the direction of the interaction between these variables. Within this framework, the established hypotheses are as follows:

• $H_1$: Intellectual motivation for participation in recreational activities among youth significantly predicts their social health levels.

• $H_2$: Social motives for participation in recreational activities among youth significantly predict their social health levels.

• $H_3$: Competence-mastery motives for participation in recreational activities among youth significantly predict their social health levels.

• $H_4$: Avoidance motivation for participation in recreational activities among youth significantly predicts their social health levels.

## METHOD

### Research Design

This study is a quantitative research endeavor aimed at determining the relationship between reasons for participation in recreational activities and social health levels, as well as the predictive power of these reasons on social health. The study is based on the relational survey model, which seeks to identify the current status of variables and reveal the interactions between them. The independent variables of the research consist of the sub-dimensions of the recreational participation motives scale, namely "Intellectual Motivation," "Social Component," "Competence-Mastery," and "Stimulus-Avoidance." The dependent variable is the participants' "Social Health" level. Within the framework of the established model, the predictive effect of these four motivational factors on social health was tested using multiple linear regression analysis to evaluate causal inferences between the variables.

### Population-sample

The population of the research consists of young individuals residing in the province of Bingöl. In the selection of the sample, the convenience sampling technique, a non-probability sampling method, was preferred due to factors of accessibility and ease of implementation. The sample group comprises 423 individuals who were reached within the scope of the study and participated on a voluntary basis. The statistical adequacy of the sample size was analyzed using G*Power software. An a priori power analysis was conducted by considering the four independent variables in the model with parameters of a medium effect size ($f2 = 0.15$), a 5% margin of error ($\alpha=0.05$), and a 95% statistical power level ($1 - \beta = 0.95$). The calculation revealed that the minimum required sample size was 129. Accordingly, the 423 participants reached in this study significantly exceeded the predicted minimum threshold, confirming that a sufficient sample size was achieved to ensure the statistical power of the subsequent analyses.

### Data collection tools

In this study, a structured questionnaire consisting of two parts was utilized to collect the necessary data.

Recreational Participation Reasons Scale (RPRS): The Recreational Participation Reasons Scale (RPRS), originally developed by Kassim and Musa (2009) and adapted into Turkish by Aksoy and Kılıçarslan (2024), was employed to measure the motives behind the participants' engagement in recreational activities. In both the original development and the Turkish adaptation processes, comprehensive validity and reliability analyses were conducted, with results indicating that the measurement tools possess adequate levels of psychometric robustness. The scale consists of 13 items and is structured into four sub-dimensions. The RPRS utilizes a 7-point Likert-type scale, with response options ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (7). The specific points on the scale are defined as follows: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Somewhat Disagree, 4 = Neither Agree nor Disagree (Undecided), 5 = Somewhat Agree, 6 = Agree, and 7 = Strongly Agree. The sub-dimensions of the scale are as follows:

- Intellectual Motivation: Items 1–3.
- Social Component: Items 4–7.
- Competence-Mastery: Items 8–10.
- Stimulus-Avoidance: Items 11–13.

Social Health Scale (SHS): The Social Health Scale (SHS), originally developed by Abachizadeh et al. (2014) and adapted into Turkish with confirmed reliability and validity by Erkoç (2021), was used to assess the social health levels of the participants. Statistical analyses conducted during the development and adaptation stages revealed that the scale met the validity and reliability criteria and was suitable for use with the relevant sample group. The scale consists of 33 items and is organized into three sub-dimensions. Responses are provided on a 5-point Likert-type scale, where 1 represents "Very little" and 5 represents "Very much." Higher scores obtained from the scale indicate a higher level of social health. Within the scope of this research, statistical analyses were conducted exclusively based on the total scores of the participants. The sub-dimensions of the scale are structured as follows:

- Family: Items 1–6.
- Relatives and Friends: Items 7–14.
- Community (Society): Items 15–33.

