

## **An Examination of Family Leisure and Family Satisfaction Among Traditional Turkish Families**

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### **Abstract**

Consideration of the importance of shared family leisure activities supporting family bonds and satisfaction leads to the inquiry into the link between the two. In this study of 70 Turkish families, data were analyzed at the parents, youth, and family levels. A family systems theoretical framework was utilized to examine the relationship between core and balance family leisure involvement and satisfaction with family life. Instruments included the Family Leisure Activity Profile (FLAP) and the Satisfaction with Family Life Scale (SWFL). Turkish urban families with traditional structures who were likely to have strong family ties reported that family leisure involvement contributed to the explanation of family satisfaction from the parents' and the female youth perspectives. Families were involved in more core family leisure than balance family leisure. Overall, findings indicated that the level of family leisure involvement and enjoyment in general was low, and their satisfaction with family life was comparatively high which was thought to be the result of their traditional family culture.

*KEYWORDS:* Family systems theory, core and balance family leisure, family satisfaction, Turkish culture.

In the leisure literature, many researchers have reported positive relationships between leisure and life satisfaction (Ragheb & Griffith, 1982; Ray, 1979; Riddick, 1986) and between involvement in shared leisure activities and satisfaction with family life (Holman & Jacquart, 1988; Miller, 1976; Orthner, 1975; Orthner & Mancini, 1990; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003). In a research study conducted by United Media (1982), adults stated that their primary leisure objectives were “spending time with the family” and “companionship.” The strong tie between leisure and family values focused new importance on shared time and interaction for family solidarity (Orthner & Mancini, 1990). It is also believed that family activities had become a common “core” to individual leisure patterns and that this core of family activities remained important throughout the life course for both men and women (Kelly, 1983). Thus, life satisfac-

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tion is related to an increase in quality of life, and family satisfaction is related to the quality of family life (Freysinger, 1994; 1995; Holman & Epperson, 1984; Jeffres & Dobos, 1993; Orthner & Mancini, 1990; Siengenthaler & O'dell, 2000).

While many leisure studies have been conducted in developed Western societies, there have been few (Aslan, 2000, 2004; Gokmen, Acikalin, Koyuncu, Saydar, 1985; Kiray, 1964) that have examined any aspect of leisure in developing societies such as that in Turkey. Studies that examine family leisure in Turkish society are virtually unheard of due to cultural differences. Culture is considered to be the basic factor affecting individuals' life-culture and leisure. Life-culture, in a sense, is the way society and individuals act. In other words, what individuals do with their leisure does influence and increasingly will influence their life-cultures (Dumazedier, 1967). Dumazedier's statement "Tell me your leisure, and I'll tell you your culture" (p.119) summarizes the relationship between culture and leisure. As families are also a fundamental unit of Turkish society, we are likely to gain insight into the cultural development of Turkish society by examining family leisure. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between family leisure and satisfaction with family life among urban Turkish families within their cultural contexts from the perspectives of both parents and a young adult child.

## Literature Review

### *Family and Leisure*

Kaplan (1975) argued that leisure behavior should not only be examined among individuals, but should focus on families as well because of the meaningful inter-relationship between the two. Families play the most important role in a child's leisure socialization which is described as a process through which individuals acquire knowledge, attitudes, values, skills and motives about leisure (Iso-Ahola, 1980). From that perspective, socialization into leisure is a continuous pattern of change beginning with the earliest interactions of childhood and continuing through the pivotal periods of adolescence and young adulthood on through maturity (Hoff & Ellis, 1992).

Another approach to the investigation of leisure socialization examined the process through which people are socialized into recreation activities (Barnett & Chick, 1986; Burch, 1969; Kelly, 1972, 1977; Shaw, 1992; Yoesting & Burkhead, 1973). The importance of social interaction on leisure choices was noted, along with the influence of norm reference groups such as family and friends. McPherson (1976) found that peer groups were most influential for males, while parents were most influential for females (Hoff & Ellis, 1992).

Studying the link between the parental role and leisure, Horna (1989) stated that mothers, whether directly or indirectly, carried out a greater share of the leisure and the semi-leisure components. She found that more fathers perceived play and games with the children as their leisure, while more mothers viewed these activities as semi-leisure. Altergott & McCreedy (1993) concluded that changes in roles among family members, their leisure motivation, coordination, and family composition or structure, all influenced family leisure involvement over the life cycle. Other family leisure studies have also found that stages in the family life cycle determine what families can or

cannot do together as a leisure group, irrespective of time available, motivations and coordination (Kelly, 1977; Rapaport & Rapaport, 1975; Witt & Goodale, 1981). Another line of family leisure research examined the relationship between family leisure and marital / family satisfaction (Hill, 1988; Holman & Epperson, 1984; Holman & Jacquart, 1988).

### *Family Leisure and Satisfaction*

Family scholars (Stinnett, Sanders, Defrain, and Parkhurst, 1982) have identified the factors that characterize healthy functioning families. In a study of over 300 self-described “happy” families, the most important characteristics the families reported was doing things together. Such leisure involvement has been examined for many years and scholars have consistently reported relationships between joint leisure and family satisfaction (Holman, 1981; Holman & Jacquart, 1988; Miller, 1976; Orthner, 1975; Palisi, 1984; Smith, Snyder, & Monsma, 1988). These studies, however, only examined joint couple leisure and marital satisfaction and generalized findings to the broader family system. While others (Metzelaars, 1994; Ragheb & Griffith, 1982; Riddick, 1986) have consistently reported positive relationships between individual leisure involvement and life satisfaction, few early researchers actually examined family leisure and family satisfaction with family life.

