

# Examination of The Attitudes of Cycling Athletes' Towards Ecorecreation

VEYSEL ALBAYRAK<sup>1</sup>, ATALAY GACAR<sup>2</sup>, EYYUP NACAR<sup>3</sup>, ÖMER FARUK TUTAR<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Physical Education and Sport Sciences, Munzur University, Turkey.

Email: [veyselalbayrak@munzur.edu.tr](mailto:veyselalbayrak@munzur.edu.tr) Tel: +905303468223

<sup>2</sup>Faculty of Physical Education and Sport Sciences, Firat University, Turkey.

Email: [agacar@firat.edu.tr](mailto:agacar@firat.edu.tr) Tel: +905056834045

<sup>3</sup>Faculty of Physical Education and Sport Sciences, Firat University, Turkey.

Email: [enacar@firat.edu.tr](mailto:enacar@firat.edu.tr) Tel: +905324348022

<sup>4</sup>Institute of Health Sciences, Firat University, Turkey.

Email: [tutar10476549@hotmail.com](mailto:tutar10476549@hotmail.com) Tel: +905535818330

## ABSTRACT

**Background:** It is known that people's relations with nature can be greatly influential in all periods of their lives and especially in their future, which has increased their interest in concepts such as "environment", "nature", "natural life", "ecology", "ecosystem" as a result of the increase in natural awareness in humans.

**Aim:** Based on these ideas, our research aims to measure the attitudes of cycling athletes in Elazig province towards ecorecreation..

**Methods:** A total of 178 athletes from 242 cycling athletes, including cycling sports clubs, associations, and individual athletes in Elazig province, participated voluntarily. It consists of 31 substances and 6 sub-dimensions developed by Ayyildiz and the 'Personal Information Form' prepared by the researchers as a data collection tool. Attitude Scale Towards Ecorecreation(ASTE), which was created in a 5-point Likert type format, was used. Spss 22.00 package program was used for the analysis of the data and the level of significance was determined as  $p < 0.05$ . In the study, t-test analysis was applied to determine the significance of the differences between two groups and ANOVA was applied to determine the significance between more than two groups. Pearson correlation analysis was used to determine the direction and severity of the relationship between variables.

**Results:** As a result of the research, there was a semantic difference in the individual and environmental sensitivities of licensed cycling athletes. A significant difference was observed in the Attitudes and Behavior towards Ecorecreation sub-dimensions of the athletes who are interested in another nature sport.

**Conclusion:** The increase in positive behaviors towards nature has clearly become clear that it is directly related to being in nature. Accordingly, researchers believe and draw attention to the fact that in order to increase the positive effect on nature, it is necessary to be intertwined with nature and to adopt it.

**Keywords:** Cycling, Outdoor Sport, Recreation, Ecorecreation

## INTRODUCTION

Leisure time is called time outside of the time spent on the basic needs, work, and requirements of the individual. When it comes to the evaluation of leisure time, we come across the concept of recreation. Leisure activities are defined as leisure or recreational activities<sup>1</sup>. In other words, "Recreation is the activities or experiences that an individual performs to have fun in his/her leisure time or to gain some physical, social and emotional behavior."<sup>2</sup> The classification of recreation by location is divided into two types: outdoor recreation and indoor recreation. Outdoor recreation is shaped by the human-environment relationship. There are different definitions with similar meanings for outdoor recreation. One of the most comprehensive of these definitions is as follows: "Outdoor recreation is organized leisure-time activities where participants participate voluntarily and interaction between participants and elements of nature"<sup>3</sup>.

Cycling is a natural sport that has recently received a lot of attention to escape economic and environmental reasons and the noise of the city, as well as one of the outdoor recreational activities<sup>4</sup>. Cycling is a sport that is not only an outdoor activity, but also has a sportive/professional use, both for transportation purposes and recreational and competitive opportunities. In other words, bicycle; is one of the outdoor sports that allows the

individual to establish a special bond between himself and nature, to liberate the individual, to positively affect the mental and physical health of the individual, and to create many benefits in meeting expectations in the spiritual and social world<sup>5</sup>.