## Data analysis

The data obtained from the research were analyzed using the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software. Initially, frequency (n) and percentage (%) analyses were performed to determine the descriptive characteristics of the participants, such as gender, age, leisure time duration, and activity preferences. The internal consistency levels of the measurement scales were tested using Cronbach's Alpha coefficients, which confirmed that all dimensions exhibited high reliability. The suitability of the data for normal distribution assumptions was evaluated through skewness and kurtosis coefficients, based on which it was decided to employ parametric tests. Pearson Correlation analysis was conducted to determine the direction and strength of the relationships between the variables. To test the predictive effect of recreational participation motives on social health, Multiple Linear Regression analysis was performed. In the regression models, standard error, t-values, and beta (β) coefficients were calculated. For all statistical interpretations, significance levels were set at $p < 0.05$ and $p < 0.01$.

## FINDINGS

**Table 1.** Descriptive characteristics of the participants

| Variables | Groups | n | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Women | 224 | 53.0 |
| | Men | 199 | 47.0 |
| Age | 18-20 age | 97 | 22.9 |
| | 21-22 age | 165 | 39.0 |
| | 23-24 age | 101 | 23.9 |
| | 25-35 age | 60 | 14.2 |
| Daily leisure time duration | 1-2 hours | 53 | 12.5 |
| | 3-4 hours | 177 | 41.8 |
| | 5-6 hours | 163 | 38.5 |
| | 7 hours or more | 30 | 7.1 |
| Most frequently participated recreational activity | Personal/Academic Development (Reading books, studying, writing, following journals.) | 153 | 36.2 |
| | Sporting Activities (Playing ball, football, volleyball, walking, swimming, running.) | 113 | 26.7 |
| | Social Activities (Going to cafes, spending time with friends, sightseeing, theater.) | 75 | 17.7 |
| | Rest-based Activities (Sleeping, resting, playing games, music, movies, phone usage.) | 60 | 14.2 |
| | Niche Activities (Knitting, painting, cooking, cleaning.) | 22 | 5.2 |
| Total | | 423 | 100 |

The distributions regarding the participants' descriptive characteristics are presented in Table 1. Fifty-three percent (n=224) of the sample are female, and 47% (n=199) are male. Regarding the age variable, it was determined that the majority (85.8%) are concentrated in the 18–24 age range, with the highest participation (39%) occurring in the 21–22 age group. When daily leisure time durations are examined, it is observed that 80.5% of the participants have three or more hours of free time per day. In the ranking of recreational preferences, personal/academic development activities (36.2%) rank first, followed by sporting (26.7%) and social (17.7%) activities. Niche activities (5.2%) have the lowest participation rate.

**Table 2.** Descriptive results regarding the data collection tools

| Scales | Number of Items | $\bar{X}$ | α | Skewness | Kurtosis |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Intellectual Motivation * | 3 | 4.16 | 0.759 | 0.144 | -0.444 |
| Social Component * | 4 | 4.17 | 0.807 | 0.047 | -0.323 |
| Competence-Mastery * | 3 | 4.23 | 0.775 | 0.016 | -0.557 |
| Stimulus-Avoidance * | 3 | 4.33 | 0.780 | -0.046 | -0.589 |
| Social Health | 33 | 3.36 | 0.912 | 0.125 | 2.145 |

**: Recreational Participation Motives*

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics, reliability coefficients, and distribution characteristics of the scales used in the study. As a result of the analyses, it was determined that the Cronbach's Alpha (α) values of the scales ranged between 0.759 and 0.912, and all sub-dimensions possessed a high level of internal consistency. Upon examining the score distributions of the scales, it is observed that the skewness and kurtosis coefficients generally fall within the limits accepted in the literature. Although the kurtosis value for the Social Health scale appears slightly high, it was found to remain well below the normal distribution criteria suggested by Kline (2011), which are limits of ±3 for skewness and ±10 for kurtosis. Furthermore, considering the views of Kim (2013), who states that an absolute kurtosis value of up to 7 is acceptable when the sample size (n=423) is greater than 300, it was accepted that the data met the normal distribution assumption required for the application of parametric analyses. The internal consistency coefficients (α) of the scales ranged from 0.759 to 0.912, and all dimensions were determined to have a high level of reliability. Regarding motivational preferences, it was identified that the highest mean was in the Stimulus-Avoidance sub-dimension, while the lowest mean was in the Intellectual Motivation sub-dimension.