If leisure has such a strong relationship with life satisfaction among individuals and with marital satisfaction among couples, it can be argued that family leisure is likely to play a significant role in family satisfaction among families. Recent scholars (Mactavish & Schleien, 1998; Shaw & Dawson, 2001; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003) have begun to report significant relationships between family leisure and family satisfaction. Mactavish and Schleien found that benefits such as family satisfaction were integral to the entire family system and concluded that “concentrating on adult-only perceptions may under-estimate the positive value of shared recreation for the family as a whole” (p.226). In response, Zabriskie and McCormick examined family leisure and family satisfaction from a parent and early adolescent perspective. They concluded that when considering other family variables, family leisure was the single strongest predictor of satisfaction with family life. Their findings added considerable insight into the family leisure and family satisfaction relationship among American families, particularly due to the different family perspectives within the family. They were limited, however, to one parent response from each family and recommended collecting data from both parents in a home if possible. Therefore, in this study, the relationship between family leisure and family satisfaction among Turkish families will be examined from a family perspective that includes data from both parents (mother and father) and young adult (between ages 18-22) family members.

### *Theoretical Framework*

*Family systems theory.* Family systems theory has been recommended by many scholars (Orthner & Mancini, 1990; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001) as one of the most useful windows, or frameworks, from which to examine family leisure behavior. It addresses attitudes, needs, and behaviors of all family members and all combinations of family members in its effort to understand family behavior (Holman & Epperson, 1984) and has emerged as perhaps one of the better known and most widely utilized

paradigms for family study in the social and behavioral sciences (Broderick, 1993).

Fişek (1982) explained that from a family systems framework, a “family can be seen as an operating unit which can take in information from the environment, process it and act upon it in which any change in one member influences other members and the functioning of which can be understood apart from that of any individual member” (p.304). As Zabriskie and McCormick (2003) stated, “family systems tend to seek a dynamic state of homeostasis by continually interacting both within themselves and with their ever changing environment” (p.166). Families are thought to be self-regulatory and utilize different mechanisms to adapt to change and maintain stability which are both seen as essential elements in family functioning (Broderick, 1993). In order to function and progress, family systems need to experience and adapt to new situations while maintaining a certain level of closeness and structure. In family systems, understanding of family behavior is best understood when viewing the whole, because not only do family dynamics have a major influence on an individual’s behavior but a change in an individual will affect the other members of a family system (White & Klein, 2002). Olson (1993) argued that both family cohesion and family adaptability are considered to be the primary dimensions of family functioning which have been consistently related to family leisure involvement (core and balance).

*Core and Balance Model of Family Leisure Functioning.* According to the Core and Balance Model there are two basic categories of family leisure (core and balance) that families use to meet needs for stability and change which facilitate family cohesion and adaptability (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003; Zabriskie & Freeman, 2004). Core family leisure activities are thought to be common everyday, low-cost, relatively accessible, and often home based activities that many families do frequently. These family activities may include watching TV and videos together, playing board games, playing together in the yard, and shooting baskets together in driveway or gardening. Balance family leisure patterns, however, are thought to be less common, less frequent, more out of the ordinary, and usually not home based thus providing novel experiences. They may include family vacations; most outdoor recreation (e.g., camping, fishing, boating); special events; and trips to a theme park, a sporting event, or the bowling alley (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001). In this model, core family leisure patterns contribute to a family’s need for familiarity and stability by regularly providing predictable family leisure experiences that foster personal relatedness and feelings of family closeness or cohesion. Whereas, balance family leisure patterns address a family’s need for novelty and change by providing new experiences that require families to negotiate and adapt to new input, to be challenged, and to develop as a working unit in a leisure context (Zabriskie & Freeman, 2004).

Involvement in both core and balance family leisure activities is thought to increase levels of both family cohesion and adaptability which are said to be the primary dimensions of healthy family functioning from a family systems perspective (Olson, 1993). Theoretically, healthier functioning families would also have higher perceptions of their quality of family life and would have more satisfaction with their family life than families who are functioning at lower levels.

The current study is focused on Turkish families within their cultural contexts. It is likely that Turkish families are different in many ways from families in Western societies. Few studies, however, have examined leisure in Turkish culture and even less is

known about family leisure involvement among Turkish families. The core and balance model and family systems theory provide a sound framework from which to examine leisure among Turkish families.

*The Turkish Family from the Family Systems Perspective*

Unlike Western individualist societies where there is an emphasis on individual rights and choices and where the goals of the group are subordinate to the goals of the individual; in collectivist societies such as in Turkey, the emphasis is placed on others rather than on the individual, which leads to an emphasis on harmony and conformity and on subordination of one's own goals to the goals of the collective (Üskül, Hynie & Lalonde, 2004). This is more strictly felt in rural areas than urban areas in Turkey. Thus, the emphasis on close group ties, accountability, and loyalty rather than on autonomy and individualism, results in a somewhat fused, undifferentiated system of relationships within the Family Systems framework. Family structure refers to the invisible set of functional demands that organize the ways in which family members interact (Minuchin, 1974). The ways of interacting develop into transactional patterns explaining when, how and to whom a member is to relate to in the family. In other words, these transactional patterns define the relationship of the family members to each other (Fişek, 1982). The sense of self or identity is conferred to the individual by the family in a child's early socialization, and consists of a sense of belonging and separateness (Minuchin). In decision making, however the individual would seem to have relatively low differentiation and lack autonomy. In such a system, individuals would tend to fuse with others when normative expectations do not guide their emotional behavior.

