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Leisure Preferences of Residents in Nevsehir, a Historical City in Central Turkey

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Abstract

The recreation and leisure activities which emerged with the industrial revolution and developed up to the present day are becoming more and more important. They are important aspects of the lives of individuals, and equally for the health of present-day economies. This paper explores the relationships between socio-economic and demographic features and the leisure preferences and activities of the local people, and the implications for marketing leisure goods and services in a country at an intermediate stage in its economic development, and in a city where tourism has become a major industry. Primary and secondary data are used. The new data is from a survey of 200 residents in Nevsehir, a city in Central Turkey. In addition to standard socio-economic and demographic information, the sample was questioned about their preferences for different kinds of leisure activities. The implications for leisure providers, and for leisure policy in the city and country, are then discussed.

Keywords: *recreation, leisure time, local people, marketing*

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1. Introduction

The recreation and leisure activities which emerged with the industrial revolution and then developed up until the present day, are becoming ever more important. They are important aspects of the lives of all individuals (Leyser & Cole 2004). If used in positive ways, leisure will lead to individual and social development, while negative use will result in problems like depression (Karakucuk, 1999, p. 53). Nowadays leisure is also of considerable economic importance. It has become an important source of jobs all over the world, and it can be a source of economic growth, especially in less developed countries such as Turkey. According to Parker (1985) Ameri-

cans spend \$700 billion a day on recreation. Kraus (2002) claims that Americans people spend from \$500 billion to \$1 trillion annually on their leisure. Turkey would like Americans, and citizens of as many other countries as possible, to spend some, and larger and larger proportions, of this money in Turkey. The huge amounts of money at stake force businesses to be careful in determining the types, quantities and quality of the leisure goods and services that they produce, and they know that they must prioritise their customers' leisure preferences. A problem in a country such as Turkey is how to balance, and to reconcile, the demands of tourists and local people.

2. Leisure in Turkey

Because of the prevailing socio-economic conditions, Turkish people have more free time than they need. For those working for the government, Turkey is known as a holiday paradise. There are approximately 108 weekends. More than one third of the year comprises holidays when annual and official holidays are included. These are only the full-day ones. When half-day holidays are included, the figure is even higher. The age for retirement is 55, which some say is too early (Karakucuk, 1999), and the authorities are searching for ways to raise the retirement age. The reasons for people having immense free time are as follows: economic problems, delay in industrial development, seasonal jobs as in agriculture and tourism related businesses, unemployment, university life because of gaps or irregular arrangements in schedules, and the large number of housewives who spend all day at home.

The leisure situation in Turkey resulting from vast amounts of free time is completely different from that in western countries where time pressure and work-life balance have become public issues. Western societies have been facing the problem of hard work and high incomes but not enough free time. Turkey has the macro-structures of a modern society – a developed education system, institutionalised retirement and so on, but lacks the economy that these structures really need, and most of the people still have the time rhythms of an agricultural society. Moreover, there is a high rate of unemployment. Hence the problem of how to spend the vast amount of free time.

Free time needs to be used in beneficial ways. As free time can be valuable, its abundance in a developing country like Turkey could be used for something beneficial. This could make the population useful to the society and help the passive masses to become active in a really effective way (Karakucuk, 1999).

An issue of debate in Turkey nowadays is why so much free time is spent passively watching something, listening to music or reading, and how little is spent actively. Another is how free the people are to participate in recreation activities. Yet another aspect of the issue is about the principal reasons why the participants join in or do not join in particular leisure activities. It has been found in numerous studies in Turkey that people appear to prefer to spend their leisure passively (Gokce 1984; Gokmen, 1985; Ocalan, 1994). To take a few examples: watching TV, listening to radio, going to movies, theatres or sport matches, wandering with friends aimlessly, going to coffee houses or pubs, and reading newspapers are common leisure activities. The most extensive study of leisure activities all over Turkey was made by the State Planning Organisation in 1993. This study divided leisure activities into two categories: indoor activities such as reading

