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Metin YILDIZ¹, Ahmet Furkan ÇETİNKAYA²,
Abdurrahman KIRTEPE³

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¹ Munzur University, Faculty of Sports Sciences, Tunceli/Türkiye, metinyildiz@munzur.edu.tr ,
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0926-9965>

² Fırat University, Institute of Health Sciences, Elazığ/Türkiye, afcetinkaya23@gmail.com ,
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4341-023X>

³ Fırat University, Faculty of Sports Sciences, Elazığ/Türkiye, akirtepe@firat.edu.tr ,
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3268-2192>

Examining the Relationship Between Life Skills Supporting Learning and Leadership Behavior Levels in Recreation Department Education**Metin Yıldız¹, Ahmet Furkan Çetinkaya², Abdurrahman Kırtepe³****ARTICLE INFORMATION**

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Volume: 6, No: 2**Pages:** 276-289**ABSTRACT**

The aim of the study was to examine the relationship between recreation department students' learning-supporting life skills and leadership behavior levels. A correlational screening model was used as a research method. The research population consisted of 250 recreation department students studying at the Faculty of Sport Sciences at Fırat University in the 2024-2025 academic year. The study sample consisted of 164 students. A personal information form, a recreational leadership behavior scale, and a learning-supporting life skills scale were used as data collection tools. SPSS 24 analysis program was used to analyze the data. Normal distribution was determined. Percentage, frequency, and arithmetic mean values were calculated. T-test, ANOVA, Pearson correlation, and linear regression analysis were used to determine effect size. All analyses were conducted at a 95% confidence interval. As a result, it was determined that the participants demonstrated positive tendencies in terms of both leadership and life skills. Leadership behaviors and life skills were similar across age groups, while no relationship was observed between these variables and gender. Leadership training was found to have no significant impact on leadership behaviors and life skills, but individuals who regularly read leadership-related documents (books, articles, etc.) adopted a less oppressive and controlling leadership style. Furthermore, it was concluded that as students' life skills improved, their recreational leadership behaviors also strengthened, and therefore, every improvement in life skills contributed to a significant improvement in leadership behavior.

Keywords: Leadership Behavior, Learning, Life Skills, Recreation.

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INTRODUCTION

Recreation is derived from the Latin word ‘recreatio,’ meaning ‘recreation,’ and is defined as the utilisation of free time. As humans are the only beings that inherently feel the need to recreate themselves, the concept of recreation is unique to human life (Erdemli, 2008). In the time remaining after daily obligations, individuals wish to engage in meaningful activities according to their own tastes and preferences. Such activities are generally referred to as recreation. Since recreation takes shape according to individual preferences, it has been defined in various ways by different researchers (Karaküçük, 2014). Recent studies also emphasise that recreation contributes significantly to individual development and well-being (Koçak et al., 2025). As participation recreational activities in leisure time increased, the life satisfaction perception increased, and the perception of automatic thought decreased (Çolak et al., 2023).

Since the dawn of time, humankind has felt the need to organise itself as a social entity in order to meet its basic needs and live in communities (Topaloğlu & Koç, 2017). People who come together for political, religious, military or economic purposes require leaders to maintain order within these groups and achieve their goals (Sayılı & Baytok, 2014). Leadership is a phenomenon as old as human history and remains an important subject of research today. Throughout history, leaders have played different roles in societies, such as prophets, kings, thinkers, commanders, artists, and teachers (Erel, 2008). The words ‘leader’, ‘to lead’ and ‘leadership’ derive from the Anglo-Saxon root ‘lead’, meaning ‘path’ or “direction”. Anglo-Saxon sailors also used this word to mean ‘ship's course’ (Yıldız, 2013). The Turkish Language Association defines the French-derived word ‘leader’ as ‘leader, chief’; and “leadership” as ‘leadership, the leader's duty’ (Ekinci, 2022).

The term ‘leader’ is used to denote an individual who shows the way, provides leadership, can anticipate the needs and expectations of their followers, and is creative. ‘Leadership’ is defined as the art of motivating employees and coordinating them to enable an organisation to achieve its goals (Tunçer, 2012). Leadership is the ability to influence individuals' attitudes, thoughts, and behaviours. A leader is someone who guides employees, motivates them, and directs them towards goals in order to achieve the organisation's objectives (Koçel, 2014). Recent research also highlights that leadership tendencies are associated with personality traits and behavioural patterns (Genç et al., 2024).

