

## ADULTS' VIEWS ABOUT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FREE TIME ACTIVITIES PROVIDED BY MUNICIPALITIES AND THE EFFECT OF RECREATION ON IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE

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### Abstract

Present study aims to find out the views of residents in Hayrabolu, Lüleburgaz, Eyüp, Vize municipalities about the facilitation of leisure time activities and effect of recreation on the improvement of life quality of the participants. Hayrabolu, Lüleburgaz, Eyüp and Vize municipalities comprise the population of the study. A total of 1967 residents took part in the study. Research data was gathered by "Satisfaction Survey Form". The study holds two parts; the former aims to determine the socio-economic characteristics of the participants, the latter focuses on physical competence, service efficiency and reliability and staff satisfaction of the residents. Analysis and Evaluation of the data were realised via SPSS 20.0 program and distribution of percentages was practiced for the frequency distribution. The study's Cronbach Alpha value of the Likert items was calculated as 0,957. It was found that the scale was suitable for factor analysis, there was a significant difference according to dimensions of physical competence, service effectiveness and reliability and staff competence. In the light of findings of the study, most of the woman participants, workers having 2001-2700 TL income and housewives stated that they mostly participated in cultural, physical and sports activities. No difference in satisfaction was observed in terms of all sub-dimensions according to gender variable. When look at the marital status of the participants, it was found out that married participants were not as satisfied as single ones and residents of Eyüp and Lüleburgaz were more satisfied than those of Hayrabolu and Vize districts.

**Keywords:** Recreation, Local Governments, Satisfaction, Life Quality, Leisure Time

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### 1. Introduction

Rapid urbanization and rapid increase in technology adversely affect the quality of life and social lives of individuals living in the city. Local governments are functionally organized institutions to detect the problems on site and implement solutions to the needs of local human communities (Sevinç, 2015). Life quality; social activities and together with participation in these activities; personal development, feeling secure, happiness, regeneration of the person and as a result of this, the time apart from the requirements to sustain life are directed to recreational activities called in free time.

It is expected from local governments to be intertwined with the public, to determine the demands of the people and to fulfill these demands effectively. Thus, it is thought that the disconnection that may arise between the public and the administration will be prevented (Özgiraz and Zeren, 2009).

Free time is a very broad concept that includes different recreational activities other than compulsory needs and working hours. (Rojek, 1989) stated that individuals are not free to choose free time activities, that is, individuals' choices are shaped by the characteristics of the society they live in.

The importance of recreational activities and sports in the creation of healthy societies has been increasing considerably by eliminating the negative effects of technological developments and industrialization in cities where the population density increase. Because, with these activities, individuals get away from stress and reach mental and physical satisfaction.

Local administrations holds importance in terms of recreational services at the local level by creating facilities and areas to be applied in the use of free time for the residents, facilitating the transportation of these facilities and areas, planning events and activities for the participants. Making a productive and happy life depends on the quality of life and this requires using the time efficiently and well. Planning is one of the most important elements of effective time management (Can, 1997). In an effective planning, first thing is to determine the aims of the target activities. The use of available resources in parallel with the determined purpose and target, the correct use of the predetermined management program show that the target can be reached in the best way. Otherwise, unplanned activities cause these activities to get mixed up, priorities not to be determined, not to be known who will be involved in which unit and do which business and most importantly, the goal cannot be achieved.

## **2. Methods of Using Time Effectively**

The effort to achieve the best and being a perfectionist can occasionally result in jobs not being finished on time. As the reason for this; spending too much time and effort on the job, the desire to repeat the job, and the desire to seek the best, can cause negative results in timing. Perfectionism and the desire to succeed don't mean the same thing. Perfectionists have difficulty in keeping their emotions, thoughts and behaviors under control. The over-controlled and meticulous work of people can be considered as positive, but excessive control will bring about wasting time.

Utilizing technology of today positively and effectively in order to use reminder tools effectively and efficiently is an important part of planning the time in activities. To give an example to the technology of the time; pagers, phones, computers, agendas and calendars are used as reminders. Timeline is a schedule related to the purpose for which time is used effectively and efficiently.

The purpose of efficient use and management of time is not just doing a lot of work but organizing work and determining the priorities are the most important features of a successful time management (Can and Aydın, 2006).

