

Sıla Karacaoğlu*

Searching for Life Satisfaction in Nature through Tourism: An Exploratory Research on Hikers

<https://doi.org/10.2478/ejthr-2024-0010>

received December 22, 2023; accepted February 26, 2024

Abstract: Hiking is a walking activity carried out in pre-determined natural environments. It is practised by many people because it does not require much equipment and expertise, and it also offers its participants a much more economical leisure time activity than other sports branches, besides providing positive impacts on health and well-being. In this respect, the study investigated whether there is a relationship between hikers' perceptions of nature, the benefits they get from hiking, and whether there is a relationship between hiking and life satisfaction. A qualitative approach was adopted, and a semi-structured interview form was prepared by utilising the relevant literature. In this context, interviews were conducted on 24.04.2023-11.06.2023 with 21 hikers over the age of 18 who were hiking in nature groups in Eskişehir with purposive and snowball sampling methods. The answers obtained were subjected to descriptive analysis. The results revealed that almost all the participants started hiking with intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivations. The findings also show that hiking has an important place in the lives of individuals, that it positively affects the lives of the participants, and that its non-economic benefits make significant contributions to increasing the life satisfaction of the participants.

Keywords: Hiking Tourism, Nature, Life Satisfaction, Descriptive Analysis

1 Introduction

Hiking is a suitable activity to integrate into wellness tourism since it has long been recognised as a strategically developed leisure and tourist activity in several Euro-

pean nations (Rodrigues et al., 2010). The past few years have witnessed a gradual rise in the prevalence of hiking among various demographic groups (Calbimonte et al., 2021). Hiking in tourism can be defined as an outdoor activity associated with vacations or holidays, involving walks in natural and cultural landscapes, typically taking place in rural areas (Nordbø et al., 2014). In this context, hiking can be categorised into two distinct types: hard hiking and soft hiking. Hikers can initially embark on a hiking excursion that progresses from easy to challenging terrain. In a broad sense, engaging in challenging hiking activities necessitates a considerable level of communal attributes, such as physical prowess, appropriate gear, and a fundamental understanding of hiking principles. In the context of recreational hiking, soft hiking can be regarded as a more straightforward and accessible activity, often accompanied by relatively modest expenses (Oktaviani & Saudi, 2020).

The majority of prior studies have concentrated on investigating the environmental consequences associated with hikers and the implementation of visitor use management strategies along trails (Wilcer et al., 2019). Despite the widespread recognition of hiking's positive impact on psychological well-being and its increasing popularity as a tourist activity worldwide, there exists a lack of research examining the relationship between hiking-tourist behaviours and their subjective well-being (Kim et al., 2015; Nordin & Jamal, 2021; Molokáč et al., 2022; Beall et al., 2022; Hinlayagan & Olivar, 2023). Currently, there appears to be a lack of attention given to additional advantages, such as social benefits. This is despite the recognition of economic benefits associated with hiking in certain studies, which have classified it as a form of environmental conservation and ecological tourism (Zhang, 2020). Additionally, several studies in the academic literature have demonstrated that engaging in active leisure activities can have a positive impact on social relationships (Cole & Thomsen, 2020; Geiger et al., 2023), self-confidence (Karacaoğlu, 2021; McAnirlin & Maddox, 2022), and overall health (Ibhafidon et al., 2021; Zwart & Evert, 2022). These factors have been consistently

*Corresponding author: Sıla Karacaoğlu, Bilecik Şeyh Edebali University, Türkiye, Email: sila.karacaoğlu@bilecik.edu.tr

linked to increased levels of well-being and life satisfaction (Li et al., 2017; Cho et al., 2018; Próchniak, 2022). This perspective entails conducting exploratory research to examine the perceptions of individuals engaged in hiking as a touristic activity and to determine if there exists a correlation between their life satisfaction and participation in hiking. This study specifically addressed the impact of visitors' perceptions of value and benefits on their quality of life in the context of hiking tourism, with a particular focus on their involvement and interactions with nature. Within this context, individuals who engage in hiking activities in rural tourism destinations by paying travel fees to nature walking groups have been selected as the sample in this study. The research involves conducting in-depth interviews with hikers who are members of nature clubs operating in Eskişehir, Türkiye. The interviews have been conducted using semi-structured interview forms that have been developed based on relevant literature. This study possesses several theoretical and practical ramifications. The study seeks to make a scholarly contribution to the existing body of literature on nature-based tourism and hiking, a sector experiencing growing demand and intensifying market competition. Based on the research findings, the obtained results are anticipated to offer valuable managerial insights and implications for nature groups, travel agencies, and tour guides involved in the organisation of hiking tours.

2 Conceptual Framework

2.1 Hiking Tourism

Hiking tourism is commonly regarded as a form of tourism that caters to specific interests (Kim et al., 2015). In addition, it is a tourist activity that is often regarded as a multifaceted concept, encompassing elements of ecotourism, nature-based tourism, cultural tourism, and adventure tourism. Hiking and backpacking are the second-most prevalent activities on vacations that focus on outdoor pursuits. Furthermore, nearly half of individuals from Western countries engaged in hiking activities at some point throughout the year (Frantz, 2007). Hiking tourism, being a fundamental component of the tourism industry, encompasses various appealing conditions that serve as tourism products. These conditions involve sensory gratification, aesthetic appeal, educational opportunities, health benefits, wellness, adventurous experiences, opportunities for relaxation, and spirituality (Li et al.,

2018; Oh et al., 2019). Moreover, hiking tourism facilitates a closer connection between tourists and the natural environment, allowing them to gain a deeper understanding of the region they traverse. This is achieved through the exploration of diverse heritage and ethnographic elements that are situated along or in close proximity to the hiking paths or trails (Svarstad, 2010; Kim et al., 2015; Gómez-Martín, 2019; Obradović & Tešin, 2022, Rodrigues et al., 2010; Smith & Puczko, 2014; Lee et al., 2017). Hiking, as defined in this article, refers to a recreational outdoor activity that involves walking for varying durations (ranging from less than an hour to several days) in natural and cultural environments, especially in rural regions. The purpose of the stroll may encompass enjoyment, physical activity, or reflection (Nordbø et al., 2014).