Recreational leadership is a concept that developed in the 1920s with the growing interest in recreational activities. It emphasises the importance of leaders who support individuals' mental, physical and spiritual development and help them make productive use of their free time (Arıkan, 2002). This type of leadership aims to provide group members with the pleasure of participation, ensure happiness, and guide and direct them towards activities (Kozak & Yüncü, 2009). Recreational leadership is critical to the success and continuity of activities. Recreational leaders are responsible for ensuring member satisfaction, directing activities, and influencing them (Karaküçük et al., 2017). In recreational leadership, it is important for the leader to manage group dynamics, build commitment, set norms, manage communication and conflict, and provide motivation (Kozak & Yüncü, 2009).

The concept of recreation is in high demand, particularly in countries with high levels of education, alongside healthy living trends (Tütüncü, 2008). This interest has encouraged the establishment of recreation departments in developed countries (Tütüncü, 2008). Recreation departments were first established in the United States in the mid-1920s, and the NRPA developed training programs to cultivate professional leaders (Kızanıklı, 2014). In the 1940s, curricula for this field were created at North American universities, and students were trained in public recreation, therapeutic recreation, and outdoor activities (Godbey et al., 2005). In Turkey, awareness of healthy living, efforts to improve the quality of life for individuals with

disabilities, and the need for a qualified workforce increased interest in recreation, leading to the establishment of departments in this field (Tütüncü, 2008). These departments, which initially began within the SBT and BESYO, later spread to Tourism Faculties (Tütüncü, 2012). Recreation department courses were first offered at Middle East Technical University, Marmara University, and Gazi University (Tütüncü, 2008; Zorba, 2008).

Life skills, which are widely used in education, health and social fields, are defined in different ways in the human sciences. Danish et al. (2004) define life skills as skills that enable individuals to succeed in different contexts such as school, home and the street. Parry and Nomikou (2014), on the other hand, emphasise that life skills are acquired through experience and learning, explaining them as a set of skills used to solve problems encountered in daily life. The World Health Organisation (WHO, 1999) defines life skills as skills that enable individuals to cope with daily life problems, develop their ability to adapt, and help them exhibit positive behaviours. Life skills are learnable and developable and are classified as physical (e.g., standing upright), behavioural (e.g., effective communication), cognitive (e.g., effective decision-making), interpersonal, and intrapersonal skills (Cronin & Allen, 2017). In this context, life skills are grouped in different ways depending on the field or program. For example, Gazda & Brooks (1985) addressed life skills within the scope of personal development in seven categories, classifying them as problem solving, communication, determination, self-confidence, critical thinking, and centralised thinking (Özmete, 2011).

Papacharisis et al. (2005) categorised life skills under the headings of remaining calm under pressure, problem solving, goal setting, communication, coping with success and failure, teamwork, and receiving feedback. In a project funded by the World Bank and conducted by the International Youth Foundation (IYF, 2014), 57 different life skills were examined, and 10 core standards were identified from among them. The core life skills defined by the Foundation are as follows: self-confidence, respect for others and oneself, interpersonal skills (empathy, compassion), emotional management, personal responsibility (trust, honesty, work ethic), positive attitude and motivation, conflict management, teamwork, communication (listening, verbal and written), cooperation, creative thinking, critical thinking, problem solving and decision making. The World Health Organisation (WHO, 1999) and UNICEF (1999) have also classified life skills as follows: decision-making, problem-solving, creative thinking, critical thinking, effective communication, interpersonal skills, self-awareness, empathy, coping with emotions and coping with stress.

The primary objective of this study is to examine the relationship between life skills that support learning and leadership behaviour levels, taking into account individual differences among recreation department students, such as age, gender, prior leadership training, and reading of leadership-related documents (books, articles, etc.). The number of existing studies on this subject is quite limited and has mostly focused on the relationship between leadership and variables such as social skills, communication, or emotional intelligence. However, there are no studies that directly address life skills and leadership behaviours together, especially in the context of recreation department students. In this respect, the study aims to fill this gap in literature, both theoretically by revealing the interaction between leadership development and life skills, and practically by contributing to educational programmes aimed at developing the leadership capacities of university youth.