The same situation seems to exist in the family context, so that the Turkish nuclear family structure could be seen as a mixture of high role differentiation and low personal differentiation. The status distinction between spouses and the separation of their spheres of activity would result in a spouse subsystem which is differentiated along the gender role dimension, with clear boundaries between the selves of the husband and wife (Fişek, 1982). Gender separation appears to be marked on the dimension of social interaction that reflects the socialization of each individual into a male or female identity, respectively, from childhood, and the development of a child's own largely uni-sexual social network in Turkish society (Olson, 1982). Within the family, the closest relationships tend to be among members of the same gender. During socialization, a female is trained to be a tidy, attentive, home maker and sacrificial person with the ethic of care (Henderson & Allen, 1991) that almost means living for others or sacrificing the self for others. A male's social network is also largely uni-sexual and he is trained to be strong, comparatively independent, authoritative, and free in spending time out of the home (Fişek; Kağıtçıbaşı, 1996a; Olson).

With respect to relations between parents and children in traditionally structured Turkish nuclear families, the general atmosphere surrounding children is one of love and control, in contrast to Western families in which love tends to be coupled with permissiveness, and a preponderance of control usually implies an insufficiency of love (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1981; 1996a). While middle class urban parents in Turkey are more attentive to the development of conceptual skills in their children than rural parents, they still tend to reinforce reliance on parental authority rather than on the child's own

resources. Many researchers (Cansever, 1965; Fişek, 1982; Geçtan, 1973; Kağıtçıbaşı, 1981; 1996a; 2002.; Köknel, 1970) agree that Turkish family dynamics would foster the development of a passive, dependent, constricted and somewhat frustrated person without a sense of autonomy and with a reliance on external sources of control and reinforcement. Young adults in Turkish families continue living with their families until the time they get married. They are not permitted to move away and live alone because of the traditional family norms and values. Thus, it can be summarized that the individual in a Turkish family is embedded in an ever-widening network of close ties, beginning with the nuclear family and extending out to the relatives and close neighbors (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1981; 1996a).

It is important to state that Turkish society is undergoing a rapid social change from being a traditional, rural, and patriarchal society into an increasingly urbanized, industrial society. Values and attitudes, however, seem to lag behind changing social structures and functions which may be the case in terms of leisure perception. Although leisure awareness in Turkish society may not be as developed as in Western societies, spending time with the family has always been valued as a part of their traditional structure. Since Turkish families in urban areas have relatively less traditional values, compared to families in rural areas, parents are beginning to worry about retaining close family relationships. As the Core and Balance Model suggests, families who participate in both core and balance family leisure activities are more likely to have better family functioning than those who do not. While core family leisure activities that are home centered are thought to be more common among Turkish families, balance family leisure activities are not so common. As for satisfaction with family life in Turkish families, it is likely that parents would already have a certain level of family satisfaction due to the traditional family values already. Therefore, an increase in family leisure involvement would likely increase the satisfaction with their family lives. Moreover, youth in such families are likely to be less dependent because of changing social trends, but the influence of the traditional family values and norms of society would also tend to constrain them such behavior. This influence is particularly felt by female youth. Therefore, based on the traditional patriarchal values, it is likely that young adults in Turkish families have gender related differences in their leisure involvement and enjoyment, and have less satisfaction with their family lives than their parents.

Although family bonds are typically strong among Turkish families and some family leisure is common and valued, rapid social change in Turkish society has led to concern about quality and satisfaction within Turkish family life today. Family leisure has been directly related to satisfaction with family life among U.S. samples (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003), yet based on cultural background and social expectations it is likely that Turkish families are very different than families in Western societies. To date, no research has examined family leisure and satisfaction with family life among families in Turkey. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between family leisure and satisfaction with family life among Turkish urban families within their cultural contexts from the perspectives of parents (both father and mother) and their young adult children (ages 18-22). Based on the Core and Balance Model of Family Leisure Functioning it was hypothesized that there would be a significant relationship between perception of family leisure involvement and family satisfaction from all three perspectives, and perhaps stronger from the parents perspective



due to the rapidly changing culture and the parents' desire to retain close family ties. Considering the traditional culture, Turkish family members are likely to participate in family leisure activities regardless of their personal preference. Thus, the enjoyment level of each family member in their family leisure involvement is also important to be examined. It was further hypothesized that there would be a significant relationship between family leisure enjoyment and family satisfaction from all three perspectives within the Turkish families.

## Methodology

### *Sample*

Seventy families were selected from among the 300 students attending the first and the second classes in the Faculty of Education at Ege University in Izmir, Turkey. In an effort to obtain current information, the 70 students who were participating in the study were all living with their families in Izmir. The families of the other students were away from Izmir, so they were either living in hostels or sharing flats with their friends in the city. Moreover, Izmir was selected because it was quite typical of a large city in Turkey going through the modernization process and included families who shared democratic and secular values. The population (4 million) included mostly middle class urban families as well as some lower class families and rural immigrant families. Thus, the families of participant university students in this study were expected to represent the social characteristics of the city.