2.2 Benefits of Hiking Tourism

Hiking has gained significant popularity as a nature-based recreational activity worldwide, owing to its numerous effects and benefits (economic, environmental, social, and health implications), and it possesses a considerable capacity to allure visitors to rural and nature-centric locales (Nordbø & Prebensen, 2015; Raya et al., 2018; Mitten et al., 2018). It is considered one of the most efficacious forms of sustainable tourism, thus presenting a multitude of opportunities for advancement. The environmental impact of this activity is relatively low in comparison to other disruptive activities. In terms of supply, the establishment of sustainable tourism offerings can be feasibly implemented in various locations with a comparatively modest investment. When implemented and administered effectively, it has the potential to provide social and economic advantages to both residents and communities within the immediate vicinity. Moreover, it facilitates enhanced engagement between tourists and local communities, natural surroundings, and cultural heritage (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2019).

Moreover, physical activity is an essential component in improving an individual's long-term health (Saelens et al., 2003). Zheng et al. (2010) proposed that there are potential immediate advantages of physical activity associated with a decreased likelihood of developing coronary heart disease. It has been observed that individuals who partake in regular physical activity may encounter a reduction in blood pressure, an augmentation of immune system functionality, and a reinstatement of attention (Mitten et al., 2018; van Leeuwen et al., 2020). In addition, there exists a correlation between consistent engagement

in physical activity and various positive outcomes, including but not limited to the reduction of body weight, enhancement of overall well-being, elevation of mood, improvement of mental health, alleviation of anxiety, and reduction of stress and depression levels (Boulware, 2003; Panik et al., 2019; Smith & Thomas, 2021; Obradović & Tešin, 2022). The cumulative impact of these factors possesses the capacity to prolong the occurrence of death (Johnsen et al., 2013). In this regard, in contemporary times, a considerable number of healthcare professionals strive to identify strategies that are intended to aid clients in attaining the recommended levels of physical activity, such as hiking. According to Mitten et al., (2018), the act of being exposed to natural elements, participating in physical activities, restoring mental and emotional well-being, and engaging in social interactions while in natural environments has been associated with a range of health advantages. As stated by Zheng et al. (2010), the adoption of this strategy holds promise in reducing healthcare costs for individuals as well as the public sector.

A number of research studies focused on rural tourism frequently highlight various psychological benefits that extend beyond the conventional associations with hiking. These benefits include enhancements in quality of life, the experience of tranquillity, and a feeling of closeness to nature (Nordbø & Prebensen, 2015). Participation in hiking activities can result in a range of favourable consequences, including the promotion of relaxation, the provision of a sense of challenge, the facilitation of cultural attribute identification, the enhancement of interpersonal relationships, and the production of other advantageous effects (Zhang, 2020). Hiking can be interpreted by individuals from different perspectives, including its function as a physical activity, a social event, a chance for profound interaction with the natural environment, or a blend of these aspects (Fondren & Brinkman, 2022).

2.3 Hiking Tourism and Its Relation to Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction typically pertains to the evaluation of individuals' lives in relation to their emotional connections, happiness, and subjective state of well-being (Edginton et al., 2002). Moreover, it can be stated that the concept of life satisfaction is commonly understood to be a cognitive component of subjective well-being, as discussed by Zhang and Leung (2002). Well-being pertains to an individual's subjective evaluation of their current life circumstances and has a direct impact on their overall

satisfaction with life (Seligman, 2002). In Seligman's own analysis of his book on "Authentic Happiness" (2002), he posits that well-being encompasses the components of pleasure, engagement, and meaning. Moreover, the notion of life satisfaction may encapsulate these various aspects. Freund and Baltes (1998) posit that life satisfaction can emerge as a significant component in the process of successful ageing.

Participation in leisure activities has been found to have a beneficial impact on individuals' psychological well-being and overall life satisfaction (Murphy, 2003). Physical activity plays a significant role in effectively managing emotions such as tension, anxiety, and anger. Moreover, engaging in exercise has been found to enhance overall mental well-being and promote improvements in various aspects of physical, mental, and cognitive functioning throughout an individual's entire lifespan. Additionally, exercise has been associated with the enhancement of self-esteem. Engaging in physical activity has been found to enhance the correlation between life satisfaction and mental well-being (Zayed et al., 2018).

Improving overall well-being is a key driver for individuals to engage in tourist activities. Hiking tourism has experienced a surge in popularity in recent years, mostly because of its positive impact on the physical and emotional well-being of visitors (Lee et al., 2017). Hiking and other nature-based recreational activities have the potential to satisfy various human needs, including personal enjoyment, cognitive and spiritual growth, challenge, and social interaction (Wilcer et al., 2019). The objective of engaging in a walk may encompass various purposes, such as seeking enjoyment, engaging in physical activity, engaging in deep thought, or pursuing comparable experiences. Studies conducted on rural tourism commonly emphasise a range of psychological advantages that extend beyond the typical benefits associated with hiking. These include improvements in quality of life, a sense of tranquillity, and a heightened connection with nature (Nordbø & Prebensen, 2015). Individuals residing in contemporary society often experience a sense of deprivation of natural environments due to the prevalence of urbanisation and the demands of hectic schedules. Engaging in hiking activities has been identified as a means of deriving pleasure and satisfaction within contemporary society, as highlighted by Kim et al. (2015). There is a growing interest among individuals in engaging in hiking as a means to enhance their overall well-being, explore unfamiliar locations, or supplement their regular physical activities. Consequently, they seek diverse and high-quality outdoor sports experiences,

which involve acquiring and applying new knowledge (Acevedo-Duque et al., 2022).

3 Methodology

3.1 Research and Data Collection Tool Design

This study aims to investigate how hiking, one of the popular leisure activities, is perceived by individuals and whether there is a relationship between individuals' life satisfaction and hiking. In line with this purpose, the semi-structured interview technique, one of the qualitative methods, was used for data collection in the study. Semi-structured interviews are an important data collection tool for qualitative research (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). This approach facilitates obtaining an objective and holistic view of the phenomenon of interest (Tsaur & Lin, 2014). Accordingly, a comprehensive literature review was conducted and open-ended interview questions were prepared (Roberson Jr & Babic, 2008; Nordbø & Prebensen, 2015; Pfeiffer et al., 2020; Mau et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2023). In addition to socio-demographic and socio-economic information of the participants, the interviews sought answers to the following research questions:

1. What does nature mean to you? How would you describe the experience of walking in nature?
2. For what purpose(s) did you start hiking tourism?
3. What benefits does hiking tourism bring to your personal and social life?
4. Do you think there is a relationship between hiking tourism and life satisfaction? What makes you happy on nature walks?