Table 1. Participation in leisure activities in Turkey

Activity	Rural (%)	Urban (%)
Indoor activities	67.3	75.6
Read books, magazines, etc.	9.4	14.9
Listen to music	2.9	5.0
Watch TV	15.4	18.9
Listen to radio	6.9	5.7
Chat with neighbours and friends	15.1	11.6
Rest	11.6	11.1
Making things by hand	6.0	8.4
Outdoor activities	27.9	21.2
Go to movies, theatres, and concerts	0.3	1.1
Go to bars, discos	0.3	0.3
Go to libraries	0.2	0.2
Go to coffee houses	13.8	5.2
Go to the countryside	2.5	4.3
Do sports	0.9	1.0
Join in religious ceremonies	5.1	2.4
Go shopping	4.3	6.5
Do something different	0.5	0.2
No free time	4.9	3.0
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: DPT. (1993). *Developments in economic and social sectors*, Ankara, p.142.

Table 2. Numbers taking part in different leisure activities

Activities	1993	1999
Cinema		
Spectators	12,521,594	51,263,226
Theatres		
Spectators (Including official and private)	1,426,000	2,793,000
Operas-ballets		
Spectators	449,000	400,000
Libraries		
Number of libraries	1,095	1,293
Books	11,102,000	13,485,000
Readers	22,518,000	21,347,000
Museums		
Number of museums	158	172
Visitors	13,663,000	17,878,000

Source: DPT. Supportive Studies of the year 2001: Developments in economic and social sectors, Ankara, pp. 232-236.

newspapers, magazines and books, listening to music, watching TV, chatting with friends and neighbours and embroidering; and outdoor activities such as going to movies, theatres, concerts, bars or discos, going to libraries or parks, walking in the country, playing sports, joining religious ceremonies and going out to markets or malls. The rates of participation in indoor activities were 67.3% in rural regions and 75.6% in urban areas. In contrast, the rates in outdoor activities were 27.9% in rural and 21.2% in urban areas (DPT, 1993).

According to official statistical data about Turkey, of the total population (67,844,943 in 1999), those who went to movies in 1999 amounted to 51,263,226, those who went to theatres totalled 2,793,000, whereas only 400,000 went to operas or ballets. Meanwhile, 21,437,000 people visited libraries and 17,878,000 people visited museums in 1999 (DPT, 2001). These figures are the total numbers of occasions on which people joined in the activities. Some people will have participated more than once and are there-

fore double (or triple etc) counted. Moreover, in some cases many of those counted would have been tourists rather than local people.

Playing sports is a leading active leisure activity in Turkey, though the numbers who play regularly are really quite modest. According to statistical data from the Directorate General for Youth and Sports in Turkey, in September 2003 just 369,248 people had official sport licences of whom 89,540 were women and 279,658 were men. These are people who play sports regularly and/or professionally. Amateur sports players who are not regular participants are not included. Considering that the population of Turkey was 72,316,000 in 2004, the number of the people with sport licences is quite low. This is another indication of the lack of interest in participating in active leisure pursuits in Turkey (DPT, 2004). Between 1993 and 1999 there was a huge increase in the number of cinema attendances, much smaller increases in visits to museums and theatres, and declines in the use of libraries and in visits to opera and ballet performances (see Table 2)

The likely reasons for sport activities not being common are the irregular distribution of sport facilities throughout the country and the poor quality of the facilities. Most present facilities are not used at optimal capacities. All these problems have been faced for a long time and are still to be solved.

3. Materials and method

Our research was designed to assess the leisure preferences of the people living in Nevsehir, a historical and tourist city in central Turkey, and to explore the relationships between socio-economic and demographic features and leisure activities. As leisure activities are thought to be of great importance for society nowadays, the study was intended to contribute to national and regional planning and possibly to develop a new point of view about marketing leisure activities. We

were interested in whether the low levels of involvement in active leisure (established in previous studies) were due to choice or constraint, and whether the locals' leisure was benefiting from the role models and facilities associated with the tourist industry. We were also interested in the extent to which western knowledge of leisure preferences and how these vary by age, gender and so on would prove a reliable base for marketing leisure goods and services to the local population in Turkey.