**Table 3.** Correlation results

| Scales | | Intellectual Motivation* | Social Component * | Competence-Mastery * | Stimulus-Avoidance * |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Social Health | r | 0.271** | 0.462** | 0.404** | 0.412** |
| | p | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| | n | 423 | 423 | 423 | 423 |

*Pearson Correlation; **: p<0.01; *: Recreational Participation Motives*

According to the analysis results, positive and statistically significant relationships were identified between social health and all sub-dimensions of the reasons for participating in recreational activities ($p < .01$). When the correlation coefficients ($r$) are examined, it is observed that the highest level of relationship with social health is in the Social Component sub-dimension. This is followed by the Stimulus-Avoidance and Competence-Mastery dimensions, respectively, which exhibit moderate significance. A low-level positive relationship was identified between Intellectual Motivation and social health. These findings demonstrate that as individuals' motivational orientations toward recreational activities (especially social and avoidance-oriented reasons) increase, their social health levels are also positively affected.

**Table 4.** Impact analysis results

| Model | B | SE | β | t | Sig. | R | Adjusted $R^2$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (Constant) | 2.115 | 0.103 | - | 20.617 | 0.000 | | |
| Intellectual Motivation | 0.026 | 0.019 | 0.062 | 1.354 | 0.176 | | |
| Social Component | 0.124 | 0.022 | 0.283 | 5.720 | **0.000** | 0.536 | 0.281 |
| Competence-Mastery | 0.072 | 0.021 | 0.173 | 3.471 | **0.001** | | |
| Avoidance Motivation | 0.072 | 0.022 | 0.170 | 3.314 | **0.001** | | |

*Enter; F: 42.193; p<0.05; Dependent Variable: Social Health*

Analysis results show that the established regression model is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). The reasons for participating in recreational activities explain approximately 28% of the total variance in social health. When standardized regression coefficients (β) are examined, it is observed that the strongest predictor of social health is the Social Component ($p < 0.01$). This is followed by Competence-Mastery ($p < 0.01$) and Avoidance Motivation ($p < 0.01$), respectively. On the other hand, no statistically significant predictive effect was found for the Intellectual Motivation sub-dimension on social health ($p > 0.05$). These findings reveal that individuals' social interactions in recreational processes, their desire to gain competence, and their tendency to distance themselves (avoidance) from daily stressors positively and significantly increase their social health levels.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study examines how reasons for participation in recreational activities influence the social health of young individuals. In this context, the findings are presented and discussed below. The research findings indicate that Reasons for participation in recreational activities have a decisive role in social health ($p < 0.05$). The fact that the "Social Component" was the strongest predictor of social health can be associated with the search for social acceptance and belonging among young adults, who constitute the vast majority of the sample. The significant contributions of the "Competence-Mastery" and "Avoidance Motivation" dimensions to social health suggest that individuals strengthen their social adaptation by acquiring new skills and distancing themselves from daily stressors. This finding regarding the desire for competence aligns with Kuşlu (2024), who determined that feeling competent through recreational practices significantly improves psychological well-being. The fact that the "Intellectual Motivation" dimension, which appeared to be related to social health in the correlation analysis, did not show a predictive effect in the regression model can be explained by the limited unique contribution of this variable to the variance in social health. The basis of this difference may lie in the fact that social health, by its nature, relies on direct interactional processes, whereas intellectual activities possess a more individual character. Consequently, it is evaluated that factors focused on social interaction and psychological relaxation among the Reasons for participating in recreational activities perform a more critical function in supporting social health. In this context, in line with the findings obtained from the research, it was determined that there are significant and positive relationships between the Reasons for participating in recreational activities and social health. Especially, it is understood that social interaction-based motivations have a stronger effect on social health. This situation indicates that the needs for establishing social bonds, feeling a sense of belonging, and interpersonal interaction are at the forefront of individuals' participation processes in recreational activities. Similar results are frequently encountered in the literature. Indeed, Puhakka (2021) states that social bonds and support mechanisms are decisive for individuals' well-being, emphasizing that recreational activities particularly play a compensatory role for individuals during periods of social isolation. In this regard, the findings indicating that recreational participation strengthens social health are of a nature that supports the current research results. Furthermore, it was determined that motivations such as developing competence and escaping from the stress of daily life in individuals' participation in recreational activities also provide significant contributions to social health. This situation shows that recreational activities have an important function in meeting not only social but also psychological needs. Similarly, Yang et al. (2012) mention that participation in leisure activities increases individuals' perceived health status and subjective well-being. This situation reveals the indirect effect of recreational activities on social health. On the other hand, it is stated that the community-based and socially inclusive nature of recreational activities yields similar positive results even across different socioeconomic groups. Petersen et al. (2021) emphasize that participation in recreational