The family systems perspective utilized in this study required responses from multiple family members. In order to have different perspectives, the data were gathered from three members of each family including father, mother (as parents) and their young adult child (the university student between the ages of 18-22). The research questionnaires were given to the participant students to take home to their parents. Each member of the family responded individually (mothers = 69, fathers = 67 and young adult students = 70). All 70 participant families (100%) completed the questionnaires (one of the mothers and three of the fathers questionnaires were invalid and they were omitted) and sent them back within a week by their young children (students). The university students were selected for two primary reasons. First, they were thought to be conscious of the meaning of family leisure and family satisfaction. Second, they would guide their parents in responding to the research questionnaire, because most parents in Turkey would not have had the experience of responding to any kind of survey instrument before.

The sample was limited to only dual parent, heterosexual couples and their young adult children which represent the majority (68.2 %) of urban families in Turkey. In addition to this traditional family structure, other family types present in Turkey include extended families (19.5 %) in rural areas and single parent families (12.3 %) in which one spouse is missing due to separation, divorce or death (Yavuz, 2004). In the process of urbanization, many Turkish families have evolved from extended families to nuclear families. A Western perspective may define the Turkish nuclear family (mother, father and children) as traditional compared to the more non-traditional views of family (e.g. single parent, same sex parents or adopted children) in Western societies, thus, the term "traditional" will be used. In Turkish society, non-married single parent or same sex parents are not legally approved as a family by law.

Mothers in this study ranged from 38 to 60 years of age ( $M = 45.3, SD = 5.26$ ) and fathers ranged from 40 to 64 years of age ( $M = 49.8, SD = 5.58$ ). The youth's ages ranged from 18 to 22 ( $M = 19.9, SD = 0.825$ ) with slightly more females (55.2 %) than males (44.8 %). The majority (90 %) were nuclear families (parents and children only, in the same household), 4.3 % were extended families (parents, children and some relatives), and 5.7 % were single parent families. The household income of participant Turkish families ranged from 300 TRY<sup>1\*</sup> (229.18 U.S.dollars) to 3000 TRY (2291.82 U.S.dollars) per month.

The mothers' educational status was quite low with nearly half of the mothers (49.3%) having elementary school education or less; 8.7% of the mothers having middle school education; 17.4% of the mothers having a high school education, and 24.6% of the mothers having some college (two year vocational higher education) or university education (4 year faculty education). Most of the mothers were housewives (62.3%), with some (17.4 %) working in offices and teaching in schools, and some (11.6 %) retired. Only 4.3 % of the mothers were laborers.

Fathers were found to have higher educational and occupational status than mothers which reflects the reality of Turkish society. One-fourth (25.4 %) of the fathers were elementary school graduates, 6.0 % of the fathers were middle school graduates, 26.9 % of them were high school graduates, and 40.3 % were college or university graduates. The fathers' occupational status also varied with 4.5 % being professionals, 10.4 % doctors, lawyers or engineers, 11.9 % traders, 22.4 % officials, 9.0 % technicians, 7.5 % laborers, 3.0 % farmers and 31.3 % retired.

The participant students did not work in any part-time jobs, so they have all been supported by their parents. This represents the traditional attitude of Turkish parents as they believe that supporting their children is one of their chief responsibilities even after their children get married.

### Instrumentation

The research questionnaire included:

- a) the 7 item Satisfaction with Family Life scale (SWFL) that measures satisfaction with family life based on the participant's own criteria;
- b) the 28 item Family Leisure Activity Profile (FLAP) which measures family leisure involvement based on the Core and Balance model of Family Leisure Functioning; and
- c) sociodemographic questions.

*SWFL.* The original SWFL scale used by Zabriskie and McCormick (2003) has demonstrated acceptable psychometric properties including evidence of construct validity, internal consistency ( $\alpha = .93$ ), and test-retest reliability ( $r = .89$ ). The Turkish version of SWFL was modified from the original Satisfaction with Family Life Scale (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003) by changing the 7-point Likert-type scale into a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = disagree to 5 = agree. The modification was made in an effort to simplify the scale for Turkish respondents, especially for the parents who were not familiar with such surveys. Two more items were also added to the

\*1 TRY = .76 U.S.dollars (28.03.2008)



5-item original scale in order to make the meaning more explanatory for the Turkish respondents. The first added item was "For my family satisfaction, spending time with my family is important." The second was "My family life quality increases by spending time with my family." Adding these two items was thought to be necessary since one of the very significant indicators of family life satisfaction in Turkish culture is a strong bonding within family that eventually increases the time spent with the family. Therefore, the Turkish form of the SWFL consisted of 7 items with a 5-point Likert type scale.

For the Turkish families, scores of the satisfaction with family life (SWFL) scale ranged from 7 to 35. However, in this study, total scores of the SWFL were divided by 7, which is the item number in the questionnaire so that scores ranged from 1 to 5. Scores of 1 meant "very dissatisfied" and 5 meant "very satisfied." In this way scores of the SWFL were easily interpreted. For family level measurement, family scores (mean of parents and youth) and family difference scores (difference between parents and youth) were calculated. In order to demonstrate the internal consistency of the Turkish version of the SWFL scale, internal consistency calculations were made with the cronbach alpha procedure for youth, mother, and father perspectives. The scale showed sufficient internal consistency for the youth ( $\alpha = .84$ ), mother ( $\alpha = .86$ ), and father ( $\alpha = .85$ ) samples and coefficients were consistent with the coefficients of the original scale.