3.2 Sample, Data Collection Tool and Data Analysis

In qualitative data collection studies, it is generally recommended that the sample size should be at least 15 (Mason, 2010). Accordingly, between 24.04.2023 and 11.06.2023, data were collected face-to-face and online from 21 hikers who agreed to participate in the study through purposive and snowball sampling methods. The purposive sampling technique, which is a nonrandom technique, involves intentionally selecting participants based on specific qualities they possess. In essence, the researcher assumes the

responsibility of determining the necessary knowledge and actively seeks individuals who possess the requisite information and are inclined to share it, based on their expertise or experience (Etikan et al., 2016). Therefore, the sampling method starts with selecting a subject who meets the criteria for the study. After collecting data from the first person contacted, another person is contacted with the help of that person, and then another person is contacted in the same way, and the sample is enlarged in a snowball effect. The first contact was made with an instructor who is a substitute member of the Supervisory Board of the Turkish Mountaineering Federation and also provides training to hiking groups in Eskişehir. After contacting him, he was asked to forward the interview form to people over the age of 18 who are hiking in nature groups in Eskişehir. Face-to-face interviews were conducted and audio-recorded with permission.

The data obtained in qualitative research are interpreted through descriptive and content analysis (Karataş, 2017, p.78). Descriptive analysis is a type of analysis that involves summarising and interpreting the data obtained through different data collection techniques according to predetermined themes (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). In this study, descriptive analysis was adopted from qualitative methods, and the categories were created based on various concepts and definitions in the literature. These categories were divided into three headings in the findings section as (1) Participants' Perceptions of Nature and Hiking Tourism and Their Purpose(s) for Starting Hiking Activities, (2) Benefits of Hiking Tourism for Participants' Personal and Social Lives and (3) Participants' Views on the Relationship between Hiking Tourism and Life Satisfaction. Then, with the semi-structured interview technique, the answers to the questions directed to 21 participants were transcribed objectively and unchanged and transferred to a Word file. The data obtained under the relevant headings were transferred and interpreted, and direct quotations were also included. In this context, the participants were given codes as R1, R2, R3,.....,R21, and the information and data about the participants were presented in this way in the study.

4 Findings

4.1 Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic and socio-economic information of the 21 participants who agreed to parti-

cipate in the study. According to gender distribution, 13 of the participants were male, 8 were female, and the majority were single (n=13). In addition, the age distribution of more than half of the study group (n=13) was predominantly 40 years and above. In terms of educational attainment, the participants were high school (n=4), university (n=9), and master's/doctorate (n=8) graduates and belonged to various occupational groups. In general, the monthly income level was found to be medium (n=12) and above (n=7).

Participants were also asked about the average number of years they have been hiking and the frequency of their hiking. Accordingly, it was understood that the majority of the participants (n=13) had been hiking for ten years or more. It is also seen that they actively participate in hiking. 9 of the participants stated that they hiked at least one or more times a week. The remaining 12 participants stated that they practised hiking at least once a month or more (Table 1).

4.2 Findings Regarding Participants' Perceptions of Nature and Hiking Tourism and Their Purpose(s) for Starting Hiking Activities

In order to reveal the study group's perception of hiking, the participants were first asked what nature meant to them and how they defined the hiking experience. A par-

ticipant who has been hiking for 45 years described nature and the hiking experience as follows:

"Nature is the essence of life. Nature is the source of life not only for us humans but also for plants and animals. If nature disappears, we all disappear. We are guests in nature, and we have a lot to learn from it. Every event I encounter and experience when I go for a walk gives me different experiences" (R1).

Walking in nature is important in terms of gaining new insights, the desire to relax from everyday life, and developing and improving skills and new knowledge (Bichler & Peters, 2021). Based on this, the thoughts of one participant are given below.

"Nature is the essence of existence on earth. The more time I can spend in nature as part of the system, the more peaceful and experienced I feel. Nature teaches me to be respectful and humble. In this way, the value I give to myself and my environment increases" (R13).

The purpose of participating in a walk can encompass a range of objectives, including seeking pleasure, engaging in physical exercise, engaging in introspection, and similar experiences. Previous studies in the literature show that the hiking experience is closely related to specific motivational needs (Wilcer et al., 2019; Yuniawati et al., 2019; Bichler & Peters, 2021; Obradović & Tešin, 2022; Li et al., 2020; Basil, 2022). Therefore, the participants were asked for what purpose(s) they started hiking

Table 1: Characteristics of Respondents (n = 21)

	Gender	Age	Marital Status	Level of Education	Occupation	Level of Income	Hiking Time (Year)	Hiking Frequency (Day)
R1	Male	64	Married	High School	Retired	Medium	45	3 per week
R2	Male	53	Married	B.A	Doctor	High	25	1 per week
R3	Male	61	Single	High School	Retired	Medium	10	2 per month
R4	Male	57	Married	Ph.D	Academician	Medium	30	2 per month
R5	Female	51	Single	Ph.D	Academician	Medium	20	1-2 per month
R6	Female	44	Single	M.A	Engineer	High	5	1 per week
R7	Male	49	Married	B.A	Teacher	Medium	18	2 per month
R8	Male	50	Married	B.A	Trainer	Medium	10	1 per week
R9	Female	45	Single	M.A	Lawyer	High	15	2 per month
R10	Male	54	Married	M.A	Retired Soldier	Medium	14	3 per week
R11	Male	42	Single	High School	Self-Employment	High	5	2 per week
R12	Male	39	Single	B.A	Technician	Medium	10	1 per week
R13	Female	38	Married	M.A	Psychologist	High	5	2 per month
R14	Male	43	Single	B.A	Bank Employee	Medium	10	2 per month
R15	Male	34	Single	Ph. D	Doctor	High	3	2 per month
R16	Female	31	Single	B.A	Insurer	Low	6	1-2 per month
R17	Female	42	Married	High School	House-wife	Medium	10	2 per month
R18	Female	26	Single	M.A	Student	Low	7	1 per week
R19	Male	30	Single	B.A	Engineer	Medium	5	1 per month
R20	Male	27	Single	B.A	Grapher	High	3	1-2 per week
R21	Female	32	Single	B.A	Architect	Medium	10	2 per month