activities is related to subjective health and well-being. Similarly, it is noted that group-based physical activities strengthen social support mechanisms and increase individuals' social health perceptions (Street et al., 2007). In this context, it can be said that the provision of social interaction opportunities by recreational activities plays an important role in increasing individuals' social health levels. Indeed, studies revealing that individuals participating in recreational activities have higher levels of social health also support this view (Georgian & Lorand, 2016). Additionally, in studies conducted on university students, it is stated that the social dimension in participation in recreational activities is more decisive compared to other types of motivation (Aksoy & Kılıçarslan, 2024). Furthermore, it is indicated that intrinsic and benefit-based motivations toward recreational activities are also effective on social health (Karakaya & Akgül, 2025). These results overlap with the findings obtained in the present research and support the multi-dimensional effect of the Reasons for recreational participation on social health. Some research shows that as individuals' intrinsic motivation levels toward recreational activities increase, social health and well-being also rise positively; for example, increases in both social interaction and subjective well-being indicators have been identified in individuals with high intrinsic motivation (Tsai et al., 2024). Research indicates that the social component motivation in individuals' participation in recreational activities is significantly and positively related to social health and social interaction indicators, and that leisure participation focused on social interaction strengthens individuals' social connection, perception of belonging, and general well-being (Budak & Yumuk, 2025). Some research indicates that avoidance motivation in participation in leisure activities is related to individuals' need to avoid stress, challenging emotions, and negative experiences; and that this form of motivation has a significant effect on individuals' psychological well-being and general motivational processes within the context of recreational participation (Sandberg et al., 2025).

## Conclusion

This study was conducted to determine the impact of reasons for participating in recreational activities on the social health levels of young individuals living in Bingöl province. The findings reveal that recreational motivational factors have significant and explanatory power over social health. As a result of the research, it was determined that approximately 28% of the total variance in the participants' social health levels is explained by the reasons for participating in recreational activities. The fact that the strongest predictive effect on social health is in the "Social Component" sub-dimension provides insight that young adults primarily view recreational processes as a tool for social interaction, belonging, and social acceptance. Furthermore, it was determined that the "Competence-Mastery" and "Avoidance Motivation" dimensions also provide positive and significant contributions to social health. This situation indicates that individuals' pursuit of acquiring new skills and distancing themselves from daily stressors directly supports their social adaptation and communication skills. On the other hand, the fact that the "Intellectual Motivation" dimension, which exhibited a significant relationship in the correlation analysis, did not show a predictive effect in the regression model suggests that this factor does not provide a unique contribution to explaining social health and remains in the shadow of other interaction-oriented variables.

## Recommendations

The recommendations developed in line with the research results are presented below;

- Collective practice workshops" (modern arts, digital design, etc.) that enable youth to relieve stress and acquire new skills should be expanded.
- Experimental research with control groups should be planned to measure the actual impact of the suggested social workshops on social health.
- New variables such as "digital socialization" or "personality traits" could be included in the model to understand the unexplained variance in social health.