*FLAP.* The original FLAP measured involvement in family leisure activities based on the Core and Balance Model of Family Leisure Functioning. Respondents identified leisure activities done with family members across 16 activity categories. Eight categories of activities were representative of core family leisure patterns, and eight categories were representative of balance family leisure patterns. Each question root asked if the respondent was involved in the activity category with family members. If the answer was yes, respondents were asked to complete ordinal scales of estimated frequency ("about how often?") and duration ("for about how long each time?") that followed each root. Respondents were then asked how satisfied they were (1 = very dissatisfied to 5 = very satisfied) with their involvement or lack of involvement with family members in each category. The original FLAP has demonstrated acceptable psychometric properties including evidence of construct validity, content validity, and test-retest reliability for core ( $r = .74$ ), balance ( $r = .78$ ) and total family leisure involvement ( $r = .78$ ) (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003).

The Turkish version of FLAP was used in this study to explain frequency of involvement and level of enjoyment in family leisure activities based on the Core and Balance Model of Family Leisure Functioning. Each question root asked if the respondents were involved in the activity category with family members. If the answer was "yes," the respondents were asked to complete ordinal scales of estimated frequency ("about how often?" Everyday, Once a week, A few times a month, A few times a year), that followed each root. Then, the respondents were asked how much they enjoyed (1 = never enjoy to 5 = enjoy very much) their involvement in the activities with family members in each category.

Some modifications were made to the Turkish version of the scale for this study. First, the duration indicator in each question root was excluded in an effort to minimize confusion for the respondents. After this modification was done, involvement scores

in the Turkish form of FLAP reflected only frequency of the family leisure involvement. Second, the eighth question in core activities which was related to religious and spiritual activities with family members in the original scale was excluded because in Turkish culture, these activities are not thought to be family leisure activities. They are practiced individually and are accepted as religious rituals. Third, the fifteenth question in balance activities which was related to outdoor adventure activities such as rock climbing, river rafting, scuba diving with family members in the original scale was also excluded in the Turkish version of the scale. These activities have only recently been introduced in Turkish culture and are thought to be marginal leisure activities. Since few people are involved in such activities in Turkey, these activities were not included in the research instrument. Therefore, in this study the Turkish participants identified leisure activities done with family members across 14 activity categories. Seven categories of activities were representative of core family leisure patterns which were described as common everyday, low-cost, relatively accessible, and often home-based activities that many families do frequently (e.g., watching TV and videos together, playing board games, gardening). The next seven categories of activities were representative of balance family leisure patterns that covered community based events, outdoor activities, and tourism.

The scores for the Turkish version of the FLAP were calculated by summing the ordinal involvement items (i.e., frequency) in the core and balance categories to provide a core and balance family leisure score. The enjoyment and involvement items were also summed to provide core and balance enjoyment and involvement scores. The total family leisure involvement score was calculated by summing the core and balance indices. For family level scores, the mean of the parents and youth scores were calculated for both the core and balance indices. The scores of the Turkish version of FLAP ranged between 0 to 70 for the total scale, and 0 to 35 for the core and balance subscales. In this study, however, total scores and the subscale scores of the FLAP were divided by item number in each scale so that scores ranged from 1 to 5. In this way scores of the FLAP were easily interpreted.

Involvement scores ranged from 1 (everyday) to 5 (less than a few times a year) with higher scores indicating the lower level of involvement and the lower scores indicating the higher level of involvement (for core and balance activities or both). On the other hand, higher enjoyment scores indicated higher levels and lower scores indicated lower levels of enjoyment experienced. Regarding the reliability of the FLAP, only internal consistency scores were calculated since the methodological limitations did not allow test-retest or interrater reliability studies. In order to demonstrate the internal consistency of the Turkish version of the FLAP, the cronbach alpha coefficient was calculated for the youth, mother and father samples independently. Internal consistency alphas of FLAP were between  $\alpha = .59$  to  $\alpha = .89$ . Alpha coefficients for Core,  $\alpha = .89$  (mother),  $\alpha = .86$  (father) and  $\alpha = .86$  (youth); for Balance,  $\alpha = .78$  (mother),  $\alpha = .86$  (father) and  $\alpha = .59$  (youth). These alpha coefficients indicated sufficient internal consistency for the FLAP. Surprisingly, item 1, which asks the frequency of the family's having dinner together, had a weak corrected item-total correlation value for both the youth and mother sample. This may be because the youth and the mother did not think of this as a family leisure activity since it is common in Turkish culture that the youth and the mother regularly eat dinners at home. The same pattern, however, was not observed for

the father sample. Here, item 1 showed sufficient corrected item-total correlation and this pattern was seen as a reflection of Turkish culture, as well. In an ordinary Turkish family, the father works, and dinner is the only time after a long day's work to be with the family. Furthermore, item 2, which asked about family leisure activities including watching TV, listening to music or reading books, etc., had a lower corrected item-total correlation value for the father sample. The exclusion of the items from the scale with weak corrected item-total correlations was considered. Because of the small sample size (approximately 70 for each sample), the researcher preferred not to spoil the structure of the scale, so items were not excluded. More research with larger samples is needed to further validate the Turkish version of the FLAP. Overall, internal consistency of the scale was determined as sufficient for use in this study.

Finally, a group of sociodemographic questions were included to identify the characteristics of the sample including, age, gender, marital status, educational status, occupational status, family structure and monthly income.