METHOD

Research Model

In the study, the correlational survey model, one of the quantitative research methods, was used to determine the relationship between the life skills that support learning and the

leadership behaviour levels of recreation department students. The correlational survey model aims to determine the existence or degree of co-variation between two or more variables (Karasar, 2005).

Universe and Sample

The population of the study consisted of 250 recreation department students enrolled at the Faculty of Sports Sciences at Fırat University during the 2024-2025 academic year. The sample of the study was also determined by the convenience sampling method among students studying at the Faculty of Sports Sciences at Fırat University ($n = (N \cdot N - 1) + (tsd, \alpha 2, p, q) / ((\alpha 2 \cdot (N - 1) + (tsd, \alpha 2, p, q)))$) and it was determined that the minimum number of subjects sufficient for maximum power was at least 152 ($d = 0.05$, $\alpha = 0.05$, $p = 0.5$). (Ural and Kılıç, 2006: 48). A total of 164 students participated in the study.

Data Collection Tool

In the study, the Personal Information Form prepared by the researchers, the Recreational Leadership Behaviour Scale, and the Life Skills Supporting Learning Scale were used as data collection tools.

Personal Information Form: The personal information form created by the researchers to determine the participants' sociodemographic information consisted of four questions (age, gender, previous leadership training, and reading of leadership-related documents (books, articles, etc.)).

Recreational Leadership Behaviour Scale: The study utilised the Recreational Leadership Behaviour Scale developed by Durhan et al. (2022). The scale consists of 15 items in total, is a 5-point Likert scale, and comprises two sub-dimensions. The sub-dimensions are differentiated as democratic leadership and autocratic leadership. The lowest possible score on the scale is 15, and the highest possible score is 75. When examining the original form of the scale, confirmatory factor analysis provides evidence of construct validity (RMSEA .072, SRMR .67, NFI .90, CFI .93, NNFI .92, χ^2/df 3.06). Furthermore, considering the original form of the scale, the internal consistency coefficient for the democratic leadership sub-dimension was determined to be .78, while the internal consistency coefficient for the autocratic leadership sub-dimension was .64. The internal consistency coefficient for the entire scale was .60. The internal consistency coefficients obtained from the data set were determined as .80 for democratic leadership, .62 for autocratic leadership, and .59 for the entire scale. While the internal consistency coefficient of the scale was $\alpha = .60$, it was determined as $\alpha = .80$ for the democratic factor and $\alpha = .62$ for the autocratic factor.

Life Skills Supporting Learning Scale: In the study, the 'Learning Supportive Life Skills Scale for Higher Education Students' developed by Köksal and Yakar (2022) was used. Validity and reliability analyses were conducted during the scale development process. The scale, which is a 5-point Likert type and single-factor structure, consists of 23 items. According to exploratory factor analysis, the single-dimensional structure explains 43.94% of the total variance. In confirmatory factor analysis, item-factor loadings ranged from .50 to .67. Upper-lower group comparisons were found to be significant, and the Cronbach's alpha value was .94.

Data Analysis

SPSS 24 analysis software was used to analyse the data collected in the study. The skewness and kurtosis analysis results showed that the data was normally distributed. Percentages, frequencies and overall mean values were determined based on the data obtained. The independent sample t-test was used to analyse variables with two groups in the study. The ANOVA test was used for variables with more than two groups. Pearson correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between the scales, and linear regression analysis was

used to determine the effect between them. The analysis of the study data was performed at a 95% confidence interval.

Research Ethics

Throughout all stages of the research, the ‘Guidelines on Scientific Research and Publication Ethics for Higher Education Institutions’ were followed, and permission was obtained from the Fırat University Social and Humanities Research Ethics Committee on 22 April 2025, numbered 33835

FINDINGS

This section presents the statistical findings regarding the participants' demographic characteristics, recreational leadership behaviors, and life skills supporting learning.