Questionnaires, which were derived from the existing literature, were used to collect the data required for the study. The questionnaire contained 10 main items. Questions 1 to 7 sought basic demographic information about the participants. Questions 8 to 10 were about leisure preferences and the importance attributed to different leisure activities by the respondents. The eighth, ninth and tenth questions were scored by the participants according to their own views about their own and other leisure activities. Respondents were offered five options to specify their preferences and the importance of the leisure activities that they had or had not taken part in. The questionnaire covered both outdoor and indoor, and active and passive uses of leisure.

The questionnaires were applied in March-April 2003 to the people from Nevşehir using a method of quasi-random sampling. The sample was stratified by age groups and types of occupations. Turkey is divided into 81 districts which are called cities in the local language. Nevşehir is one of them. According to official statistics, the population of the city is 309,914 but just 83,840 live in the city itself, the name of which is also Nevşehir. The rest of the population live in other towns and villages around the city (DIE, 2000). Of the city (narrowly defined) population, 24,354 (29.1%) are 15 years old and below, 19,307 (23.1%) are between 15 and 24, 15,374 (18.3%) are between 25 and 34, 9,690 (11.5%) are between 35 and 44, 8,242 (9.8%) are 45-55,

and 6,875 (8.2%) are 55 years old and over. The average age is 26.1. The breakdown by gender in the city is 40,223 (47.9%) males and 43,617 (52.1%) females. A total of 230 questionnaires were distributed and returned, but 30 were not used in the analysis because they were incomplete so just 200 questionnaires were used.

There are a total of 20,637,000 students in Turkey (Korkmaz, 2005). As noted above, the population of Turkey was 67,803,927 in 1999 (DIE, 2000), so students comprise a considerable proportion which reflects both the young age structure and Turkey's relatively well-developed education system compared with the under-developed economy. The ratio of students in the sample was taken according to their representation in the national population because it was impossible to determine the exact number of students in Nevşehir. The rest of the participants were selected according to professional groups within the age groups. The unemployed (the official unemployment rate was low in Nevşehir) were not included in the survey.

4. The location

Nevşehir is a historic city in the Central Anatolian region of Turkey with a surface area of 5,467 km². It is one of the major cities of the Cappadocia Region which possesses a beautiful combination of nature and history. Geological movements have formed the region's 'fairy chimneys' and throughout history people have inhabited these natural wonders. The fairy chimneys and carved houses and the churches inside these formations are adorned with frescos carrying the traces of thousands of years of civilisation. During its long history, the city had been inhabited by Hittites, Assyrians, Phrygians, Persians, Macedonians, Romans, Byzantines, Seljuk, and Ottoman Turks before 1923, the date of the foundation of the present-day Republic of Turkey.

There are a lot of monasteries, chapels and churches in the city. For example, the

Nunnery and Monastery, Saint Basil Church, the Chapel of Saint Barbara, Durmus Kadir Church, El Nazar Church, the Hidden Church and the Kiliclar Kusluk Church of Mother Mary. There is church architecture in Goreme open air museum, the Tokali (buckle) Church, Apple Church, the Snake Church of St. Onuphrius, the Dark Church, etc. Almost all of the ruins from previous periods can be seen today. The frescos in the rock structures are still as vivid as they were centuries ago.

Nevsehir is a tourist destination not only for international tourists because of its ancient sites but also for domestic tourists. The city, which was in fact a small village at the beginning of Turkish settlement, has been populated by Turks since the twelfth century. Hacı Bektasi Veli, a very important Islamic figure and a leader of a section of Islam (Bektasi), lived and is buried there. Every year festivals are held in his name and thousands of people visit the city. Besides, there are a lot of mosques and other historical structures from this period in the region such as Taskinpasa Mosque, Nigde Aladdin Mosque, caravanserais and medrasses, plus hundreds of mosques of the present-day.

The main sources of employment in the city are agriculture and stockbreeding, industry, trade and tourism. According to statistics from the year 2000, the unemployment rate in the city is lower than in the whole of Turkey. The reasons will include the city being very close to two other major cities, Kayseri, a very important industrial and commercial centre, and Ankara, the capital city.