As a phenomenon of today's modern societies<sup>6</sup> the concepts of recreation and environment that enable human development and interaction physically, spiritually, and socially as a whole are like pieces of intertwined chains for a sustainable life. In this direction, the increase in demand for recreational activities has increased the awareness of individuals and increased the pressure on the resources used for recreational purposes. This situation required the raising of environmental or ecological issues<sup>7</sup>. As a result of the increase in people's awareness of nature, it is known that their relationship with nature can be greatly influential in all periods of their lives and especially in their future, increasing their interest in concepts such as "environment", "nature", "natural life", "ecology", "ecosystem". With the increase in interest in the environment and nature, the addition of "eco", which is an acronym for the word "ecological", has started to be widely used in order to clearly define the word ecology<sup>7</sup>. Thus, the construction of leisure activities applied in outdoor or indoor areas on the basis of ecological understanding reveals the concept of ecorecreation<sup>8</sup>. In other words, with the awareness that the

phenomenon of "ecology" or "environment" is at the forefront in the middle of the recreation phenomenon, we can say that the concept of "ecorecreation" becomes a necessity when we strictly associate recreation with ecology<sup>7</sup>. The aim of this study is to examine the ecorecreational attitudes of individuals interested in outdoor recreational activity and cycling, which is a natural sport, according to certain variables.

**MATERIAL & METHODS**

Relational scanning model was used from descriptive research methods in the research. A total of 178 athletes from 242 cycling athletes, including cycling sports clubs, associations, and individual athletes participated voluntarily in Elazig province in 2021.

The personal information form was created by the researchers in order to determine the personal

characteristics of the participants, including age, gender, licensed sports status, sports participation status, interest in different nature sports. Scales; After detailed and necessary explanations about the research were made to the cycling athletes who participated in the study, it was applied online through Google forms as included in the personal information form.

SPSS 22.00 statistical package program was used to evaluate the data obtained from the participants. Parametric tests were used for data showing normal distribution. Accordingly, t-test and one-way variance analysis (ANOVA) were used in independent groups in the analysis of the data. Pearson Correlation test and regression analyses were used to determine the role of commitment to sports in influencing the level of mental training and to examine their relationship.

**RESULTS**

Table 1. Ecorecreational attitude levels distribution values according to age variable of individuals interested in cycling

	Ages	N	X	Ss	F	p
ASTE	20<	55	119,38	16,08	0,67	0,51
	21-25 y/o	91	120,21	17,16		
	25>	32	115,56	29,56		
	Total	178	119,12	19,61		
Individual	20<	55	31,54	5,37	1,57	0,20
	21-25 y/o	91	32,36	5,43		
	25>	32	30,15	8,59		
	Total	178	31,71	6,11		
Social	20<	55	28,14	4,68	1,31	0,27
	21-25 y/o	91	28,16	4,36		
	25>	32	26,53	7,47		
	Total	178	27,86	5,15		
Behavior	20<	55	17,05	4,58	0,07	0,92
	21-25 y/o	91	16,75	4,60		
	25>	32	16,96	5,07		
	Total	178	16,88	4,66		
Antipathy	20<	55	14,98	4,62	0,39	0,67
	21-25 y/o	91	15,59	4,48		
	25>	32	15,75	5,04		
	Total	178	15,43	4,61		
Environmental Sensitivity	20<	55	15,70	2,55	0,78	0,45
	21-25 y/o	91	15,46	2,98		
	25>	32	14,84	4,25		
	Total	178	15,42	3,12		
Communication with Nature	20<	55	11,94	1,92	0,85	0,42
	21-25 y/o	91	11,87	2,09		
	25>	32	11,31	3,38		
	Total	178	11,79	2,32		

According to the age variable of cyclists, no significant difference was found between the ecorecreational attitude levels, general score averages and subscale mean scores (p>0.05).

