

# Does activity type affect behavior and flow? In terms of recreational leadership behavior And recreational flow experience

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*Abstract: Within the scope of the research in which the recreational flow experiences and recreational leadership behavior of university students through the recreational activities they participate in are tried to be determined, the effect of the selected activity type on recreational leadership behavior and recreational flow experiences is examined. At the same time, 650 university students were included in the study in which the change of measurement tools of various variables and the relationship between measurement tools were determined, and the data were collected with the “Recreational Leadership Behavior Scale” and “Recreational Flow Experiences Scale” through face-to-face survey method. The data were evaluated with parametric tests as well as descriptive analysis. The findings indicate that various variables differentiate recreational leadership behavior and recreational flow experience. While there are moderate positive relationships between the measurement tools, it is noteworthy that democratic leadership behavior has a negative relationship with anxiety experience. At the same time, it can be said that the type of activity selected has a partial effect on recreational leadership behavior and recreational flow experience.*

*Keywords: Recreational Leadership, Behavior, Flow*

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## INTRODUCTION

Recreation is a concept that describes various activities that individuals freely choose in leisure time. These activities may include passive or active activities. In other words, recreation is generally enjoyable activities that individuals do in order to be happy, to get pleasure and to lose themselves in a different activity by postponing their problems for a while in the time left over from obligations such as work, school or lessons. While participating in these activities, having fun and immersing oneself in the flow may be among the prioritized desires. In this direction, by learning activities that involve various challenging skills, it is possible that after a while, hours can pass without realizing how time passes by experiencing the flow as if a different dimension has opened in life during that activity. This concept characterizes the processes basically expressed by the flow theory proposed by Csikszentmihalyi (1975). Recreational activities are precisely at the basis of flow experience. Therefore, it is inevitable for individuals to experience flow experiences through participation in recreational activities. In short, recreational flow experience is the state of experiencing a sense of complete concentration and enjoyment during leisure activities. This state is characterized by giving one's full attention to the activity at hand, detaching from time and space, and immersing oneself completely in the activity.

Individuals can regulate their leadership orientations in their lives through the activities they participate in, and they can also develop recreational leadership behavior through the recreational activities they organize. In general, leadership styles defined under three main headings are classified as permissive, democratic and autocratic leadership. In this classification, it is considered that recreational leadership behaviors should be strengthened with the democratic leadership aspect, but autocratic leadership behaviors in large-scale organizations are also among the behavioral styles that should be kept in the foreground.

In recreation leadership, individuals and groups are guided to learn, develop and discover their potential while having fun. This is a broad field that includes specialization in various fields. Recreation leadership is considered as an element that requires the use of various leadership behavior styles in order to appeal to different groups of participants and to manage programs effectively. In democratic leadership, which is the most widely used recreation leadership behavior style, leaders seek the opinions

and views of participants before making decisions. This style makes participants feel that they are part of the program and increases their motivation. In autocratic leadership, on the other hand, leaders make all decisions on their own and do not receive much feedback from participants. This style emphasizes discipline and control.

It is expected that the activities participated in will make a difference in these behaviors and in the flow experience. The negative developments experienced are reflected in the style of activities chosen by the students, such that in various studies, it has been determined that individuals who prefer more passive activities have more negative outcomes (A'mir et al., 2024; Avenyo, Kwashie & Demuyakor, 2024; Costa et al., 2024). Therefore, it can be said that the choice of activity also creates a benefit-loss relationship in this direction. In this respect, it has been a matter of curiosity whether the selected activity changes the recreation leadership behavior and flow experience towards recreational activities.

Recreation leadership behavior can also be differentiated through observations in the activities participated in. Therefore, the assumption that individuals may show more positive leadership orientation in activities where they experience flow is strengthened. The current research was conducted to examine the related assumption, as well as to determine the relationship between recreational flow experience and recreational leadership behavior and the variables that differentiate them, on the other hand, to investigate the effect of the preferred activity on recreational flow experience and recreational leadership behavior.

## METHOD

The study is a survey study prepared with quantitative method. The study group consists of 650 participants who are university students in Ankara. Data were collected by face-to-face survey method. In addition to the demographic data form, "Recreational Leadership Behavior Scale" and "Recreational Flow Experience" were collected.