activities. The responses indicate that the participants generally participate in hiking activities to stay healthy, get away from city life and crowds, relax, integrate with nature, learn new things, achieve and experience a sense of competence and self-esteem, socialise, and have a pleasant time. Research suggests that hiking contributes to improved health outcomes (Raya et al., 2018; Calbimonte et al., 2020). A participant, who is a retired soldier, stated that he has been training for years due to his job, thus staying vigorous, and that he regularly walks both individually and by participating in hiking groups to maintain his physical and mental health after retirement.

“Sport is a way of life for me. I started because I know that walking is the basis of all kinds of sports branches and its positive effects on human health. Apart from walking, I am also interested in nature sports such as climbing, swimming, and diving” (R10).

In their daily lives, people are integrated into highly organised, controlled, stressful, and unsatisfying working and living conditions. Excessive noise and stimuli in the environment, urban pollution, crowds, traffic and congested environments make daily life unhealthy (Kastenholz & Rodrigues, 2007). From this point of view, another participant explains the purpose of starting the walk as follows.

“My job requires me to be indoors, working overtime and on shifts. I also have a lot of responsibility. Therefore, I started walking to get away from my busy work pace, to utilise my free time and to spend quality time away from the crowds and stress of the city” (R15)

Engaging in this activity within an organic environment provides individuals with the opportunity to gain knowledge and cultivate a profound appreciation for rural areas and the countryside while simultaneously deriving enjoyment from the natural world (Raya et al., 2018; Cho et al., 2018). Finally, a participant who stated that he was an educator stated the aims of starting the walk and the process he had developed over time as follows.

“A sense of learning and curiosity. I first started hiking to explore and better understand nature. Afterwards, getting to know new people and spending a pleasant time in nature also motivated me. Apart from the hiking groups in Eskişehir, I participate in hiking activities with hiking groups in other cities, mostly in Türkiye and sometimes abroad” (R 5)

4.3 Findings on the Benefits of Hiking Tourism for Participants’ Personal and Social Lives

When the participant responses to the question “What benefits does hiking tourism bring to your personal and

social life?” are analysed, it is seen that hiking has an important place in their lives, and they are aware of the benefits it provides. Engaging in nature-based hiking trails is a cost-effective form of recreational pursuit that presents prospects for pleasure, social interaction, and consistent physical exertion (Baklien et al., 2016). The accessibility of this activity can be attributed to its minimal need for extensive physical, technical, or specialised training or equipment, making it affordable for a diverse range of individuals. In this context, the benefits of hiking provided by a participant who stated that he was still a student and not working are given below.

“The economic cost of hiking is cheaper than other sports. It also requires less knowledge and equipment. For these reasons, I prefer hiking. So, I can protect my health and socialise in nature, and it does not force me economically” (R18)

Previous studies have quantified the non-economic advantages linked to hiking (Raya et al., 2018; Nordin & Jamal, 2021). From this point of view, the views of a participant who stated that he has been hiking for almost 30 years are as follows.

“Starting the day with a walk makes me feel refreshed, energised, and rejuvenated. I also feel that regular hiking in nature is not only good for my physiological health but also for my mental and psychological health” (R4)

“When I walk, I feel relieved of my troubles, even if for a short time” (R14)

Participation in physical activity has been associated with improvements in psychological well-being, with outdoor exercises showing particularly notable positive outcomes. A participant who drew attention to this issue shared his thoughts as follows.

“Walking is actually a reward in itself for me both physically and spiritually” (R8)

“Hiking offers excellent mental health benefits, such as better mood and a reduction in stress and anxiety. Not only does it offer the opportunity to think and clear the mind, but it also helps to release hormones such as endorphins and serotonin, which also help to improve mood and self-esteem, which in turn increases our happiness towards life” (R13)

The inclusion of companions during walking or hiking activities adds a significant social aspect to individuals’ leisure time (Moore & Ross, 1998; Roberson Jr & Babic, 2008). Engaging in hiking activities along nature-based trails allows hikers to experience personal gratification and engage in social interactions with fellow hikers (Oktaviani & Saudi, 2020). According to Goldenberg et al.

(2008), the primary motivation for hikers is derived from the pursuit of pleasure and the desire to cultivate meaningful interpersonal connections. The views of a participant who emphasised this benefit are as follows.

“Hiking allows me to be together with people with a common nature consciousness and passion and to have fun by having experiences” (R12)

“Thanks to hiking, I can both spend time with individuals who enjoy nature and meet people from different cultures. So, I am expanding my social circle day by day. Hiking activities help me make good friendships” (R17)

4.4 Findings Related to Participants’ Views on the Relationship Between Hiking Tourism and Life Satisfaction

For hikers, hiking is often not only about regular physical activity (Baklien et al., 2016). It also generates opportunities for personal enjoyment, challenge, cognitive and spiritual growth, self-confidence development, and social interaction (Cho et al., 2018; Wilcer et al., 2019; Próchniak, 2022), and while doing so, it exhibits a reduced level of adverse environmental consequences when compared to alternative intrusive activities (Raya et al., 2018; Calbiomonte et al., 2020; Bichler & Peters, 2021). From this point of view, within the scope of the research, the participants were asked the questions “Do you think there is a relationship between hiking tourism and life satisfaction? What makes you happy during nature walks?” The statements of some of the participants on the subject are as follows.

“Yes, I think there is a relationship because sometimes I find myself looking for opportunities to explore new routes. Pushing my limits in hiking, seeing myself succeed, and becoming an expert makes me happy” (R2).