Table 2: Ecorecreational attitude levels of individuals interested in cycling according to gender variable distribution values

	Gender	N	X	Ss	t	p
ASTE	Male	118	117,79	21,08	-1,26	0,20
	Female	60	121,73	16,20		
Individual	Male	118	31,46	6,48	-,075	0,45
	Female	60	32,20	5,33		
Social	Male	118	27,38	5,49	-1,76	0,07
	Female	60	28,81	4,28		
Behavior	Male	118	16,64	4,78	-0,97	0,33
	Female	60	17,36	4,40		
Antipathy	Male	118	15,38	4,68	-0,17	0,86
	Female	60	15,51	4,53		
Environmental Sensitivity	Male	118	15,29	3,30	-0,77	0,43
	Female	60	15,68	2,74		
Communication with Nature	Male	118	11,61	2,44	-1,44	0,15
	Female	60	12,15	2,04		

According to the gender variable of the cyclists, no significant difference was found between the ecorecreational attitude levels, general score averages and subscale mean scores (p>0.05).

Table 3. Distribution values of ecocreational attitude levels of individuals interested in cycling according to licensed sportsmanship status variable

	Licensed Athlete	N	X	Ss	t	p
ASTE	Yes	133	120,44	19,66	1,54	0,12
	No	45	115,22	19,17		
Individual	Yes	133	32,29	5,94	2,19	0,02*
	No	45	30,00	6,36		
Social	Yes	133	28,22	5,05	1,61	0,10
	No	45	26,80	5,34		
Behavior	Yes	133	16,90	4,91	0,10	0,91
	No	45	16,82	3,86		
Antipathy	Yes	133	15,32	4,81	-0,54	0,58
	No	45	15,75	4,01		
Environmental Sensitivity	Yes	133	15,75	3,10	2,47	0,01*
	No	45	14,44	2,99		
Communication with Nature	Yes	133	11,93	2,37	1,32	0,18
	No	45	11,40	2,17		

There was no significant difference between the averages of the overall score of the ecocreational attitudes of cycling athletes according to the variable of being licensed athletes ( $p>0.05$ ). Ecocreational attitude levels when looking at subscale score averages; it was observed that licensed athletes were higher than those without a license at the individual and environmental sensitivity subscales ( $p<0.05$ ).

Table 4. Distribution values of ecocreational attitude levels according to the "team – individual" variable of the participation of individuals interested in cycling

	Sports participation status	N	X	Ss	t	p
ASTE	Team	91	117,07	20,58	-1,42	0,15
	Individual	87	121,26	18,43		
Individual	Team	91	31,41	6,33	-0,65	0,51
	Individual	87	32,02	5,90		
Social	Team	91	27,56	5,51	-0,80	0,42
	Individual	87	28,18	4,75		
Behavior	Team	91	16,53	4,81	-1,02	0,30
	Individual	87	17,25	4,49		
Antipathy	Team	91	14,75	4,72	-2,00	0,04*
	Individual	87	16,13	4,42		
Environmental Sensitivity	Team	91	15,30	3,17	-0,52	0,60
	Individual	87	15,55	3,09		
Communication with Nature	Team	91	11,49	2,30	-1,78	0,07
	Individual	87	12,11	2,32		

There was no significant difference between the ecocreational attitude levels of cyclists and their overall score averages according to the variable of participation in sports ( $p>0.05$ ). Ecocreational attitude levels when looking at subscale score averages; it was observed that individual athletes were higher in the lower scales of antipathy than team athletes ( $p<0.05$ ).

Table 5. Ecocreational attitude levels distribution values according to the variable of individuals interested in cycling in different nature sports

	Interest in Different Nature Sports	N	X	Ss	T	p
ASTE	Yes	93	122,36	21,22	2,33	0,02*
	No	85	115,57	17,12		
Individual	Yes	93	32,47	6,62	1,74	0,08
	No	85	30,88	5,43		
Social	Yes	93	28,37	5,45	1,38	0,16
	No	85	27,30	4,76		
Behavior	Yes	93	17,79	4,84	2,76	0,00*
	No	85	15,89	4,25		
Antipathy	Yes	93	15,96	4,78	1,62	0,10
	No	85	14,84	4,38		
Environmental Sensitivity	Yes	93	15,72	3,28	1,31	0,19
	No	85	15,10	2,92		
Communication with Nature	Yes	93	12,03	2,42	1,40	0,16
	No	85	11,54	2,21		

According to the variable of cycling athletes' interest in natural sports, there was a significant difference in ecocreational attitude levels between the overall score averages ( $p>0.05$ ). Ecocreational attitude levels when looking at subscale score averages; it was observed that athletes interested in another natural sport were higher in behavioral subscales than athletes who were not interested ( $p<0.05$ ).