Despite being a very old Christian settlement, Nevsehir today is an Islamic city. As is characteristic for midland cities in Turkey, it is a place where people are conservative and bound to traditions. However, this has been changing over the years because of industry and technology, and also because the city is close to Ankara, the capital city and a cosmopolitan metropolis. The city is quite like some other cities in Central Anatolia with respect to traditions and hospitality. As an old Turkish

tradition, old people spend their time at home preparing young children for life and praying at mosques.

Bektasi festivals play an important role when people from other places pour into the city. During the festivals the city becomes the cultural centre for a large number of people. Yet in spite of these festivals and the reputedly hard-working character of the people of Nevsehir, there are not many facilities for cultural activities for locals in the city (www.kapadokyanet.com/20/05/2005). The cultural and artistic facilities intended primarily for locals in Nevsehir are as follows. There is only one cinema in the city centre and there were just 18,000 admissions in 1997 and 1998 combined. There is no theatre or ballet in the city. However, there are 43 libraries, which were visited by 509,022 readers in 2004. There are five museums in the city. As it is a historical city, hundreds of thousands of people visit the museums but unfortunately it is impossible to determine how many of them are from the city and how many are from other places. There are quite a high number of sport facilities in the city in comparison with other cities around, but participation is low. In 2004, for example, there were just 2,335 people with official sport licences, 786 women and 1,549 men (GSGM, 2005).

5. Findings

The demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the sample are shown in Table 3: 62% were male and 38% female; 39.5% were 24 years and under; 28.0% were between 25 and 34; 22.5% were 35-44; 8% 45-54; and 2.0% 55 and above. The largest group by education was the university graduates (35.5%). Others had some undergraduate or secondary education, middle school or primary education. As regards professions, the largest group comprised undergraduate students (32.0%), followed by academics, officials, teachers, tourism staff, public executives, the self-employed and engineers. The marital status of the respondents was as

Table 3. Characteristics of the sample

Gender	Frequency (n)	Ratio (%)
Women	76	38.0
Men	124	62.0
Total	200	100.0
Age		
24 and below	79	39.5
25-34	56	28.0
35-44	45	22.5
45-54	16	8.0
55 and over	4	2.0
Total	200	100.0
Educational Level		
Primary education	10	5.0
Secondary education	39	19.5
Those with vocational diplomas	53	26.5
Graduate	71	35.5
Post Graduate	27	13.5
Total	200	100.0
Occupations		
Academics	32	16.0
Officials	30	15.0
Teachers	21	10.5
Students	64	32.0
Tourism employees	16	8.0
Public executives	9	4.5
Employees	12	6.0
Self-employed people	7	3.5
Trainers	6	3.0
Engineers	3	1.5
Total	200	100.0
Marital Status		
Married	92	46.0
Single	107	53.5
Widow-widower	1	0.5
Total	200	100.0
Income Levels (New Turkish Lira)*		
250 and below	54	27.0
251-500	32	16.0
501-750	67	33.5
751-1000	33	16.5
1000 and over	14	7.0
Total	200	100.0

*1 \$ = 1.4 NTL

follows: 46.0% were married, 53.5% single, and 0.5% widow(er)s. Income levels were as follows: 33.5% were in the 501-750 New Turkish Lira (NTL) band, followed by 250 NTL and below, 751-1000, 251-500, and 1000 and above.

The sample's preferred ways of spending leisure time are listed in Table 4 in descending levels of importance (as scored by the respondents). The most preferred activity was "watching television". The second was "reading". The third was "sports" while the fourth and fifth were "visiting relatives and friends" and "going to movies, theatres and concerts". The least preferred activities were "going to exhibitions and fashion shows", "collecting" and "stage performances".

The kinds of experiences that respondents preferred during their leisure are listed in Table 5. The most preferred were "resting", "relaxing" and "being entertained". The least preferred experiences were "meeting other people" and activities geared to health promotion and self-improvement such as attending educational classes.

Variations in leisure preferences according to demographic and socio-economic factors are shown in Table 6.