“I like belonging to a community and experiencing the feeling of accomplishment together. These feelings give me happiness” (R7)

“I think we need little crumbs of happiness in life to feel good about ourselves. After taking long walks, I appreciate myself and feel proud of myself, so I think walking contributes to my life satisfaction” (R14)

“I think there is a strong relationship with inspiration. Hiking offers me many things at the same time (sport, health, freedom, excitement, self-confidence, sense of achievement, new discoveries, the opportunity to protect nature, socialising, etc.). These things make me very happy and make me feel good. I also increase my life motivation by thinking that I am making good use of my time. Hiking is always present in my life and will be as long as I can” (R21).

Physical activities such as walking increase life satisfaction, mindfulness, happiness, and self-efficacy while decreasing depressive symptoms in young adults (Smith & Thomas, 2021). The statements of the participants explaining the effects of walking on mindfulness and life satisfaction are as follows.

“Being able to observe nature in all its forms, to realise the perfection of the system increases my sense of gratitude and gives me happiness” (R6).

“If you want to learn and internalise what happiness is with small things, if you want to make friends with no interests, if you want to be truly peaceful and healthy, just take a walk in nature without paying a big price” (R20).

In addition, previous studies have found a strong correlation between engaging in hiking activities and experiencing notable improvements in emotional state, overall life satisfaction, levels of optimism, and psychological well-being among older adults who are facing feelings of loneliness (Kim et al., 2017; Yu et al., 2017). The statement made by one of the participants regarding this situation is quite striking.

“After the death of my wife, hiking and related activities became an integral part of my life because I needed to hold on to something. When I walk, I feel that I come back to life. I know that one day when the time comes when I will not be able to walk with the hiking group due to health problems, I will feel lonely and very unhappy” (R3).

“Hiking is a basic need for me. I miss my friends at the weekends when I can’t go hiking with the hiking club. I feel incomplete and like I missed something important” (R11).

5 Discussion

Hiking is a compelling area of scholarly investigation due to its interconnectedness with three traditionally separate theoretical domains: tourism, recreation, and leisure (Kastenholz & Rodrigues, 2007; Wall-Reinius & Bäck, 2011). That is because the objective of engaging in hiking extends beyond mere locomotion, encompassing the fulfilment of diverse needs and instincts that hold varying degrees of significance for individuals. These needs and instincts are shaped over time by a multitude of factors, including social, economic, environmental, and personal influences (Gómez-Martín, 2019). The research aims to reveal hikers’ perceptions of nature, the benefits they derive from hiking, and whether there is a relationship between hiking and life satisfaction by using a qualitative method. In this context, a semi-structured interview form

was prepared by reviewing previous studies in the relevant literature, and interviews were conducted by selecting hikers. The profile of the study group was generally male, middle-aged, highly educated and middle-income group. It is seen that most of the participants have been hiking for at least 10 years, and all of them walk at least once a month or more. In this respect, it can be said that the participants perceive hiking as a way of life rather than a simple hobby.

Firstly, the participants were asked about their purpose(s) for starting hiking. The answers are striking in terms of showing that they participate in hiking activities for psychological needs rather than physical reasons. The fact that almost all of the participants stated that they started hiking for reasons such as “getting away from city life and crowds”, “relaxation”, “integrating with nature”, “learning new things”, “experiencing a sense of achievement and competence”, “improving self-esteem”, “socialising and having a pleasant time” shows that they have intrinsic motivations rather than extrinsic motivations. This result is in line with the “Push and Pull Theory” proposed by Dann (1977) and developed by Crompton (1979). According to this hypothesis, individuals are first pushed by their internal forces and then attracted by external forces, such as destination characteristics, before participating in a particular travel or tourism activity. Therefore, in this study, it is concluded that emotional drivers are more effective for starting hiking. This finding also proved once again that the motivations of eco-tourists participating in nature-based activities are different from those of traditional mass tourists (Eagles, 1992; Holden & Sparrowhawk, 2002). The personal and social benefits that participants derived from hiking activities were also analysed. At this point, although there were participants who stated that hiking has economic benefits, such as being relatively cheaper than other sports branches and not requiring too much detailed technical equipment and expertise, the non-economic benefits of hiking, such as refreshing psychological and mental health, meeting new people with common goals, and socialising were mainly pointed out. In general, it can be said that these results are in line with the participants’ reasons for starting hiking for intrinsic reasons.

People generally derive hedonic pleasure from intrinsically motivated activities because they directly satisfy certain psychological needs, such as satisfaction derived from the behaviour itself (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Waterman et al., 2008). From this point of view, the participants in the study were asked to explain whether there is a relationship between hiking and life satisfaction, and if so, why. When the results obtained were evaluated, it was

seen that there was a close relationship between hiking and life satisfaction; hiking had a positive effect on the participants’ overall life satisfaction. In this study, it can be said that, in general, hiking fulfils the participants’ psychological needs, such as “sense of challenge and achievement”, “self-confidence”, “self-actualisation”, “spiritual development and contemplation”, “social interaction”, “sense of belonging to the community”, and “nature conservation”. One of the most striking findings is that older hikers felt connected to life thanks to hiking, that their feelings of loneliness decreased, that they felt better about themselves, and that they thought they would be unhappy if they could not go hiking in the future. This suggests that hiking has become a serious leisure activity for these individuals and can become addictive over time. There are certain approaches that are prominent in life satisfaction studies. When the research findings are evaluated in the light of some of these theories, they show parallels. According to the Telic Theory, when people make efforts to achieve their goals, their subjective well-being and life satisfaction increase (Diener, 1984; Deiner & Fujita, 1995). In addition, according to the theory, happiness occurs when needs are met, and unhappiness occurs when they are not (Wilson, 1960). According to the activity theory, happiness is a product of human activity, and individuals derive satisfaction from the activities they do to achieve their goals. Activities are expressed in terms such as hobbies, social relationships, and exercises (Diener, 1984). From this point of view, it is an expected result that when participants take part in hiking activities, their life satisfaction will increase as a result of achieving their goals and meeting certain physiological/psychological needs. To summarise, the results of this study show that hiking has an important place in the lives of individuals, positively affects the lives of the participants, and makes significant contributions to their life satisfaction.