## Limitations and strengths

- The sample size of 423 and high reliability coefficients (up to .912) significantly enhance the statistical power and reliability of the study.
- It provides a robust theoretical foundation by integrating Social Capital and Self-Determination theories with recreational motivations.
- The study offers evidence-based and actionable data for developing local youth strategies and social health interventions specific to Bingöl.
- The explained variance of 28.1% indicates that other factors, such as personality traits and digital habits, also substantially influence social health.
- The use of convenience sampling and the geographical focus on Bingöl limit the generalizability of the findings to the broader population.
- The cross-sectional design identifies predictive relationships but remains limited in establishing definitive long-term causality.

## Ethical statement

This paper was conducted with the decision of Bingöl University/Türkiye, Health Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee dated December 12, 2025, and numbered 28.

## Generative AI Use Statement

Artificial intelligence–based tools, including ChatGPT (version 5.2), were used in this study solely for language editing purposes, such as improving grammar, clarity, and readability of the manuscript. No AI tools were used for data analysis, interpretation of results, or generation of scientific content.

## CRediT authorship contribution statement

**Özavcı R.:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Software, Validation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Resources, Data curation, Writing - Original Draft, Writing - Review & Editing, Visualization, **Korkutata A.:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Software, Validation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Resources, Data curation, Writing - Original Draft, Writing - Review & Editing, Visualization, Supervision, Project administration.

## Data availability

The data used in the study may be shared upon request to the corresponding author.

## Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the study reported in this paper.

## Acknowledgment

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

## REFERENCES

Abachizadeh, K., Tayefi, B., Nasehi, A. A., Memaryan, N., Rassouli, M., Omidnia, S., & Bagherzadeh, L. (2014). Development of a scale for measuring social health of Iranians living in three big cities. *Medical Journal of the Islamic Republic of Iran*, *28*, 80. PMCID: PMC4154288

Aksoy, Y., & Kılıçarslan, F. (2024). Üniversite öğrencilerinin rekreasyonel aktivitelere katılım nedenleri ve boş zaman değerlendirme sürecini kısıtlayan engeller üzerine bir araştırma. *ROL Spor Bilimleri Dergisi*, *5*(4), 713-732. [Crossref]

Brown, C. K., Glei, D. A., Lee, C., & Weinstein, M. (2026). Leisure Activities are Associated with Physical and Mental Health. *Current Research in Behavioral Sciences*, 100206. [Crossref]

Budak, D., & Yumuk, E. D. (2025). Leisure involvement, social inclusion, and happiness in Türkiye: A mediational analysis. *Frontiers in Public Health*, *13*, 1696910. [Crossref]

Caldwell, L. L., & Witt, P. A. (2011). Leisure, recreation, and play from a developmental context. *New Directions for Youth Development*, *2011*(130), 13-27. [Crossref]

Chang, P. J., Wray, L., & Lin, Y. (2014). Social relationships, leisure activity, and health in older adults. *Health Psychology*, *33*(6), 516-523. [Crossref]

Eime, R. M., Young, J. A., Harvey, J. T., Charity, M. J., & Payne, W. R. (2013). A systematic review of the psychological and social benefits of participation in sport for children and adolescents: Informing development of a conceptual model of health through sport. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, *10*(1), 98. [Crossref]

Elmose-Østerlund, K., Dalgas, B. W., Bredahl, T. V. G., Lenze, L., Høyer-Kruse, J., & Ibsen, B. (2023). Motives for leisure-time physical activity participation: An analysis of their prevalence, consistency and associations with activity type and social background. *BMC Public Health*, *23*(1), 2399. [Crossref]

Erkoç, B. (2021). Sosyal sağlık ölçeğinin Türkçe uyarlaması: Geçerlik ve güvenirlik çalışması. *Anemon Muş Alparslan Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, *9*(5), 1455-1466. https://izlik.org/JA48LT24WM

Fancourt, D., Aughterson, H., Finn, S., Walker, E., & Steptoe, A. (2021). How leisure activities affect health: A narrative review and multi-level theoretical framework of mechanisms of action. *The Lancet Psychiatry*, *8*(4), 329-339. [Crossref]

Georgian, B., & Lorand, B. (2016). The influence of leisure sports activities on social health in adults. *SpringerPlus*, *5*(1), 1647. [Crossref]

Güzel, E. (2025). *Assessment of self-expression levels of individuals with intellectual disabilities participating in recreational activities. International Journal of Environmental Sciences, 11*(24), 4817–4820.