Avoiding postponement is generally due to the following reasons (Sabuncuoğlu and Paşa, 2002):

- Doing the job that you don't like
- Uncertainty about how the planned job will be done
- Uncertainty of priority order
- Thinking that the planned work will fail
- Uncertainty where to start
- Distraction and laziness

After determining the reasons for postponement, it is necessary to focus on solutions.

The concept of free time plays an important role in all kinds of activities related to free time recreational activities. Recreational activities are related to the activities that individuals who have free time perform in their free time voluntarily. Free time is not the period of time in which an individual spends doing nothing. On the contrary, it is a period of time that they spend with activities that they enjoy and make them happy.

### **3. The Concept of Recreation**

Recreation is the activities carried out in the free time period where individuals spend their time effectively and efficiently, to improve themselves in their free time, socialize, go out of routine life, be happy, develop their interests, find themselves. Nowadays, the increase in technology and industry cause an increase in the need for recreation in societies. Recreation is shaped according to the age, gender, socio-economic and cultural differences of the people who need. Therefore, recreation activities do not include single level activities, but include different activities in parallel with the wishes of the individuals.

### **4. Service Quality, Satisfaction Concept and Satisfaction of Participants in Local Governments**

In a society with production, consumption and industrialization, undisputedly the most important asset is those who receive service, in other words, those who use this service. The main purpose of the service sector is to ensure that individuals are satisfied with the service they use and participate in. However, a successful administration cannot be established only with the satisfaction of the citizens and it is also necessary to emphasize that a transparent, accountable and participatory management is required (Pietroski, Ryzin, 2007). In today's world where the needs of the individuals living in the city are increasing, it is a fact that local governments, whose main duty is to provide services to the residents, try to respond to these needs and plan their services in parallel with the demands of the people.

These services offered to the public by the local government are seen as services that citizens are satisfied with human life, they are satisfied with, they care about and evaluate. The satisfaction of individuals can only be achieved by the proximity of local governments to individuals. In this context, if local governments want to increase the satisfaction of the people, they have to pay attention to some features. These features can be listed as followed; (Peker, 1996); Accompany with the public; local governments attach importance to the participation of the people of the city, be sensitive to the demands and problems of the people and provide high quality service. The satisfaction of the people benefiting from the services provided by the

municipality, that is, the satisfaction of the citizens holds importance in terms of the activities of the municipality administration and all kinds of activities.

Local governments are organs having a more effective, dynamic and entrepreneurial approach and structure, reducing the burden of the central government and providing services in a short time and on site.

As in the whole service sector, the main purpose in evaluating public services is to meet the satisfaction of participants and users at the highest level. It is very important to measure the satisfaction of the services provided by the local governments with the facilitation they have received by the users and the participants, for what purpose, in what direction and how the services provided are perceived and determining the weak and strong sides of the services offered by local governments. In this respect, citizen satisfaction constitutes the most basic part of the service sector.

Innovation in service means “thinking for the customer” to deliver superior value (Kandampully, 2006). What is important in the service quality offered by local administrations to the public is the way the participants perceive the quality. Therefore, the perception of the service and judgment status of the individuals participating in the service and receiving the service will affect the success of the administration providing the service.

Individuals' requests from local governments change and develop over time according to various different needs. Ensuring the satisfaction of individuals from local government services will increase the quality of life of the residents and provision of services in parallel with the expectations and interests of the individuals play an important role in increasing level of satisfaction. The outstanding question in evaluating the quality of service is what the expectations of the service participant and receivers will be and how this service will be evaluated. In this context, it is very important for the individuals' observations, complaints and feedback to be taken into consideration by the service providers to eliminate the deficiencies and increase the quality.

Local governments are responsible for managing city in the best way, increasing the life quality of the residents and meeting their common needs in the most appropriate way since they take over the government. This indicates that local governments have to fulfill most of the public service.

If local governments meet the common needs of the people of the city and increase the rate of citizen satisfaction in return for service, they serve in accordance with the purpose of establishment and fulfill their basic functions. Since all the services offered by local governments are made for residents of the city, they can be defined as businesses that serve people in their regions. Participant satisfaction holds importance for local governments. In addition to determination of the needs by local governments, it is also necessary to measure the perceptions of citizens towards the services provided in certain periods (Usta and Memiş, 2010).