Table 1

Results of the Normality Test for Scales

Scale	Factor	Skewness	Kurtosis
Recreational Leadership Behavior Scale	Scale Total Score	-,158	-,303
	Democratic	-,341	,474
	Autocratic	-,145	-,478
Life Skills Scale Supporting Learning	Scale Total Score	-,160	,401

According to the normality test (skewness and kurtosis) conducted on the recreational leadership behaviour scale and its sub-factors, as well as the life skills scale that supports learning, it was determined that the data fell within the range of +1.5 to -1.5 and exhibited a parametric distribution (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2013). Therefore, since the data exhibit a normal distribution, they are both usable and the analysis results are considered statistically reliable.

Table 2

Demographic Variables

Variable	Group	n	%
Age	18–20 Years Old	42	25,6
	21–25 Years Old	98	59,8
	26–30 Years Old	12	7,3
	31 And above	12	7,3
Gender	Woman	67	40,9
	Man	97	59,1
Previous Leadership Training Experience	Yes	72	43,9
	No	92	56,1
Reading Status of Documents Related to Leadership (books, articles, etc.)	Yes	70	42,7
	No	94	57,3

As shown in Table 2, a total of 164 individuals participated in the study. Looking at the age distribution of the participants, 42 individuals (25.6%) were in the 18-20 age group, 98 individuals (59.8%) were in the 21-25 age group, 12 individuals (7.3%) were in the 26-30 age group, and 12 individuals (7.3%) were in the 31 and above age group. In terms of gender, 67

participants were female (40.9%) and 97 were male (59.1%). Regarding previous leadership training, 72 participants (43.9%) stated that they had received training, while 92 (56.1%) stated that they had not. Regarding reading leadership-related documents (books, articles, etc.), 70 participants (42.7%) stated that they had read such sources, while 94 participants (57.3%) stated that they had not.

Table 3

General Average Scores for Scales and Sub-Factors

Scale	Factor	n	Min.	Max.	\bar{X}	Std.
Recreational Leadership Behavior Scale	Scale Total Score	164	44,00	67,00	56,01	4,97
	Democratic	164	19,00	40,00	33,12	4,29
	Autocratic	164	14,00	33,00	22,89	4,07
Life Skills Scale Supporting Learning	Scale Total Score	164	59,00	115,00	93,18	12,02

According to Table 3, the mean total score (\bar{x} =56.01) on the recreational leadership behaviour scale is found to be at a moderate level. Among the sub-factors of this scale, the average score for democratic leadership behaviour (\bar{x} =33.12) is higher than that for autocratic leadership behaviour (\bar{x} =22.89), indicating that participants exhibit more democratic leadership characteristics. The total score average of the Life Skills Supporting Learning Scale (\bar{x} =93.18) is slightly above average, indicating that individuals possess life skills supporting learning to a large extent. These results reveal that participants show positive tendencies in terms of both leadership and life skills.

Table 4

Results of the ANOVA Test According to Age Variable

Scale	Factor	Age	n	Mean	Sd.	F	p
Recreational Leadership Behavior Scale	Scale Total Score	18–20 Years Old	42	55,38	4,83	1,242	,297
		21–25 Years Old	98	56,17	4,82		
		26–30 Years Old	12	54,83	6,56		
		31 and above	12	58,16	4,70		
		Total	164	56,01	4,97		
	Democratic	18–20 Years Old	42	32,33	4,09	1,810	,148
		21–25 Years Old	98	33,23	4,02		
		26–30 Years Old	12	32,58	5,29		
		31 and above	12	35,50	5,56		
		Total	164	33,12	4,29		
	Autocratic	18–20 Years Old	42	23,04	3,86	,134	,940
		21–25 Years Old	98	22,93	4,04		
		26–30 Years Old	12	22,25	5,29		
		31 and above	12	22,66	4,24		
		Total	164	22,89	4,07		
Life Skills Scale Supporting Learning	Scale Total Score		42	94,21	13,36	1,421	,239
		18–20 Years Old					
		21–25 Years Old	98	92,52	10,66		
		26–30 Years Old	12	89,50	14,82		
		31 And above	12	98,66	14,04		
		Total	164	93,18	12,02		

According to the ANOVA test results presented in Table 4, there is no statistically significant difference between the groups in the total score and sub-factors (Democratic and Authoritarian) of the Recreational Leadership Behaviour Scale and the total score of the Learning Supportive Life Skills Scale, depending on the age variable ($p > .05$). This result indicates that individuals in different age groups have similar values in terms of recreational leadership behaviour and life skills.