Hekim, Ö. (2022). Üniversite öğrencilerinin doğa temelli sportif serbest zaman etkinliklerine katılım nedenlerinin ve serbest zaman engellerinin incelenmesi. [Yüksek Lisans Tezi]. Karamanoğlu Mehmetbey Üniversitesi.

Karakaya, B., & Akgül, B. (2025). The role of recreational activity motivation on recreational social health: The case of volleyball. *International Journal of Human Sciences*, *22*(2), 295-310.

Kassim, M. & Musa, R. (2009). Measuring spectators' leisure motivation cues, emotion experience and satisfaction: An analysis of motor sport tourism event. *Malaysian Journal of Sport Science and Recreation, 5*(1), 41-54.

Khalid, A., & Sarfraz, N. (2019). Effectiveness of leisure and play activities for socialization skills of a child with intellectual disability-A case study. *JPMA. The Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association*, *69*(2), 178-182.

Kim, H. Y. (2013). Statistical notes for clinical researchers: Assessing normal distribution (2) using skewness and kurtosis. Restorative Dentistry & Endodontics, 38(1), 52-54. [Crossref]

Kline, R. B. (2011). *Principles and practice of structural equation modeling (3rd ed.)*. The Guilford Press.

Kovach, J. S. (2019). Outdoor recreation increases self-confidence in women. *The Journal of Student Leadership*, *3*(1), 27-35.

Kurkmazlı, E. (2022). *Rekreasyonel bir faaliyet olarak halk oyunlarına katılan üniversite öğrencilerinin sağlık çıktıları ve mutluluk düzeylerinin incelenmesi.* [Yüksek Lisans Tezi]. Necmettin Erbakan Üniversitesi.

Kuşlu, E. (2024). Rekreasyonel pilates yapan bireylerde özyeterliğin psikolojik iyi oluşa etkisi. *Journal of Recreation, Sport and Tourism Research, 1*(1), 20-25. [Crossref]

Leeson, R., Collins, M., & Douglas, J. (2024). Interventions that aim to increase social participation through recreation or leisure activity for adults with moderate to severe traumatic brain injury: A scoping review. *Disability and Rehabilitation*, *46*(15), 3286-3302. [Crossref]

Liang, Y., Li, J., & Wang, Z. (2025). From leisure motivation to recreation specialization: A study on the psychological mechanism of sustainable participation of ice and snow sports participants. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *16*, 1484550. [Crossref]

Mahardika, G. P., & Lahinda, J. (2025). Psychological benefits of recreational sports for university students. *Journal of Physical Education Health and Sport*, *12*(2), 429-436.

Mutz, M., Reimers, A. K., & Demetriou, Y. (2021). Leisure time sports activities and life satisfaction: Deeper insights based on a representative survey from Germany, *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, *16*, 2155-2171. [Crossref]

Özant, M. İ., Durhan, T. A., Demirel, M., & Zorba, E. (2025). Recreational activity motivation and perceived health outcomes in recreation from men's perspective. *Journal of Men's Health*, *21*(3), 127-136. [Crossref]

Özden, E., & Yaşartürk, F. (2024). Üniversite öğrencilerinin rekreasyonel spor iyi oluş ve akademik aidiyeti arasındaki ilişki. *Uluslararası Sağlık, Egzersiz ve Spor Bilimleri Dergisi, 2*(2), 348-364.

Özkurt, B., & Küçükibiş, H. F. (2024). 12-18 Yaş Aralığındaki Öğrencilerin Fiziksel Aktiviteye Katılım Motivasyonları ve Mutluluk Düzeylerinin İncelenmesi. *Sivas Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi Spor Bilimleri Dergisi*, *5*(1), 27-37. https://izlik.org/JA59JF53AZ

Petersen, C. B., Bekker-Jeppesen, M., Aadahl, M., & Lau, C. J. (2021). Participation in recreational activities varies with socioeconomic position and is associated with self-rated health and well-being. *Preventive Medicine Reports*, *24*, 101610. [Crossref]