Gender

According to the data, 50.0% of the women and 28.2% of the men attached some degree of importance to activities like movies, theatres and concerts. This is not an unexpected finding. In his questionnaire study among 803 university students, Balcı (2003) found 55.2% of the girls and 33.1% of the boys preferred these same leisure activities. There are many additional confirmatory findings to those in this study. Likewise with our finding that 38.1% of the women against 55.6% of the men attached some importance to participating in sport. The men were also more likely than the women to report enjoying spending time in coffee houses and pubs. It is striking to note that women rarely marked coffee houses and pubs as first or

Table 4. Respondents' recreation preferences (a)

Recreation Preferences	Preferred		Not Preferred		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Television	142	71.0	58	29.0	200	100.0
Reading	138	69.0	62	31.0	200	100.0
Sports	98	49.0	102	51.0	200	100.0
Visiting friends and relatives	97	48.5	103	51.5	200	100.0
Cinemas, theatres, concerts	73	36.5	127	63.5	200	100.0
Coffee houses, bars	55	27.5	145	72.5	200	100.0
Improvement courses	28	14.0	172	86.0	200	100.0
Clubs and charity services	27	13.5	173	86.5	200	100.0
Pool, beach, sea	21	10.5	179	89.5	200	100.0
Handicrafts	20	10.0	180	90.0	200	100.0
Others	19	9.5	181	90.5	200	100.0
I have no time	14	7.0	186	93.0	200	100.0
Making things by hand	12	6.0	188	94.0	200	100.0
Celebration parties	11	5.5	189	94.5	200	100.0
Exhibitions, fashion shows	7	3.5	193	96.5	200	100.0
Collecting	5	2.5	195	97.5	200	100.0
Stage performances	3	1.5	197	98.5	200	100.0

second in levels of importance whereas many men gave an important place to spending free time in these places.

Age groups

Here there were marked differences in the importance attached to sport: 62% of the 25-34s and 54% of the under 25s, but only 28.8% of the 35-44 year olds, 31.2% of the 45-54s and 25% of those aged 55 and above declared that they preferred to play sports in

their free time. Why was interest in sport higher among the 25-34s than in the younger age group? This is not what researchers usually find in western countries. In Nevsehir (as throughout Turkey), most people remain students until at least their early-20s and while they are students they are pre-occupied with examinations and studying. Also, they are economically dependent on their families, and not all families can afford to give their children good opportunities to do sports. So

Table 5. Respondents' recreational preferences (b)

Effects	Preferred		Not Preferred		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Resting	135	67.5	65	32.5	200	100.0
Relaxing	132	66.0	68	34.0	200	100.0
Amusement	113	56.5	87	43.5	200	100.0
Pleasure	95	47.5	105	52.5	200	100.0
Education	92	46.0	108	54.0	200	100.0
Human relations	63	31.5	137	68.5	200	100.0
Health gains	52	26.0	148	74.0	200	100.0

Table 6. Recreational preferences and socio-demographic factors

Leisure activities		Gender	Age	Education	Occupation	Marital Status	Income
Going to cinemas, theatres, concerts etc	Pearson Correlation	.236*	.129	-.038	.086	.037	.104
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.022	.138	.376	.236	.377	.191
	N	73	73	73	73	73	73
Playing sports	Pearson Correlation	-.217*	.193*	-.081	-.029	.007	.019
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.016	.028	.213	.118	.223	.128
	N	98	98	98	98	98	98
Joining improvement courses	Pearson Correlation	.264	.091	-.039	-.196	-.366*	.137
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.087	.322	.423	.159	.028	.244
	N	28	28	28	28	28	28
Visiting friends and relatives	Pearson Correlation	-.060	-.131	.172*	-.078	.190*	-.184
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.281	.101	.046	.223	.031	.035
	N	97	97	97	97	97	97
Reading	Pearson Correlation	.001	-.209**	-.203**	.109	.157	-.296**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.263	.007	.008	.102	.033	.000
	N	138	138	138	138	138	138
Watching TV	Pearson Correlation	-.128	-.213**	.158	-.328**	.156	-.103
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.064	.006	.000	.000	.032	.111
	N	142	142	142	142	142	142
Going to coffee houses, pubs etc.	Pearson Correlation	-.438**	-.428**	.464**	-.578**	.212	-.341**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.001	.000	.000	.060	.005
	N	55	55	55	55	55	55
Others	Pearson Correlation	.201	-.248	.238	.113	.113	-.262**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.205	.039	.163	.322	.019	.139
	N	19	19	19	19	19	19