Nowadays, it is observed that local governments compete to create a city where the people will be happy to live in and their culture. It is seen that this competition is created by considering the common needs of the residents in the city.

It has become very important to use the resources they have more effectively and efficiently in order to increase participant satisfaction and raise awareness with the investments and services they offer. The important factor in increasing the satisfaction of the people, the provision and evaluation of the service that will meet the needs is of great importance in determining the future strategy in local governments.

## **5. Method**

This study reveals the satisfaction levels of the residents in Hayrabolu, Lüleburgaz, Eyüp and Vize districts regarding the activities offered by their municipalities and views about their municipalities. The questionnaire, which was planned to be conducted with a total of 2000 people in the study, was applied face to face with a total of 1697 people due to the faulty questionnaire. The questionnaire aims to define recreational approaches of participants in addition to their demographic information. A “Satisfaction Questionnaire” consisting of 22 items was developed to measure the satisfaction of municipalities’ activities and the views of the people about the municipality. The data gathered in the study was analyzed in the SPSS 20 program, besides, the tables regarding the variables were interpreted.

The sub-dimensions of the satisfaction scale were obtained by conducting factor analysis.

It was revealed from sub-dimensions that the participants living in Hayrabolu, Lüleburgaz, Eyüp, Vize, whether have a significant difference according to socio-economic factors. The statistical study sample consisted of residents living in Hayrabolu, Lüleburgaz, Eyüp and Vize districts.

Frequencies were obtained from the socio-economic structures of the participants. The profession, age, gender, education status, marital status, income status according to the current conditions, recreational activities in Hayrabolu, Lüleburgaz, Eyüp and Vize districts were analyzed.

Whether there was a significant difference according to the socio-economic structures of the people living in these districts was tested with the Mann Whitney U test. From the scale development stages; first literature review about the subject that was planned to be researched and with Prof. Dr. Adil OĞUZHAN's views, from Trakya University, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Department of Econometrics, a pool of questions was created and a pre-implementation draft with 22 items consisting of "I strongly disagree" and "I totally agree" was prepared. The draft was examined by field experts in terms of language and content, and a pre-implementation was conducted with a total of 600 people living in four districts. By applying One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, it was determined whether the data were normally distributed or not. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test was performed to measure the adequacy of the sample by factor analysis. In addition, test of sphericity was applied to determine whether significant factors could be obtained from the research data and adequacy of the sample. Factor analysis was applied to determine validity and reliability level of questionnaires responded as a result of pre-application, and three sub-dimensions were gathered according to the variance test results.

## 6. Findings

**Table 1:** Distribution of the Sample by Demographical Structure

	<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>% Frequency</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Female	936	54,4
	Male	771	45,6
	Total	1697	100,0
<b>District lived</b>	Hayrabolu	310	18,3
	Lüleburgaz	423	24,9
	Eyüp	560	33
	Vize	404	23,8
	Total	1697	100,0
<b>Marital Status</b>	Married	580	34,2
	Single	1117	64,8
	Total	1697	100,0
<b>Education Status</b>	Only literate	52	3,1
	High School and Equivalent School Graduate	764	45
	Elementary school graduate	240	14,1
	University Graduate	395	23,3
	Primary School / Secondary School Graduate	209	12,3
	Postgraduate	37	2,2
	Total	1697	100,0
<b>Economic Status</b>	1300 and less	290	17,1
	1301-2000	511	30,1
	2001-2700	557	32,8
	2701-3400	125	7,4
	3401-4100	124	7,3
	4101+	90	5,3
	Total	1697	100,0
	<b>As profession</b>	Housewife	298
Unemployed		143	8,4
Officer		204	12
Worker		384	22,6
Tradesman		155	9,1
Self-employment		288	17
Retired		225	13,3
Total		1697	100,0