### *Analysis*

In this study, three perspectives were gathered: a) youth responses, b) mother responses, c) father responses. In order to demonstrate the relationship between the youth (male and female), mother and father core and balance involvement and enjoyment scores of the FLAP, Spearman Rank Correlations were computed. Further, Spearman Rank Correlations were used to examine the relationship between FLAP and SWFL scores of youth (male and female), mother, and father. Descriptive statistics were used to present an overview of responses.

### **Findings**

Male youth ratings of satisfaction with family life (SWFL) had a mean of 3.25 (SD = 0.87), female youth had a mean of 3.67 (SD = 0.92), mother had a mean of 3.92 (SD = 0.74), and father had a mean of 3.71 (SD = 0.72). The results explained that male youth had less satisfaction with their family life than female youth. However, mothers had higher satisfaction with their family life than the fathers. Overall, parents in these Turkish families had higher satisfaction with their family life than their young adult children.

The FLAP provided frequency of involvement and enjoyment scores for core, balance and total family leisure (see Table 1). The data indicated that male youth had very little involvement and enjoyment with core family leisure and had almost no involvement and enjoyment with balance family leisure. Female youth, mothers and fathers were all similar having moderate involvement and enjoyment in core activities and little involvement and enjoyment in balance activities. Moreover, the data for total family leisure involvement and enjoyment indicated that young males had almost no involvement and enjoyment with family leisure activities, while, female youth, mothers, and fathers had some involvement and enjoyment for total family leisure activities.

Examination of correlation coefficients indicated some significant relationships among study variables. Within the youth data sets, core family leisure involvement was positively correlated with their involvement and enjoyment. Results indicated a positive relationship between male youth ( $r = .852$ ;  $p < .01$ ) and female youth ( $r = .779$ ,  $p < .01$ ) perception of core family leisure involvement and family leisure enjoyment.

TABLE 1  
*Summary of FLAP Mean Scores (Youth, Parents and Family Perspectives)*

		Core Involvement	Core Enjoyment	Balance Involvement	Balance Enjoyment	Total Involvement	Total Enjoyment	
<i>Youth</i>	Male	Mean	4.50	1.54	4.97	1.67	4.73	1.60
		SD	0.69	0.86	0.54	0.94	0.55	0.81
	Female	Mean	3.79	2.57	4.71	2.13	4.25	2.35
		SD	0.65	0.99	0.61	0.99	0.55	0.89
<i>Mother</i>		Mean	3.70	2.67	4.73	2.32	4.21	2.50
		SD	0.63	0.97	0.59	1.14	0.56	0.97
<i>Father</i>		Mean	3.68	2.62	4.73	2.17	4.21	2.39
		SD	0.67	0.93	0.65	1.06	0.58	0.89

*Note.* Family leisure involvement scores are reverse coded (5 = low, 1 = high).  
 Family leisure enjoyment scores are not (1 = low, 5 = high).

Moreover, a positive relationship was also found between the mother ( $r = .875$ ;  $p < .01$ ) and father ( $r = .890$ ;  $p < .01$ ) perception of core family leisure involvement and family leisure enjoyment.

Within the datasets, balance family leisure involvement was positively correlated with the youth involvement and enjoyment. Results indicated a positive relationship between balance family leisure involvement and family leisure enjoyment for both male ( $r = .865$ ;  $p < .01$ ) and female youth ( $r = .827$ ;  $p < .01$ ). There were also positive relationships between the mothers ( $r = .946$ ;  $p < .01$ ) and fathers ( $r = .899$ ;  $p < .01$ ) perceptions of balance family leisure involvement and enjoyment.

Finally, the relationship of total family leisure involvement and satisfaction with family life was examined to find out if family leisure contributed to the explanation of overall family satisfaction (see Table 2). The data indicated that male youth family leisure involvement was not correlated to family life satisfaction ( $r = .184$ ,  $p > .01$ ) but there was a significant and positive relationship between their family leisure enjoy-

TABLE 2  
*Total Family Leisure Involvement & Satisfaction With Family Life (SWFL)*

Variable	Family Life Satisfaction
1. Male youth family leisure involvement	.184
2. Male youth leisure enjoyment	.491**
3. Female youth family leisure involvement	.678**
4. Female youth leisure enjoyment	.630**
5. Mother family leisure involvement	.252**
6. Mother leisure enjoyment	.398**
7. Father family leisure involvement	.324**
8. Father leisure enjoyment	.420**

Note. \*\* $p < 0.01$  (2-tailed)

ment and family life satisfaction ( $r = .491$ ,  $p < .01$ ). For the female youth, however, both family leisure involvement ( $r = .678$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and family leisure enjoyment ( $r = .630$ ,  $p < .01$ ) had a significant and positive relationship with family life satisfaction. Moreover, for the mothers, both family leisure involvement ( $r = .252$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and family leisure enjoyment ( $r = .398$ ,  $p < .001$ ) scores were positively correlated with family life satisfaction. Similarly, fathers' scores on both family leisure involvement ( $r = .324$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and family leisure enjoyment ( $r = .420$ ,  $p < .001$ ) were positively correlated with family life satisfaction.