what do young people do with their free time? Like older people in Nevsehir, they spend a great deal of their free time watching television. This was a preferred leisure activity of 100% of those aged 55 and above, 79.7% of those aged 24 and below, 66.6% of the 35-44s, and 62.5% of both the 45-54s and the 25-34s.

Reading newspapers, magazines and articles was another use of leisure time that was favoured by the young: 83.0% of the

under 25s, 68.5% of the 25-34s, and 62.5% of the 45-54 age group declared that they preferred to read in their free time. Most respondents who rated reading as important were either students, teachers or academics. The older the people of the region became, the less time they were devoting to reading, which is another feature which makes Turkey different from the more developed parts of the world. Older age groups read less than younger people in Turkey because the level

of education in the older groups is much lower than in the younger ones.

Another way in which Turkey is different is that it is older people who are most likely to spend free time in coffee houses and pubs. Just 26.5% of those aged 24 and below, 28.6% of the 25-34s and 26.5% of the 34-44s, but 37.6% of the 45-54s and 100% of those aged 55 and over preferred coffee houses and bars as leisure milieus. Pubs are visited mostly by men in Turkey. They are rarely visited by women. They are very much like the bars in western cultures in this respect. Some bars serve meals but most people visit pubs to drink alcohol, not to eat. Coffee houses are rather different. They originally started as places to read, like libraries, and are also used mainly by men. Alcoholic drinks are not served in coffee houses. Tea is the favourite drink at these places. People visit the coffee houses to play games like cards, and also to consume soft drinks. Coffee houses are also visited frequently by the old and the retired who spend time chatting and telling jokes to each other. Coffee houses are culturally different from the physically similar places in western countries. In Turkey they are used mainly by people with lower educational levels and are places to spend considerable time while spending little money. This why the people with lower incomes to go there more often than the rich.

Educational levels

Reading newspapers, magazines and articles was a preferred use of leisure time for 92.6% the university graduates, 71.8% of those with diplomas, 66.0% of those with vocational qualifications, 43.6% of those with full secondary education, but just 40.0% of those with primary education only. So the higher the level of education, the more time was being spent reading. Another major difference by educational levels was that 90% of those who had just primary education attached importance to visiting relatives in their leisure time compared with 43.6% of those

who had secondary or university education, and 47.1% of those with vocational diplomas. So the more highly people were educated, the less likely they were to visit relatives, possibly on account of the time that such visits could take, and those concerned needing and wanting to do other things.

Sixty percent of those with just primary education, 35.8% those with vocational education, 33.3% of those with secondary education, 16.9% of university graduates and 18.5% of those with masters degrees or doctorates preferred going to pubs and coffee houses as leisure activities. So there was a relationship between educational levels and using coffee houses and pubs: those with higher education spent less time in these places than those with lower education.

Occupational groups

All the self-employed, 93.7% of the students, 86.5% of manual workers, and 80% of lower level civil servants said that they preferred to watch television in their leisure time against 57.1% of teachers, 50.0% of tourism staff, 44.4% of government executives, 40.6% of academics and 33.3% of engineers. So it can be said that the more responsibility at work a person has, the less time is likely to be spent watching television.

As many as 71.4% the self-employed, 58.3% of workers, and 50% of students attached importance to spending leisure time in pubs and coffee houses, while none of the engineers, tourism staff or public executives, and only 16.6% teachers and 6.2% of academics preferred this use of leisure. It appears that those who were working under hard and intensive circumstances and those with higher levels of education did not want to go to such places in their leisure time.