According to the findings; when looked at the distribution of the participants in the study in terms of gender, it is observed that 54,4% of female participants and 45,6% of male participants. The number of people in variable distribution in terms of the district where the participants live are ranked as 310 18,3% Hayrabolu, Lüleburgaz 423 24,9%, Eyüp 560 33%, Visa 404 23,8%. It was observed that the marital status distribution of the participants in variable number of people was 580 34,2% were married, 1117 single was 64,8%. When the education level of the participants in the study was examined, 3,1% of the participants were only literate, 45% were high school graduates, 14,1% elementary school graduates, 23,3% university graduates, 12,3% primary school / secondary school graduates, 2,2% consisted of postgraduate education. When the income distribution of the participants was examined, 17,1% 1300 and less, 30,1% 1301-2000, 32,8% 2001-2700, 7,4% 2701-3400, 7,3% 3401- 4100, 5,3% of them was found to be 4101- +. According to distribution of profession, 17,6% were housewives, 8,4% unemployed, 12% officer, 22,6% workers, 9,1% tradesmen, 17% self-employed, and 13.3% were retired.

The results of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test of the Satisfaction Scale of the Activities and the Municipality's Views were found as 0,940, Barlett's Sphericity test was approximately 15834,729, the Degree of Independency was 231, P, 000. Since the statistical result is close to 1, it is seen that the data are appropriate for factor analysis. Besides, the fact that the sphericity test is 0,000 indicates that significant factors will be obtained from the research data and competence of the sample.

**Table 2:** Variance Percentages and Cronbach's Alpha Results According to Sub-Dimensions of Satisfaction Scale of the Activities Provided by the Municipalities and Views About the Municipalities

Questionnaire Item Distributions Regarding Factor Dimensions		Revealed Variance Percentages	Alpha Cronbach
<p><b>Factor 1:</b></p> <p><b>Staff Satisfaction</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The recreation staff of the municipality understand the changing wishes and needs of the participants.</li> <li>• The recreation staff of the municipality pay attention to the participants individually.</li> <li>• The recreation staff of the municipality take care of each participant one by one.</li> <li>• The recreation services of the municipality create a very good impression and protect the interests of the participants.</li> <li>• The recreation services of the municipality have working hours suitable for the participants.</li> <li>• The recreation staff of the municipality are experts who have received the necessary training for the service to be provided.</li> <li>• The recreation staff of the municipality are always polite.</li> </ul>	%29,71	0,949

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants feel safe in the recreation activities of the municipality.</li> <li>• The staff of the municipality providing recreation services are reliable.</li> <li>• The recreational staff of the municipality always find enough time to meet the needs of the participants.</li> </ul>		
<b>FaktóFactor 2: Satisfaction of Service Efficiency and Reliability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a meticulous system in which participants are registered in the recreation services of the municipality.</li> <li>• The recreation activities offered by the municipality are reliable.</li> <li>• The provision of recreational services of municipalities takes place within the promised period.</li> <li>• It informs the public about when the recreation services of the municipality will be implemented exactly.</li> <li>• In the recreation services of the municipality, the problems related to the participants are taken seriously and these problems are dealt with sincerely considering the situation of the participants.</li> <li>• If a certain period is foreseen for the completion of an activity in the recreation services of the municipality, this activity is carried out on time.</li> <li>• The recreation services of the municipalities are in parallel with the demands of the public.</li> <li>• The staff of the municipality providing recreation services helps the participants.</li> </ul>	%21,62	0.903
<b>Factor 3: Physical Satisfaction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The physical appearance of the municipality's recreational services increases active participation.</li> <li>• The technical equipment of the recreation services of the municipality is in parallel with the latest developments of the era.</li> <li>• In the recreation services of the municipality, the staff is cleanly dressed and gives a positive impression.</li> <li>• The materials, environmental regulation and formation of the municipality related to recreation services are suitable for the type of the service.</li> </ul>	%15,27	0.839



As a result of analysis, it was determined that there was a suitable sample volume and it showed random distribution. Whether the sub-dimensions of the satisfaction scale differ according to socio-demographic characteristics of the participant individuals was investigated via Whitney U and Kruskal Wallis tests.

**Table 3:** Significance Levels of Sub-Dimensions of Satisfaction Scale Regarding Socio-Economic Characteristics of Participants

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Type of Test</b>	<b>Physical Satisfaction</b>	<b>Satisfaction of Service Efficiency and Reliability</b>	<b>Staff Satisfaction</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Mann Whitney U- Wilcoxon W	,957	,781	,134
<b>Marital Status</b>	Kruskal Wallis	,767	,554	,686
<b>Education Status</b>	Kruskal Wallis	,156	,744	,513
<b>Economical Status</b>	Kruskal Wallis	,252	,000	,000
<b>Profession Status</b>	Kruskal Wallis	,262	,001	,000

As seen in Table 3, there is no judgment difference in the sub-dimensions of satisfaction regarding the physical, efficiency and reliability of the service, and staff competencies of the municipalities according to gender, marital status, and education status.