6 Conclusion

It is thought that determining the intrinsic motivations of participants in hiking and various other nature-based activities to understand the reasons for performing their activities and revealing the relationship between life satisfaction and the activity is important both in terms of contributing to the academic literature and in terms of creating marketing strategies for businesses serving in this field. In this context, appropriate market segmentation and sales/marketing techniques can be recommended according to the needs of hikers. For instance,

when developing a tourism product, it is essential to consider the motivations and purposes of hikers from the perspective of the supply side. This is because the creation of a tourism product is inherently linked to various other tourism and tourism-related sub-products. These sub-products include accommodations, which typically consist of small-scale bed and breakfast establishments in family-owned rural tourism units, as well as options for self-catering in country houses, huts, camping sites, and more upscale hotel establishments, depending on the target market segment. Additionally, other sub-products such as restaurants, guided tours, transportation services to and within the hiking area, and shops offering hiking equipment, souvenirs, maps, and guidebooks, among other items, are also relevant considerations (Kastenholz & Rodrigues, 2007). It is thought that the study provides useful information to destination managers, tourism marketers, travel agencies, and hiking clubs in Eskişehir in particular and to stakeholders in many different destinations in general.

As with any academic study, this research has some limitations. First of all, this study was conducted with a qualitative approach and the number of interviewees was limited. In this respect, the results of the study are limited to the study group and cannot be generalised. For future researchers, it may be recommended that more comprehensive results be obtained by using quantitative and qualitative methods. Another issue is that hikers were interviewed in the study. In other studies, the nature and hiking perceptions and life satisfaction of hikers can be compared. The study was conducted with hikers in Eskişehir, Türkiye, due to time and cost constraints. Therefore, it may be possible to compare the results by conducting research with those who participate in hiking activities in different cities.

Bionote

Dr. Sila KARACAOĞLU is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Applied Sciences, Department of Tourism Guiding at Bilecik Şeyh Edebali University, Türkiye. She received her PhD degree from the Mersin University in Tourism Management in 2017. In her doctoral dissertation, she investigates “Community Perceptions, Attitudes and Support for Community Based Tourism: The Case of Misi Village”. Her research interests are tourism marketing, sustainable tourism and its types, cultural heritage and serving as a tour guide. ORCID ID: 0000-0001-7724-2188

References

- [1] Acevedo-Duque, Á., Llanos-Herrera, G. R., García-Salirrosas, E. E., Simón-Isidoro, S., Álvarez-Herranz, A. P., Álvarez-Becerra, R., & Sánchez Díaz, L. C. (2022). Scientometric analysis of hiking tourism and its relevance for wellbeing and knowledge management. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(14), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19148534>
- [2] Baklien, B., Ytterhus, B., & Bongaardt, R. (2016). When everyday life becomes a storm on the horizon: families' experiences of good mental health while hiking in nature. *Anthropology & Medicine*, 23(1), 42–53. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13648470.2015.1056056>
- [3] Basil, M. D. (2022). Understanding people's motivations for a long-distance hiking trip. *Leisure Studies*, 42(2), 282–295. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2022.2115108>
- [4] Beall, J. M., Jackson, S. B., Casola, W. R., Peterson, M. N., Larson, L. R., Stevenson, K. T., & Seekamp, E. (2022). Self-reported participation in outdoor and nature-based recreation before and during the COVID-19 pandemic supports psychological health and well-being. *Wellbeing, Space and Society*, 3(2022), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wss.2022.100094>
- [5] Bichler, B. F., & Peters, M. (2021). Soft adventure motivation: an exploratory study of hiking tourism. *Tourism Review*, 76(2), 473–488. <https://doi.org/10.1108/TR-10-2019-0403>
- [6] Boulware, D. R. (2003). Backpacking-induced paresthesias. *Wilderness & Environmental Medicine*, 14(3), 161–166. [https://doi.org/10.1580/1080-6032\(2003\)14\[161:BP\]2.0.CO;2](https://doi.org/10.1580/1080-6032(2003)14[161:BP]2.0.CO;2)
- [7] Calbimonte, J. -P., Martin, S., Calvaresi, D., & Cotting, A. (2021). A platform for difficulty assessment and recommendation of hiking trails. In W. Wörndl, C. Koo & J. L. Stienmetz (Eds.) *Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism 2021* (pp. 109–122). Springer. <https://arodes.hes-so.ch/record/8267>
- [8] Calbimonte, J. -P., Martin, S., Calvaresi, D., Zappelaz, N., & Cotting, A. (2020). Semantic data models for hiking trail difficulty assessment. In J. Neidhardt & W. Wörndl (Eds.), *Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism 2020* (pp. 295–306). Springer.