Table 5

Results of the t-Test According to Gender Variable

Scale	Factor	Gender	n	Mean	Sd.	t	p
Recreational Leadership Behavior Scale	Scale Total Score	Woman	67	55,56	4,43	-,998	,320
		Man	97	56,32	5,30		
	Democratic	Woman	67	33,00	4,27	-,302	,763
		Man	97	33,20	4,32		
	Autocratic	Woman	67	22,56	3,47	-,858	,392
		Man	97	23,12	4,44		
Life Skills Scale Supporting Learning	Scale Total Score	Woman	67	93,91	11,57	,651	,516
		Man	97	92,68	12,35		

According to the t-test results presented in Table 5, there was no statistically significant difference between female and male participants in the total score of the Recreational Leadership Behaviour Scale and its sub-dimensions (Democratic and Authoritarian) and the total score of the Life Skills Supporting Learning Scale based on the gender variable ($p > .05$). This finding indicates that gender does not have a decisive effect on the levels of leadership behaviour and life skills measured by these scales.

Table 6

Results of the t-Test According to the Variable of Previous Leadership Training

Scale	Factor	Receiving Education	n	Mean	Sd.	t	p
Recreational Leadership Behavior Scale	Scale Total Score	Yes	72	56,68	5,17	1,500	,136
		No	92	55,50	4,77		
	Democratic	Yes	72	33,31	4,18	,523	,602
		No	92	32,96	4,39		
	Autocratic	Yes	72	23,36	4,15	1,288	,200
		No	92	22,53	4,00		
Life Skills Scale Supporting Learning	Scale Total Score	Yes	72	93,72	10,89	,518	,605
		No	92	92,76	12,87		

When examining the t-test results in Table 6, it is observed that there is no statistically significant difference between the groups that received leadership training and those that did not in terms of the total score and sub-factors of the Recreational Leadership Behaviour Scale and the total scores of the Learning Supportive Life Skills Scale ($p > .05$). This result indicates that having received leadership training does not have a significant effect on the levels of leadership behaviour and life skills measured by these scales.

Table 7

Results of the T-Test Based on The Reading Status Variable for Documents Related to Leadership (books, articles, etc.)

Scale	Factor	Leadership-Related Document	n	Mean	Sd.	t	p
Recreational Leadership Behavior Scale	Scale Total Score	Yes	70	55,42	5,23	-1,295	,197
		No	94	56,45	4,74		
	Democratic	Yes	70	33,67	4,39	1,409	,161
		No	94	32,71	4,19		
	Autocratic	Yes	70	21,75	4,46	-3,171	,002
		No	94	23,74	3,56		
Life Skills Scale Supporting Learning	Scale Total Score	Yes	70	93,30	12,72	,106	,916
		No	70	55,42	5,23		

According to the t-test results in Table 7, there is no significant difference between the groups in the total score of the recreational leadership behaviour scale, the democratic sub-factor, and the total score of the life skills supporting learning scale based on the variable of reading leadership-related documents (books, articles, etc.) ($p > .05$). However, a significant difference was found in the autocratic sub-factor ($p < .05$); this indicates that those who read leadership-related documents have significantly lower autocratic leadership behaviour scores than those who do not read such documents. This result suggests that individuals who regularly read leadership-related documents (books, articles, etc.) are less likely to adopt authoritarian, i.e., more controlling and domineering, leadership behaviours. In other words, acquiring leadership-related knowledge may contribute to individuals moving away from authoritarian leadership attitudes and possibly towards more democratic, participatory leadership approaches. However, this reading habit does not create a significant difference in the total recreational leadership behaviour score or in life skills that support learning.