### Recreational Leadership Behavior Scale

The measurement tool developed by Ayyıldız Durhan et al. (2022) consists of 15 items and 2 sub-dimensions. The measurement tool consisting of autocratic leadership and democratic leadership sub-dimensions is 5-point Likert type. The highest score that can be obtained from the instrument is 75 and the lowest score is 15. In the current study, the internal consistency coefficient was determined as .77.

### Recreational Flow Experience

The measurement tool adapted by Özdemir, Ayyıldız Durhan, and Akgül (2020) consists of 13 items and 2 sub-dimensions. The measurement tool consisting of flow and anxiety sub-dimensions is 5-point Likert type. The maximum score that can be obtained from the measurement tool is 65, while the minimum score is 13. In the current study, the internal consistency coefficient was determined as .86.

## FINDINGS

**Table 1.** Percentage and frequency distributions of the participants

		N=(650)	
	Variable	f	%
Gender	Male	346	53,2
	Female	304	46,8
Class	1	161	24,8
	2	229	35,2
	3	145	22,3
	4	115	17,7
Income	Low	126	19,4
	Middle	449	69,1
	High	75	11,5
Type of activity	Sportive	219	33,7
	Culturel	115	17,7
	Academic	137	21,1
	Trip	151	23,2
	Other	28	4,3
Number of participants	Daily	44	6,8
	Weekly	186	28,6
	Once in a month	245	37,7

**Table 2.** Arithmetic mean, standard deviation and kurtosis-skewness values between measurement tools

N=(650)						
	Min.	Max.	$\bar{x}$	sd	Skewness	Kurtosis
<b>Recreational leadership</b>	1,00	5,00	3,65	,57	-,533	2,614
Democratic leadership	1,00	5,00	4,27	,73	-1,552	3,369
Otocratic leadership	1,00	5,00	2,94	,88	,390	-,268
<b>Recreational flow</b>	1,00	5,00	3,59	,68	-,498	1,309
Flow	1,00	5,00	3,79	,76	-,564	,848
Anxiety	1,00	5,00	2,93	1,07	,081	-,678

The findings of the study, in which the recreational leadership and recreational flow experience scales revealed scores above the average values, indicate that the democratic leadership characteristics of the participants are high. At the same time, considering the flow experience scale, it was determined that the highest average was exhibited in the flow sub-dimension. According to the distribution of the participants' responses, it can be said that the measurement tools are within the range of normal distribution in this context, so parametric tests are applied.

**Table 3.** Independent samples t test results between measurement tools and gender variable

N=(650)						
	Gender	n	$\bar{x}$	sd	t	p
<b>Recreational leadership</b>	Female	346	3,65	,52	-0,259	0,796
	Male	304	3,66	,62		
Democratic leadership	Female	346	4,36	,67	3,356	0,001*
	Male	304	4,17	,79		
Otocratic leadership	Female	346	2,83	,80	-3,593	0,000*
	Male	304	3,08	,95		
<b>Recreational flow</b>	Female	346	3,62	,64	0,919	0,358
	Male	304	3,57	,73		
Flow	Female	346	3,82	,73	1,135	0,257
	Male	304	3,75	,80		
Anxiety	Female	346	2,93	1,03	-0,149	0,882
	Male	304	2,94	1,12		

p<0,05

As a result of the analysis between the gender of the participants and their recreational leadership behaviors and the flow experiences they exhibited in the activities they participated in, it was determined that leadership behaviors differed according to gender. Accordingly, it was determined that there was a significant difference in favor of women in democratic leadership and in favor of men in autocratic leadership. It was determined that recreational flow experiences did not differ according to gender.

**Table 4.** One Way ANOVA test results between measurement tools and class variable

N=(650)						
	Class	n	$\bar{x}$	sd	F	p
<b>Recreational leadership</b>	1 <sup>a</sup>	161	3,74	,54	3,826	0,010*
	2 <sup>b</sup>	229	3,69	,59		
	3 <sup>c</sup>	145	3,53	,57		
	4	115	3,61	,55		
	Total	650	3,65	,57		
Democratic leadership	1	161	4,35	,64	1,103	0,347
	2	229	4,24	,76		
	3	145	4,21	,78		
	4	115	4,30	,73		
	Total	650	4,27	,73		