- [9] Cho, D., Post, J., & Kim, S. K. (2018). Comparison of passive and active leisure activities and life satisfaction with aging. *Geriatrics & Gerontology International*, 18(3), 380–386. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ggi.13188>
- [10] Cole, T., & Thomsen, J. (2020). Understanding the role of social interactions during different phases of the thru-hiker experience. *International Journal of Wilderness*, 26(2), 50–69. <https://ijw.org/role-of-social-interactions-during-thru-hiking/>
- [11] Crompton, J. L. (1979). Motivations for pleasure vacation. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 6(4), 408–424. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383\(79\)90004-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383(79)90004-5)
- [12] Dann, G. M. (1977). Anomie, ego-enhancement and tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 4(4), 184–194. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383\(77\)90037-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383(77)90037-8)
- [13] Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior*. Plenum Press.
- [14] DiCicco-Bloom, B., & Crabtree, B. F. (2006). The qualitative research interview. *Medical Education*, 40(4), 314–321. <https://asmepublications.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdfdirect/10.1111/j.1365-2929.2006.02418.x>
- [15] Diener, E. (1984). Subjective well-being. *Psychological Bulletin*, 95(3), 542–575.
- [16] Diener, E., & Fujita, F. (1995). Resources, personal strivings, and subjective well-being: A nomothetic and idiographic approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 68(5), 926–935. <https://sci-hub.se/10.1037/0022-3514.68.5.926>
- [17] Eagles, P. F. (1992). The travel motivations of Canadian ecotourists. *Journal of Travel Research*, 31(2), 3–7. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Paul-Eagles/publication/240703605_The_Travel_Motivations_of_Canadian_Ecotourists/links/553e67c30cf294deef716fc1/The-Travel-Motivations-of-Canadian-Ecotourists.pdf
- [18] Edginton C. R., Jordan, D. J., DeGraaf D. G., & Edginton, S. R. (2002). *Leisure and Life Satisfaction: Foundational Perspectives*. McGraw-Hill.
- [19] Etikan, I., Musa, S. A., & Alkassim, R. S. (2016). Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, 5(1), 1–4. https://d1wqtxts1xz-le7.cloudfront.net/55796997/Comparison_Convenience_and_Purposive_Sampling-2016_4p-libre.pdf?1518575584=&response-content-disposition=inline%3B+filename%3DComparison_of_Convenience_Sampling_and_P.pdf&Expires=170895916-7&Signature=aOV03ouTdEckMh~AyRqS0qiY27kzCCX4crX2fjzpsQyPx0sF1CH~mDFrCucVK3FV~LA6YZ88R2hJXIDcnXGJaGoF~7Zg1Wlc-MlkVXqX7CXTMa0hggWJnxHVhtTjjaiKn8k7i7WriLr6joYpj7c0BNo-jY3O4UludpojiBxOB7UipEt20ruiE3LVbPIKuFFf-x~zbTBQYEedwHPI4AhQyI0UU7MCZxJludNYJ9o-j50z9URuUiUQm5NmyZKVCQbQFS3Bzg7pf-rwRo-QPROXBsO6-5vG5HRoM6AuhsOlbtEGrg-kP2-uarFgy1QS9sZCmV96Fz2f5wlfHrlptpe5pgtw__&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJLOHF5GGSLRBV4ZA
- [20] Fondren, K. M., & Brinkman, R. (2022). A comparison of hiking communities on the Appalachian and Pacific Crest trails. *Leisure Sciences*, 44(4), 403–420. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01490400.2019.1597789>
- [21] Frantz, J. (2007). *The Value of Hiking*. Washington Trails Association.
- [22] Freund, A. M., & Baltes, P. B. (1998). Selection, optimization, and compensation as strategies of life management: correlations with subjective indicators of successful aging. *Psychology and Aging*, 13(4), 531–543. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/0882-7974.13.4.531>
- [23] Geiger, K., Sers, S., Buday, L., & Wäsche, H. (2023). Why hikers hike: an analysis of motives for hiking. *Journal of Sport & Tourism*, 27(4), 315–329. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14775085.2023.2252420>
- [24] Goldenberg, M., Hill, E., & Freidt, B. (2008). Why individuals hike the Appalachian Trail: A qualitative approach to benefits. *Journal of Experiential Education*, 30(3), 277–281. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/19142872.pdf>
- [25] Gómez-Martín, M. B. (2019). Hiking tourism in Spain: Origins, issues and transformations. *Sustainability*, 11(13), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11133619>
- [26] Hinlayagan, K. R., & Olivar, K. G. (2023). Socio-psychological and cultural motives of ASEAN tourists. *Archives of Business Research*, 11(1), 173–187. <https://doi.org/10.14738/abr.111.13695>
- [27] Holden, A., & Sparrowhawk, J. (2002). Understanding the motivations of ecotourists: the case of trekkers in Annapurna, Nepal. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 4(6), 435–446. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.402>
- [28] Ibhafeon, A., Oforka, O. K., Onuzulike, N. M., & Nwaobiala, C. J. (2021). Recreation and its health benefits: A critical review. *International Journal of Human Kinetics, Health and Education*, 6(1), 158–167. <https://journals.aphriapub.com/index.php/IJoHKHE/article/view/1464>

- [29] Johnsen, N. F., Ekblond, A., Thomsen, B. L., Overvad, K., & Tjønneland, A. (2013). Leisure time physical activity and mortality. *Epidemiology*, 24(5), 717-725. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23486727>
- [30] Karacaoğlu, S. (2021). Doğa temelli etkinliklere katılanların içsel motivasyonları ile gelecekteki davranışsal niyeti arasındaki ilişkinin belirlenmesi. *Ağrı İbrahim Çeçen Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 7(2), 81-109. <https://doi.org/10.31463/aicusbed.971249>
- [31] Karataş, Z. (2017). Sosyal bilim araştırmalarında paradigma değişimi: Nitel yaklaşımın yükselişi [Paradigm transformation in social sciences research: Rise of qualitative approach]. *Türkiye Sosyal Hizmet Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 1(1), 68-86. <https://dergi-park.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/360845>
- [32] Kastenholz, E. & Rodrigues, Á. (2007). Discussing the potential benefits of hiking tourism in Portugal. *Anatolia: An International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 18(1), 5-21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13032917.2007.9687033>
- [33] Kim, H., Lee, S., Uysal, M., Kim, J., & Ahn, K. (2015). Nature-based tourism: Motivation and subjective well-being. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 32(sup1), 76-96. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2014.997958>
- [34] Kim, J., Lee, S., Chun, S., Han, A. & Heo, J. (2017). The effects of leisure-time physical activity for optimism, life satisfaction, psychological well-being, and positive affect among older adults with loneliness. *Annals of Leisure Research*, 20(4), 406-415. <https://doi.org/10.1080/11745398.2016.1238308>
- [35] Kim, J., Lee, Y., Kil, N., Pitas, N. A. & Hwang, S. (2023). Exploring the relationships across recreation specialization, leisure satisfaction, and happiness: The case of Korean hikers. *Leisure Sciences*, (accepted/ in press), 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01490400.2023.2197901>
- [36] Lee, S. A., Manthiou, A., Chiang, L., & Tang, L. R. (2017). An assessment of value dimensions in hiking tourism: Pathways toward quality of life. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 20(2), 236-246. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.2176>
- [37] Li, P., Bin, Z., & Ryan, C. (2017). Hiking in China: a fuzzy model of satisfaction. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 22(2017), 90-97. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2017.03.003>
- [38] Li, P., Ryan, C., & Bin, Z. (2020). The motivations of Chinese hikers: data from Ningbo. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 23(23), 2893-2909. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2019.1646224>
- [39] Li, P., Zhou, B., Ryan, C., & Wen, J. (2018). Research on the leisure satisfaction of hiking activities based on Fuzzy Comprehension Evaluation: Data from Ningbo, Zhejiang Province. *Tourism Tribune*, 33(5), 44-55
- [40] Mason, M. (2010). Sample size and saturation in PhD studies using qualitative interviews. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 11(3), 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-11.3.1428>
- [41] Mau, M., Aaby, A., Klausen, S. H., & Roessler, K. K. (2021). Are long-distance walks therapeutic? A systematic scoping review of the conceptualization of long-distance walking and its relation to mental health. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(15), 1-22. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/353699198_Are_Long-Distance_Walks_Therapeutic_A_Systematic_Scoping_Review_of_the_Conceptualization_of_Long-Distance_Walking_and_Its_Relation_to_Mental_Health
- [42] McAnirlin, O., & Maddox, C. B. (2022). 'We have to be a little more realistic': women's outdoor recreation experiences in a community hiking group. *Annals of Leisure Research*, 25(3), 335-351. <https://doi.org/10.1080/11745398.2020.1820880>
- [43] Mitten, D., Overholt, J. R., Haynes, F. I., D'Amore, C. C., & Ady, J. C. (2018). Hiking: A low-cost, accessible intervention to promote health benefits. *American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine*, 12(4), 302-310. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1559827616658229>
- [44] Molokáč, M., Hlaváčová, J., Tometzová, D., & Liptáková, E. (2022). The preference analysis for hikers' choice of hiking trail. *Sustainability*, 14(11), 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14116795>
- [45] Moore, R. L. & Ross, D. T. (1998). Trails and recreational greenways: Corridors of benefits. *Parks & Recreation*, 33(1), 69-79.
- [46] Murphy, H. (2003). Exploring leisure and psychological health and wellbeing: some problematic issues in the case of Northern Ireland. *Leisure Studies*, 22(1), 37-50. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614360306570>
- [47] Nordbø, I., & Prebensen, N. K. (2015). Hiking as Mental and Physical Experience. *Advances in Hospitality and Leisure*, 11(2015), 169-186. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Ingeborg-Nordbo/publication/281619759_Hiking_as_Mental_and_Physical_Experience/links/564c743b08ae3374e5dfdc9f/Hiking-as-Mental-and-Physical-Experience.pdf
- [48] Nordbø, I., Engilbertsson, H. O., & Vale, L. S. R. (2014). Market myopia in the development