Table 8

Pearson Correlation Results by Scale

Scale	Recreational Leadership Behavior Scale	
Life Skills Scale Supporting Learning	r	,421**
	p	,000
n=164 **=$p < .001$		

According to the results of the Pearson correlation analysis conducted based on the scales, a moderate positive correlation ($r = .421^{**}$ $p < .000$) was observed between the levels of life skills supporting learning and the levels of recreational leadership behaviour among the students participating in the study. This finding indicates that as students' life skills improve, their recreational leadership behaviour also increases, revealing that learning-supportive life skills play an important role in strengthening leadership behaviour.

Table 9*Results of Linear Regression Analysis by Scale*

Dependent Variable: Recreational Leadership Behavior Scale					
	B	Std. Error	β	t	p
Life Skills Scale Supporting Learning	39,787	2,769		14,369	,000
	,174	,029	,421	5,910	,000
	R= ,421	R²=,177			
	F=34,927	p<,01			

According to the results of the linear regression analysis conducted based on the scales, it was observed that the levels of life skills supporting learning among the students participating in the study had a statistically significant effect on their levels of recreational leadership behaviour ($R=.421$, $R^2=.177$). This indicates that each increase in life skills leads to a marked improvement in leadership behaviour and that these skills account for approximately 18% of the development of students' leadership competencies. Therefore, developing life skills that support learning plays a critical role in enhancing students' leadership capacities.

DISCUSSION

The aim of our study is to determine the relationship between recreation department students' life skills that support learning and their levels of leadership behaviour. When examining the overall mean scores for the scales and their sub-factors (Table 3), it is seen that the mean total score for the recreational leadership behaviour scale ($\bar{x}=56.01$) is at a moderate level. It is understood that the average of the sub-factor of democratic leadership behaviour ($\bar{x}=33.12$) is higher than that of autocratic leadership behaviour ($\bar{x}=22.89$), and that the participants exhibit more democratic leadership characteristics. The total mean score of the Life Skills Supporting Learning Scale ($\bar{x}=93.18$) is slightly above average, indicating that individuals possess a high degree of life skills supporting learning. These results reveal that participants demonstrated positive tendencies in terms of both leadership and life skills. According to the study conducted by Mutlu et al. (2020), students' leadership behaviour levels were found to be high when considering the scores obtained from the scale. In other words, it reveals that the participants showed positive trends in terms of leadership behaviour. The findings of the examined study support our work. Avcı and Kemer (2018) emphasised in their study that the participants' life skills levels were low. It cannot be said that the findings of the studies examined yielded the same results as our study.

In our study, when the ANOVA test results according to the age variable (Table 4) are examined, there is no statistically significant difference between the groups in the total score of the recreational leadership behaviour scale and its sub-factors (Democratic and Authoritarian) and the total score of the life skills supporting learning scale ($p > .05$). This result indicates that individuals in different age groups have similar values in terms of recreational leadership behaviours and life skills. In their study, Cakmak et al. (2022) found no significant difference between the age variable and life skills. İrhan (2023) found no significant difference between students' recreational leadership behaviours and age ($p>0.05$). The findings of the studied research support our study.

In our study, when the t-test results according to the gender variable (Table 5) were examined, no statistically significant difference was found between female and male

participants in the total score of the recreational leadership behaviour scale and its sub-dimensions (Democratic and Authoritarian) and the total score of the life skills supporting learning scale ($p > .05$). This finding indicates that gender does not have a decisive effect on the levels of leadership behaviour and life skills measured by these scales. In their study, Cakmak et al. (2022) found that male students had higher life skills, stress coping, and empathy-self-awareness than female students, showing a significant gender-related difference. The findings of the studies reviewed cannot be said to be consistent with our study. In his study, İrhan (2023) found no significant difference between students' recreational leadership behaviours and gender ($p > 0.05$). The findings of the study reviewed support our study.

In our study, when examining the t-test results (Table 6) according to the variable of having previously received leadership training, no statistically significant difference was found between the groups that received training and those that did not in terms of the total score and sub-factors of the recreational leadership behaviour scale and the total scores of the life skills that support learning scale ($p > .05$). This result indicates that having received leadership training does not have a significant effect on the levels of leadership behaviour and life skills measured by these scales. In their study, Ordu et al. (2024) found that students with leadership experience may have more developed recreational leadership skills. Taşkıran (2018) found that students who received recreation and leadership training had higher levels of authority-oriented leadership than those who did not receive such training. The findings of the studies reviewed cannot be said to be consistent with our study.