Otocratic leadership	1 <sup>a</sup>	161	3,04	,86	5,048	0,002*
	2 <sup>b</sup>	229	3,06	,92		
	3 <sup>c</sup>	145	2,75	,84		
	4	115	2,82	,84		
	Total	650	2,94	,88		
<i>Recreational flow</i>	1	161	3,66	,70	1,887	0,131
	2	229	3,63	,68		
	3	145	3,54	,63		
	4	115	3,49	,73		
	Total	650	3,5	,68		
Flow	1	161	3,83	,76	0,641	0,589
	2	229	3,82	,75		
	3	145	3,74	,74		
	4	115	3,74	,83		
	Total	650	3,79	,76		
Anxiety	1 <sup>a</sup>	161	3,08	1,03	4,501	0,004*
	2 <sup>b</sup>	229	3,01	1,07		
	3 <sup>c</sup>	145	2,90	1,06		
	4 <sup>d</sup>	115	2,63	1,11		
	Total	650	2,93	1,07		

p<0,05\*

When Table 4 is examined, it is observed that the recreational leadership behaviors and recreational flow experiences of the participants differ with their grades. Accordingly, a significant difference was determined in favor of the 1st graders in the total scores of recreational leadership behavior and autocratic leadership sub-dimensions, and in favor of the 1st graders in the anxiety sub-dimension in recreational flow experiences. In intragroup comparisons, it can be said that as the class level increases, autocratic approach and flow experience increase in terms of anxiety.

**Table 5.** One Way ANOVA test results between measurement tools and number of participation variable

	Number of participation	N=(650)			F	p
		n	$\bar{x}$	sd		
<i>Recreational leadership</i>	Daily	44	3,59	,77	1,258	0,288
	Weekly	186	3,72	,54		
	Once in a month	245	3,63	,50		
	Once in a year	175	3,62	,63		
	Total	650	3,65	,57		
Democratic leadership	Daily	44	4,09	,96	1,601	0,188
	Weekly	186	4,26	,65		
	Once in a month	245	4,33	,70		
	Once in a year	175	4,24	,78		
	Total	650	4,27	,73		
Otocratic leadership	Daily	44	3,01	1,09	3,420	0,017*
	Weekly <sup>a</sup>	186	3,10	,87		
	Once in a month <sup>b</sup>	245	2,83	,81		
	Once in a year	175	2,92	,91		
	Total	650	2,94	,88		
<i>Recreational flow</i>	Daily <sup>a</sup>	44	3,78	,97	2,792	0,040*
	Weekly <sup>b</sup>	186	3,66	,70		
	Once in a month	245	3,57	,62		
	Once in a year <sup>c</sup>	175	3,51	,65		
	Total	650	3,59	,68		
Flow	Daily	44	3,90	1,04	1,953	0,120
	Weekly	186	3,88	,78		
	Once in a month	245	3,77	,69		

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Anxiety	Once in a year	175	3,70	,75	2,981	0,031*
	Total	650	3,79	,76		
	Daily <sup>a</sup>	44	3,38	1,22		
	Weekly <sup>b</sup>	186	2,96	1,10		
	Once in a month <sup>c</sup>	245	2,88	1,04		
	Once in a year <sup>d</sup>	175	2,87	1,03		
	Total	650	2,93	1,07		

p<0,05\*

The findings of Table 5 indicate that recreational leadership behaviors and flow experiences of the participants change according to the number of activities they participate in. In this direction, it was determined that those who participated in activities weekly exhibited higher autocratic leadership behaviors than those who participated once a month. In the recreational flow experience, it was determined that those who participated in activities on a daily basis experienced higher flow, and similarly, in the anxiety experience, it was determined that those who participated in activities on a daily basis experienced higher anxiety. In this case, it can be said that the high number of participation in activities differentiates leadership behavior and flow experience.

**Table 6.** Correlation test findings between measurement tools

<b>Recreational leadership</b>	1					
Democratic	,694**	1				
Otocratic	,729**	,014	1			
<b>Recreational flow</b>	,555**	,460**	,334**	1		
Flow	,517**	,548**	,197**	,936**	1	
Anxiety	,310**	-,028*	,457**	,548**	,218**	1

p<0,05\*; p<0,01\*\*

Recreational leadership behaviors and recreational flow experiences were found to have a moderate positive relationship. The negative relationship between anxiety and democratic behaviors is considered as a promising finding. Therefore, through the development of democratic leadership understanding, it will be possible to reduce the anxiety experienced in activities. The findings are important in this direction.