Marital status

Self-improvement activities of various kinds were preferred by just 4.4% of those who were married against 22.4% of the sin-

gle. Single people would have had more time for such activities. Another difference by marital status was that 57.9% of the single against 38.0% of the married attached importance to visiting relatives in their leisure time. The most likely reason for this is that the young and single in Turkey need the help of the older and the married in order to achieve their own life goals. Young people in Turkey are dependent on their families and this dependence continues for ever. Families play an important role in arranging both employment and marriages, and young people are economically dependent on their families. Because most of them are students, they have less money but more free time than those who are married and employed, and the young use their free time to maintain good relationships with those on whom their futures depend. This is different to the situation in western countries where the leisure of young people is less family-based than in any other age groups.

Income levels

All the respondents with monthly incomes of over NTL 1000, 96.9% of those with incomes of 751-1000, 95.5% of those with incomes of 501-750, and 95.5% of those with incomes of 251-500, but only 22.2% of those with a monthly incomes below 250 preferred reading as a leisure activity. In Nevsehir the popularity of reading dropped suddenly and dramatically among the very poor. Another strong variation by income was that just 14.2% of those with monthly incomes of over 1000, 12.1% of those with 751-1000, and 14.9% of those with 501-750, but 50% of those with monthly incomes of 251-500 and 40.0 % of those with below 250 preferred to spend their leisure time in coffee houses or bars. Here we have another stark difference vis-à-vis western countries: in Nevsehir the lower the income levels, the more time was being spent in places for the consumption of beverages, sometimes (but not often) food, conversation, and to play informal games.

6. Conclusion

Our evidence suggests that the general passivity of leisure in Nevsehir (as throughout Turkey) was reflecting people's preferences. There were no indications of frustrated ambitions to do other things. Playing sport was the only kind of active leisure with a reasonably high level of participation. The most preferred leisure activities were watching television, reading, playing sport, and visiting friends and relatives. The least preferred leisure activities were going to fashion shows and exhibitions, collecting and performing in plays. The high preference for watching television showed no major differences according to any independent variables which leads us to the conclusion that television is an attractive way of spending leisure time for all social groups in Turkey. Local people were making little if any use of the facilities provided for tourists (except as sources of employment). There appeared to be no spin-offs into the leisure preferences of the local population.

Some of the variations in leisure preferences between socio-demographic groups were rather different than those usually recorded in western countries, and the specificities in Turkey need to be fed into the local planning and marketing of leisure goods and services. For example, although they were less likely than men to have paid jobs, our evidence does not suggest that women in Nevsehir were generally advantaged as regards leisure (see also McMeeking and Purkayasta, 1995). Men were more interested in sports, and in visiting pubs and coffee houses, but women were the more interested in movies, theatres and concerts. Our evidence suggests that age has different implications for leisure in Turkey than in western countries. The under-25s in Turkey are not advantaged as regards access to sport. Indeed, their leisure has been shown to be more TV-dominated and more family-oriented than in most other age groups. If youth is a crucial life stage for leisure socialisation, our evidence suggests that the limited oppor-

tunities for the age group in Turkey could be a reason for the general passivity of leisure.

Gender, age, education, occupation, marital status and income levels all influence leisure preferences, as has been found in all countries where the relevant research has been undertaken. For this reason, the features of target groups should always be established before deciding to market leisure activities, and the specific features of the target groups in specific places must be heeded. Businesses and other organisations that offer leisure goods and services should always consider this carefully when deciding exactly what to offer and to whom. The careful analysis of leisure time habits will help firms to make better plans. But perhaps first of all, young Turkish people need to be taught how important leisure activities are, and introduced to the full range of possibilities. When companies address the leisure of people in Turkey, they must recognise the importance of offering affordable fare. Companies need to be aware of the amounts of money that people can afford to spend on leisure. Locals in Turkey do not have the amounts of money to spend on their own leisure that are enjoyed by international tourists. In designing, developing and advertising leisure goods and services, local socio-economic and demographic factors, and the related variations in tastes and means, should always be considered. In so doing, the firms and public authorities will not only use resources more productively and profitably; they will also maximise the benefits to the local populations and to their wider societies.

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