## Discussion

The findings of this study supported hypothesized relationships and indicated a positive relationship between family leisure involvement and family satisfaction from a

young adult, mother and father perspective. Furthermore, findings indicated a positive relationship between family leisure enjoyment and family satisfaction from a young adult, mother and father perspective. Findings also indicated higher correlation coefficients for female youth than male youth. This suggests that female youth in Turkish culture had closer ties to their families which may be due to the traditional way of socialization. These findings provide the first empirical insight into family leisure involvement among Turkish families, and considerable implications for urban Turkish families today.

#### *Family Leisure Involvement and Family Satisfaction*

Findings from this study go beyond previous work by examining families from three perspectives (mother, father, and young adult child) versus only one parent and a child (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003). This study obtained views of both parents in the same household about their family leisure and family life satisfaction considering that it would have great importance to explain the impact of traditional family values among nuclear families in Turkey.

While the insight into family leisure from both parents perspectives has been useful, there have been some limitations related to examining families in Turkey that have not been encountered among family leisure researchers in Western developed countries (Holman & Jacquart, 1988; Orthner, 1975; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003). This study focused on only dual parent, heterosexual couples with children, which are referred to in Turkey as nuclear families. In examining parents' family leisure involvement and family life satisfaction among Turkish nuclear families, the data showed that both parents had very similar perceptions of family leisure involvement and family satisfaction. Considering the traditional gender norms and values in the society, it was expected that there would be differences in their perspectives. Parents in this study, however, responded very similarly which may be a culturally motivated effort to keep the harmony and to maintain stability which they value as essential elements in family functioning. Even if parents had different views, they may be likely to cling to each other for the family stability which is imposed strongly by the traditional family values.

Findings in this study indicated that Turkish families were involved more frequently in core family leisure activities than in balance family leisure activities, which is somewhat consistent with the findings from Western families (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003). However, while the male youth reported being involved in these core activities with family members "very rarely" (a few times a year); female youth, mothers, and fathers, reported participation in shared core activities with family members "once or twice a month". It is no surprise that Turkish families were involved more in core family leisure activities mostly because such activities are more home-centered and familiar to the Turkish family culture. It is important to note, however, that most of these core family activities (eating dinner at home, watching TV, gardening, cooking special meals, knitting, etc.) are thought to be part of a family's daily routine. While they may not consider such routines to be leisure as in Western families, Turkish parents appear to facilitate involvement in the same common, everyday, core types of family activities in an effort to maintain family cohesion, stability, and to support feelings of closeness.

As for the balance family leisure activities, participant Turkish families participated in these activities with family members very rarely. Except for some balance family



leisure activities such as visiting friends, going for a picnic, cinema or matches, the other balance family leisure activities such as camping, bowling, tennis, diving, etc. were not participated in very often by families in this sample. This may be because such activities are not very common in Turkish culture yet, or due to the lack of parental awareness.

Satisfaction with family life was examined as an independent factor in Findings section in this study. Results indicated Turkish families were “moderately” satisfied with their family lives. Perhaps, the most significant finding in this study was that although Turkish families were involved in less family leisure (both core and balance) than families in Western societies (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003), Turkish family involvement was positively related to their satisfaction with family life. In other words, they enjoyed whatever they did together whether it was called “leisure” or not. It is interesting that, while male youth had “very little” involvement in family leisure activities, they were “moderately” satisfied with their family life.

#### *Family Leisure Enjoyment and Family Satisfaction*

Considering the traditional culture, Turkish family members are likely to participate in family leisure activities ignoring their personal preferences but regarding the group's (the family's) preferences (Üskül et al., 2004). Thus, the enjoyment level of each family member in their family leisure was important to examine. The data in the study indicated a significant and positive relationship between family leisure enjoyment and family satisfaction from all three perspectives. It may be explained that leisure enjoyment is similar to leisure satisfaction. The leisure satisfaction literature has reported similar findings for individuals (Russell, 1987, 1990) and for couples (Johnson, Zabriskie, & Hill, 2006). Findings from the current study provide additional support to such previous works and make a further contribution by addressing family variables from three different perspectives. The data also indicated that Turkish family members enjoyed core family leisure more than balance family leisure activities. This finding also appears to be similar to trends in U.S. samples (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003).

Examining the relationship of family leisure enjoyment and family satisfaction, the data indicated that even though the Turkish family members did not enjoy family leisure activities much, they were moderately satisfied with their family life. The findings emphasized that parents in Turkish families already had some family satisfaction due to traditional family values. Thus, if families increase their family leisure involvement, it is expected that their family leisure satisfaction would be higher. However, youth in such families would prefer to be less dependent because of changing social trends, but due to the traditional norms and values, youth cannot be independent. The influence of tradition appeared to be felt more by females than males. Therefore, it would be important to consider gender related differences in young adult's family leisure and their family satisfaction.