In our study, when the t-test results (Table 7) were examined according to the variable of reading leadership-related documents (books, articles, etc.), no significant difference was found between the groups in the total score of the recreational leadership behaviour scale, the democratic sub-factor, and the total score of the life skills supporting learning scale ($p > .05$). However, a significant difference was found in the autocratic sub-factor ($p < .05$); this indicates that those who read leadership-related documents have significantly lower autocratic leadership behaviour scores than those who do not read such documents. This result suggests that individuals who regularly read leadership-related documents (books, articles, etc.) are less likely to adopt authoritarian, i.e., more controlling and domineering, leadership behaviours. In other words, acquiring leadership-related knowledge may contribute to individuals moving away from authoritarian leadership attitudes and possibly towards more democratic, participatory leadership approaches. However, this reading habit does not create a significant difference in the total recreational leadership behaviour score or in life skills that support learning.

In our study, when examining the results of the Pearson correlation analysis conducted according to scales (Table 8), it was observed that there was a moderately positive relationship ($r = .421^{**}$ $p < .000$) between the levels of life skills supporting learning and the levels of recreational leadership behaviour among the students participating in the study. This finding indicates that as students' life skills improve, their recreational leadership behaviour also increases, revealing that learning-supportive life skills play an important role in strengthening leadership behaviour.

In our study, when examining the results of the linear regression analysis regarding the scales (Table 9), it was observed that the levels of life skills supporting learning among the students participating in the study had a statistically significant effect on their levels of recreational leadership behaviour ($R = .421$, $R^2 = .177$). This indicates that each increase in life skills leads to a marked improvement in leadership behaviour and that these skills account for approximately 18% of the development of students' leadership competencies. Furthermore, these results are supported by recent research. Specifically, when leisure satisfaction is high, the positive effect of peer relationships on happiness is amplified (Yalçın et al., 2025). Ceran

(2023) demonstrated through a meta-analysis that emotional and personal competencies considered core components of life skills—have a significant and positive relationship with transformational leadership behaviours. This contemporary evidence reinforces that improvements in life skills meaningfully contribute to stronger, more adaptive, and more effective leadership performance. Therefore, developing life skills that support learning plays a critical role in enhancing students' leadership capacities.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study examined the relationship between learning-supportive life skills and recreational leadership behaviors among recreation department students, and it was found that students generally demonstrated positive tendencies in both areas. Age and gender variables were not found to have a significant effect on leadership behaviors or life skills, and receiving leadership training did not create a notable difference. On the other hand, participants who regularly read leadership-related documents exhibited less authoritarian and autocratic leadership behaviors. Furthermore, it appears that increases in life skills may positively influence recreational leadership behaviors and that these skills may contribute to leadership development. Therefore, it can be suggested that enhancing learning-supportive life skills may play an important role in improving students' leadership competencies.

Recommendation

Practical activities can be carried out to encourage students to adopt a more democratic and participatory leadership style, moving away from authoritarian leadership. Making books, articles and other academic documents more accessible to students may contribute to a reduction in authoritarian tendencies. In addition to theoretical lessons, students' leadership skills can be reinforced through fieldwork, workshops and team activities. Opportunities for sharing experiences in leadership development processes can be provided for different age and gender groups. Monitoring and feedback systems can be established to evaluate the long-term gains of individuals who have undergone leadership training. Training programmes can be designed holistically to integrate life skills with leadership behaviours in a mutually supportive manner. Students can be encouraged to regularly attend seminars and conferences related to leadership. Counselling and mentoring programmes may be implemented to support the development of life skills (mentoring involves an experienced guide providing guidance and support to a student in their personal, academic and leadership development).

Limitations

The population of the study consisted of 250 students studying in the Recreation Department of Fırat University's Faculty of Sports Sciences in the 2024-2025 academic year. The sample of the study consisted of 164 students who participated in the study, and the research is limited to this population and sample.

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