**Table 7.** Multiple Regression analysis results between activity type and mesarument tool

	B	Std.Error	β	t	p	Zero- order r	Partial r
(Constant)	1,181	,130		9,109	,000		
Democratic	-,009	,031	-,014	-,288	,774	,038	-,011
Otocratic	,031	,024	,059	1,328	,185	,038	,052
Flow	,055	,030	,088	1,803	,072	,075	,071
Anxiety	-,036	,020	-,082	-1,832	,067	-,036	-,072
R=0,106	R <sup>2</sup> =						
	0,011						
F(1,843)=0,119	p<0,000						

*Dependent variable: activity type*

Activity type was categorized in terms of sportive activities and it was tried to determine how participation in sportive activities affects recreational leadership behavior and recreational flow experience. Accordingly, the choice of activity type affects recreational leadership behavior and flow experience by around 11%. Therefore, it can be said that the type of activity chosen has a partial effect on recreational leadership behavior and recreational flow experience.

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The findings of the study, which examined the differences in recreational leadership behaviors and recreational flow experiences of university students through various variables, reveal some important outcomes. Accordingly, the findings show that various variables differentiate recreational leadership

behavior and recreational flow experience. While there are moderate positive relationships between the measurement tools, it is noteworthy that democratic leadership behavior has a negative relationship with anxiety experience. At the same time, it can be said that the type of activity chosen has a partial effect on recreational leadership behavior and recreational flow experience.

When the literature is examined, it is observed that there are findings that recreational leadership behaviors differ through observation in leadership processes and recreational activities participated in. Based on the relevant literature, it has been determined that leadership approaches in physical activity environments positively affect behavior with group commitment and perceived autonomy support as potential mediators (Gray & Rhodes, 2018). It also mediates the relationship between leader behavior and participant satisfaction in recreational exercise programs (Loughead & Carron, 2004). Recreation activity leaders experience leadership in a variety of ways, emphasizing the need for careful assessment of their abilities and potential tasks (Little & Watkins, 2004). In this sense, leadership behaviors in activities that strengthen social bonds come to the fore (Stokowski, Long, & Nuckolls, 1992). Using leadership behaviors in activities has a positive effect on psychometric parameters related to the activity (Long et al., 2001). It has been determined that participation in various activities increases the development of students' leadership identity and positively affects communication and teamwork (Boettcher & Gansemer-Topf, 2015). Based on the research finding that participation in sports activities as a recreational activity positively affects the development of students' leadership attitudes (Basoglu, 2013), it can be said that studies on the reflection of activities on recreational leadership behavior in terms of their content are limited. In this context, it is important that the current research has found that the preferred activity relatively affects the recreational leadership behavior.

The research finding that the participants' recreational flow experience differs according to various variables is also supported by different studies (Boudreau, Mackenzie, & Hodge, 2020; Decloe, Kaczynski, & Havitz, 2009; Novak, Hoffman, & Duhachek, 2003; Stein et al, 1995). Therefore, an increase in flow experience in participation in recreational sports activities such as hiking is considered as an expected outcome, and studies similar to the finding obtained are found in the literature (Cheng, Hung & Chen, 2016; Cheng, & Lu, 2015; Wöran & Arnberger, 2012). Therefore, it is thought that the intensity of the selected activity and the state of being active should be examined extensively in future studies.

Based on all this information, it was determined that individuals' recreational flow experiences and recreational leadership behaviors differed in terms of the activity in which they participated, the selected activity had a partial effect, and at the same time, various variables also differentiated these levels. Based on the findings, suggestions are made to conduct experimental studies on different sample groups. At the same time, it is suggested to expand the research with qualitative studies that include opinions on recreational flow experience and recreational leadership behavior. In addition, by conducting these studies in different geographies and in different sample groups, a common pool of activities that take into account the needs of individuals can be created, local governments and recreational organization operators at the international level can benefit from this pool of activities, and thanks to this guide, positive contributions can be made to the psychosocial parameters of individuals through the organization of recreational organizations in which they are especially active.

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