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The attitude scale towards ecocrecreation in the study was revealed by Durhan's (2018) study<sup>9</sup>. Since the attitude scale for ecocrecreation is a newly developed scale, it is evaluated in the literature with the scale of

attitudes towards the environment and attitudes towards leisure, similar to this study.

As an example of these scales, Yaşaroğlu and Akdağ's (2013) scale of attitude towards the environment for primary education can be shown<sup>10</sup>. When validity and reliability studies

of the scale are examined, it is concluded that there is sufficient level of internal consistency in all dimensions, the scale is verified as a model according to the validating factor analysis result, and the developed scale is valid and reliable (.84). At the same time, the scale of improving the attitude scale towards environmental problems made by the Guven (2013) and determining the attitudes of teacher candidates can be shown as examples<sup>11</sup>. In the study, it was applied to different teacher candidates throughout the development and it was determined that the attitudes of the teacher candidates vary according to the substances found on the scale, but the attitudes are moderate. In his study in Durhan (2018), he determined significant differences in individual and social sub-dimensions according to statistical results based on gender variability<sup>9</sup>. Erdoğan (2003) contrasted with our study in his study, and a significant difference was found according to the t-test results of the attitude scores of male and female students towards environmental problems<sup>12</sup>. In the study conducted by Kahyaoglu and Özgen (2012)<sup>13</sup>, when the attitude scores of teacher candidates towards environmental problems according to their gender are examined, it supports the work of Erdogan (2003)<sup>12</sup>. Cetinkaya (2015) found that the total scores of environmental attitudes of people participating in natural sports and their averages of ecologically centered approach, enjoyment of nature, environmental action, conservation policies, environmental fragility sub-dimensions were higher than those of individuals who did not participate in natural sports<sup>14</sup>. This result has been shown to support our study. At the same time, when özgel et al. (2018) were examined, the nature camp-assisted sightseeing teaching method and traditional teaching method were divided into two different groups and attitude scores towards the environment in individuals who learned with nature revealed a significant difference compared to the other group<sup>15</sup>. Kanbak's (2015) study supports our study and it has been observed that students' attitudes towards the environment do not differ according to their gender and age<sup>16</sup>. Aydın and Naldı 2013 study examined the attitudes of geography teacher candidates towards sustainable environment and concluded that the attitudes of the participants regarding the sustainable environment were positive and high<sup>17,18,19</sup>. While this study shows parallelism with the general score of ASTE in the variable of interest in nature sports in our research, the attitude scores of individuals participating in sportive recreation activities towards ecorecreation are also in line with our study with the study conducted by Durhan (2018)<sup>9</sup>.

As a result, when we examined the results of our study when the attitudes towards ecorecreation and the scores of their sub-dimensions were examined, no significant difference was found in the age and gender variables. When other variables were examined, significant differences were observed in the sub-dimension of individual and environmental sensitivity in the variable of being a licensed athlete. It can be said that this result is due to the awareness of individuals who are licensed athletes about the need for nature in

sports environments. According to the sports branch variable, only differences in the sub-dimension of antipathy were observed from the sub-dimensions. According to the variable of interest in natural sports, a significant difference was observed in the sub-dimension of the behavior and the overall ASTE score. This observed result can be stated that the state of being intertwined with the environment increases the level of awareness, knowledge and awareness of the environment.

According to some variables, it is appropriate to make some recommendations according to the findings of our research, which measures the attitude of cycling athletes towards ecorecreation.

- In order to implement positive behavior towards the environment, the necessary trainings should be given by the responsible organizations and these trainings should be increased for all age groups,
- In order to increase ecorecreational activities in the city or in the country, many activities should be done and these activities should become a habit,
- These activities should be announced to a wide audience using media outlets,
- It is thought that lessons should be given in order to improve the attitude towards nature and the environment in all education levels, especially starting from the primary education level, and that these lessons should be put into practice.

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