While differences were observed in the socio-economic status and occupational status of the participants in the study on municipal services, it was determined that there was no difference in terms of physical perspective.

**Table 4:** The Test of Differences According to the District of Sub-Dimensions of Satisfaction Scale

Variable	Type of Test	Physical Satisfaction	Satisfaction of Service Efficiency and Reliability	Staff Satisfaction
<b>Hayrabolu-Lüleburgaz</b>	Mann Whitney U/Wilcoxon W	0,36	0,010	0,003
<b>Hayrabolu -Eyüp</b>	Mann Whitney U/Wilcoxon W	0,024	0,000	0,000
<b>Hayrabolu-Vize</b>	Mann Whitney U/Wilcoxon W	0,021	0,004	0,004
<b>Lüleburgaz-Eyüp</b>	Mann Whitney U/Wilcoxon W	0,967	0,008	0,006
<b>Lüleburgaz-Vize</b>	Mann Whitney U/Wilcoxon W	0,000	0,000	0,000
<b>Eyüp-Vize</b>	Mann Whitney U/Wilcoxon W	0,000	0,000	0,000

Looking at Table 4, the participants living in Hayrabolu and Vize districts have quite different judgments according to the physical sub-dimension, the efficiency and reliability dimension of the service, and the staff competence dimensions. This difference is observed that those living in Hayrabolu district have more positive views than those living in Vize district.

Similarly, when looked at the results between Hayrabolu district and Eyüp district, it is revealed that the participants in Eyüp district have more positive views than the participants in Hayrabolu district.

The test result determines that there is no difference between Lüleburgaz and Eyüp districts according to the physical satisfaction of the municipality.

## 7. Discussion and Conclusion

Recreational activities have become increasingly important in the execution of services of local government and municipality. These are called services that affect the life and quality of life of the residents and services which the individuals closely follow and evaluate.

The satisfaction level of the residents with the local administration and municipal services is closely related to living in the modern city and the city where they feel happy to live. It will be accepted that local governments are more successful to the extent that their residents can fulfill their wishes, desires and demands. Citizens' search for quality in factors such as recreational activities, physical, efficiency and reliability of service, staff satisfaction in the city they live in is no longer considered as a privilege and these demands are generally accepted. Cities with high quality of life; are known as places where the satisfaction of the residents of the city is at a high level and local governments and municipalities have very important duties in fulfilling these conditions.

According to the results of the study, the expressions of the participants were evaluated and the level of satisfaction of each participant with all of their views about the recreational services and municipalities was calculated.

Yüzgenç and Özgül (2014) reveal that when the service quality in terms of gender is evaluated, participants do not show a significant difference in sub-dimensions by gender, and similarly, there is no difference in judgment in our study.

Among the participants living in Hayrabolu and Vize, there are quite different judgments in the sub-dimensions of physical competence, effectiveness and reliability of the service, and staff satisfaction. It is seen that those living in Hayrabolu have more positive views than those living in Vize, and those living in Eyüp district have a more positive view than those living in Hayrabolu district. Among those living in Lüleburgaz and Hayrabolu, it is observed that the participants in Lüleburgaz are more positive.

There is no difference between Lüleburgaz and Eyüp districts in terms of physical satisfaction.

As a result, significant differences were observed in the study according to socio-demographic characteristics of the views of the adult residents on the practice of free time activities of the municipalities, the quality of life and recreation.

According to these results; recreationists are supposed to be employed in local governments that are closest to the public. As a result, the activities and events to be held will gain more quality.

When looked at the findings of the study; the rate of preferring municipal activities was lower than expected. Local governments should investigate the reason for the non-participation of individuals and plan activities for them.

It has been revealed by statistical data that there are significant difference among the four districts where the study was conducted, and recreational activities should be organized in parallel with the wish and demands of the public to increase satisfaction level of residents in Hayrabolu and Vize districts.

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