Puhakka, R. (2021). University students' participation in outdoor recreation and the perceived well-being effects of nature. *Journal of outdoor recreation and tourism*, *36*, 100425. [Crossref]

Rivera, E., Veitch, J., Loh, V. H., Salmon, J., Cerin, E., Mavoa, S., ... et al. (2022). Outdoor public recreation spaces and social connectedness among adolescents. *BMC Public Health*, *22*, 165. [Crossref]

Sandberg, B., Hurmerinta, L., Kangasniemi, A., & Leino, H. M. (2025). Experiential avoidance related to leisure time physical activity. *Leisure Sciences*, 1-21. [Crossref]

Shannon, M. T. (1989). Health promotion and illness prevention: A biopsychosocial perspective. *Health & Social Work*, *14*(1), 32-40. [Crossref]

Sidi, M. A. M., Radzi, W. M., Aman, M. S., & Yassim, M. M. (2017). A study of participation motive in outdoor recreational activities. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, *7*(3), 2222-6990.

Street, G., James, R., & Cutt, H. (2007). The relationship between organised physical recreation and mental health. *Health Promotion Journal of Australia*, *18*(3), 236-239. [Crossref]

Sun, Y. (2026). The influence of recreational sports on physical and mental health: A systematic review. *Theoretical and Natural Science*, 157, 153–160. [Crossref]

Timonen, J., Niemelä, M., Hakko, H., Alakokkare, A., & Räsänen, S. (2023). Social leisure time activities as a mediating link between self-reported psychological symptoms in adolescence and psychiatric morbidity by young adulthood: The Northern Finland 1986 Birth Cohort study. *European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, *32*, 2569-2580. [Crossref]

Tsai, C. Y., Pahrudin, P., & Wu, M. T. (2024). The relationship among intrinsic leisure motivation, social support, and perceived wellness for the people who aged over 65 years. *Cogent Social Sciences*, *10*(1), 2292316. [Crossref]

Tuncer, S. (2022). *Spor bilimleri fakültesinde okuyan öğrencilerin yalnızlık düzeyleri ile rekreasyon engelleri arasındaki ilişkinin incelenmesi.* [Yüksek lisans tezi]. Selçuk Üniversitesi.

World Health Organization. (2025). *From loneliness to social connection: Charting a path to healthier societies: Report of the WHO Commission on Social Connection* (ISBN 9789240112360). World Health Organization.

Yang, W. C., Chen, K. C., Hsueh, Y. S., Tan, C. P., & Chang, C. M. (2012). The relationship between leisure and well-being in Taiwanese college students. *Social Behavior and Personality: An international journal*, *40*(8), 1245-1254. [Crossref]

Yuvalı, E. (2016). Mobbingin psiko-sosyal sağlık ve iş sağlığı bakımından sonuçları ve mobbing mağdurunun başvurabileceği hukuki çareler. *İnönü Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Dergisi*, *6*(4), 723-738.

Zamora, A. N., Waselewski, M. E., Frank, A. J., Nawrocki, J. R., Hanson, A. R., & Chang, T. (2021). Exploring the beliefs and perceptions of spending time in nature among US youth. *BMC Public Health*, *21*, 1586. [Crossref]

Zare, S. M. H., Khorasani, B., Sadr, A. S., Zare, M., Koushki, R., & Babapour, J. (2025). The Relationship between Leisure Activities and Social Health of the Elderly in Iran. *Medical Journal of the Islamic Republic of Iran*, *39(1)*, 62. [Crossref]

**Disclaimer/Publisher's Note:** All statements, opinions, interpretations, data, findings, and claims contained in this publication are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s). They do not necessarily reflect the views of Red & River Publications, the editors, the editorial board members, or any affiliated institutions. Red & River Publications and the editors shall not be held responsible for any direct or indirect harm, personal injury, property damage, financial loss, infringement of rights, or other adverse consequences arising from any ideas, methods, instructions, applications, products, or services referred to in the published content. The author(s) bear full responsibility for the scientific accuracy, originality, ethical compliance, legal integrity, and observance of third-party rights in their work.