#### *Gender Difference Among Young Adult Youth*

The findings in this study indicated higher correlation coefficients for female youth than male youth. This suggests that female youth in Turkish culture had closer ties to their families which may be due to the traditional way of socialization. Hoff and El-

lis (1992) reported that peer groups were most influential for males, while parents were most influential for females. Current findings were consistent with their conclusion and indicated that in this sample the female youth participated in family leisure and reported satisfaction with family life in strikingly similar fashion as their parents. This is not typical, however, in modern Western societies. Zabriskie and McCormick (2003) found that the female youth in their study reported lower family leisure involvement (both core and balance) and family satisfaction than the male youth did. Those findings of Western female youth were just the opposite of the related findings in Turkish families in the current research. Furthermore, in a previous study by the same researchers (2001) having examined similar variables among a young adult college student sample (a similar age group as in this study), they reported no significant gender related findings. The important differences in youths' perspectives of leisure in these similar studies both in U.S. and in Turkey are thought to be related to the youth's cultural backgrounds. The youth in the Turkish sample are likely to be reflecting the traditional characteristics of the Turkish culture in their behavior both in family leisure involvement and in family life satisfaction. The reason why female youth in Turkish families may have behaved very similar to their parents although they belong to a new generation can be found in the Family Systems framework (Olson, 1993). Child-rearing practices are thought to be the mechanism through which the combination of differentiated role expectations and fused emotional relationships, characteristic of the total system get transmitted to each new generation. The product of these practices is an individual who is dependent, externally controlled, and lacking autonomy. In the systems framework, this makes an undifferentiated individual who is likely to have a high need for a sense of belonging, but will not be aware of a need for separateness in this traditional culture.

From the Western perspective, Turkish families may be expected to have conflict among the members because of such traditional values and life-styles. However, they have neither much conflict nor dissatisfaction with family life (Fişek, 1982). In the family systems framework, the well-functioning individual would be the one who perceives little or no disconnection between the role demands and actual experiences. Since cultural norms regulate subsystem boundaries and the individual stays within these boundaries, there would be no feeling of serious discomfort (Fisek). In Turkish families, for example, the wife who accepts her low status and segregation from her husband, the male child who accepts the father's distance as a sign of authority, and the female child who is taught to be attentive, dependent and, brought up with an ethic of care will not feel rejected, unloved or dissatisfied. As a result of these culturally patterned family values, Turkish families such as those in this study are not likely to report being dissatisfied with their family lives.

From the cultural perspective, leisure perceptions of individuals are thought to be deeply related to their values and actual behaviors. Jeffres and Dobos (1993) stated that "The values of leisure refer to personal assessments of the worth or utility of leisure. Such values may be applied to leisure opportunities available in the environment or leisure activities as a part of an individual's personal life" (p.205). When values are internalized by individuals, they become a part of the culture. Therefore, as leisure awareness continues to develop in Turkish culture, individuals and families are likely to develop leisure attitudes that will enable them to use their leisure more con-

sciously. Furthermore, in previous research among Turkish university students (Aslan, 2000) and Turkish women (Aslan, 2004), the author concluded that the lack of leisure awareness and consequently the lack of need for leisure in Turkish society have been important discriminators between societies in developed industrialized countries and those in developing countries.

Findings from this study indicated that whether it is called "leisure" or not, family leisure involvement was a contributor to satisfaction with family life among urban Turkish families. Moreover, in the process of modernization, contrary to Western families, intergenerational relationships of urban families are moving not toward the independence but rather toward increased interdependence on the emotional level (Vergin, 1985). Therefore, the family leisure and family satisfaction relationship is likely to be more significant in the future among Turkish families because of the changes in society and parents' desire to retain close family ties.

### Conclusions

While findings in this study indicated positive relationships between family leisure involvement and satisfaction with family life among Turkish families, correlational techniques were used. Interpretations in terms of the directionality of the relationships cannot be made with these techniques alone without further study. Future research should include larger samples, pre-tests, post-tests, different levels and types of family leisure involvement and should include the measurement for duration of core and balance family leisure activities. Extended follow-up tests over time, and the possible use of control groups for comparisons could also help to empirically examine the question of directionality. This study was also among the first to translate and modify the FLAP and SWFL scales. Further validity and reliability studies are recommended prior to their continued use in future Turkish family research. Qualitative methodologies such as in-depth interviews and observations with small groups can also be used to gain further insight into the interrelationships among variables and into the meaning of both core and balance family leisure involvement for family members within the Turkish family.

Considering that Turkey is undergoing rapid social change from being a traditional, rural and patriarchal society into an increasingly urbanized, industrial and modern society (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1981, 1996a, 2002), values and attitudes tend to lag behind changing social structures and functions (Fisek, 1982). During this process of social change, it is recommended that leisure and especially family leisure involvement, be increased in an effort to maintain higher levels of family satisfaction, and to support family cohesion, stability, and adaptability.

In the present study, family leisure involvement was clearly related to family satisfaction among Turkish families. Moreover, this relationship suggests that family leisure involvement may add to the ability of traditional family values and norms to influence satisfaction with family life. The socially patterned interdependence within the family would support the family unity and satisfaction as well as feelings of closeness which provide the necessary foundations for family systems to adapt to the cultural changes and challenges. One significant finding of this study was that even if Turkish urban families had relatively low frequency of involvement in family leisure activities (both core and balance), family leisure was highly correlated with family satisfaction. This

finding suggests that family leisure may in fact play a significant and perhaps an essential role in family satisfaction among Turkish families. It is recommended that future study continue to examine family leisure and family satisfaction, as well as related variables such as family functioning and family enjoyment among Turkish families.

Findings from this study are expected to make a contribution to the leisure literature by being the first from Turkey to describe and analyze the relationship of family leisure and family satisfaction from the perspective of three family members (mother, father, and youth) in the same household while emphasizing their traditional culture. Findings clearly contribute to the understanding of family leisure variables among families in this rapidly changing society. In order to observe the changes in social context from being traditional to modern with its norms and values, and also the change of leisure perceptions and attitudes in the family context in Turkish society, many qualitative and quantitative studies are recommended and expected to follow in the future.

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