- of hiking destinations: The case of Norwegian DMOs. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 23(4), 380–405. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19368623.2013.827608>
- [49] Nordin, M. R., & Jamal, S. A. (2021). Hiking tourism in Malaysia: Origins, benefits and post Covid-19 transformations. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business & Social Sciences*, 11(13), 88–100. https://hrmars.com/papers_submitted/8504/hiking-tourism-in-malaysia-origins-benefits-and-post-covid-19-transformations.pdf
- [50] Obradović, S., & Tešin, A. (2022). Hiking in the COVID-19 era: Motivation and post-outbreak intentions. *Journal of Sport & Tourism*, 26(2), 147–164. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14775085.2022.2048683>
- [51] Oh, M., Kim, S., Choi, Y., & Pratt, S. (2019). Examination of benefits sought by hiking tourists: a comparison of impact-range performance analysis and impact asymmetry analysis. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 24(8), 850–864. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10941665.2019.1635501>
- [52] Oktaviani, D., & Saudi, M. H. M. (2020). Analysis of tourism perception using the importance performance analysis method toward Jayagiri Hiking Trail Bandung. *Solid State Technology*, 63(3), 1–10. <https://solidstatetechnology.us/index.php/JSST/article/view/4500>
- [53] Panik, R. T., Morris, E. A., & Voulgaris, C. T. (2019). Does walking and bicycling more mean exercising less? Evidence from the US and the Netherlands. *Journal of Transport & Health*, 15(2019), 100590. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jth.2019.100590>
- [54] Pfeiffer, D., Ehlenz, M. M., Andrade, R., Cloutier, S., & Larson, K. L. (2020). Do neighborhood walkability, transit, and parks relate to residents' life satisfaction? Insights from Phoenix. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 86(2), 171–187. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944363.2020.1715824>
- [55] Próchniak, P. (2022). Profiles of wellbeing in soft and hard mountain hikers. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(12), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19127429>
- [56] Raya, J. M., Martínez-García, E., & Celma, D. (2018). Economic and social yield of investing in hiking tourism: the case of Berguedà, Spain. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 35(2), 148–161. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2017.1350252>
- [57] Roberson Jr, D. N., & Babic, V. (2008). *Walking and hiking as a way of life*. ERIC: Online Submission. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED501659>
- [58] Rodrigues, Á. L. O., Kastenholz, E., & Rodrigues, A. (2010). Hiking as a wellness activity - an exploratory study of hiking tourists in Portugal. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 16(4), 331–343. <http://hdl.handle.net/10174/29110>
- [59] Saelens, B. E., Sallis, J. F., & Frank, L. D. (2003). Environmental correlates of walking and cycling: findings from the transportation, urban design, and planning literatures. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, 25(2), 80–91. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15324796ABM2502_03
- [60] Seligman, M.E.P (2002). *Authentic Happiness*. Free Press.
- [61] Smith, C. A., & Thomas, E. N. (2021). Hiking in the shadow of Mt Doom: how outdoor adventure programs can impact locus of control in university students. *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning*, 23(3), 258–269. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14729679.2021.2011336>
- [62] Smith, M., & Pucsko, L. (2014). *Health, Tourism and Hospitality: Spas, Wellness and Medical Travel*. Routledge.
- [63] Svarstad, H. (2010). Why hiking? Rationality and Reflexivity Within Three Categories of Meaning Construction. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 42(1), 91–110. <https://www.nrpa.org/globalassets/journals/jlr/2010/volume-42/jlr-volume-42-number-1-pp-91-110.pdf>
- [64] Tsaor, S. -H., & Lin, W. -R. (2014). Hassles of tour leaders. *Tourism Management*, 45(2014), 28–38. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2014.03.017>
- [65] United Nations World Tourism Organization. (2019). *Walking Tourism—Promoting Regional Development*. https://www.polskiemarkiturystyczne.gov.pl/uploaded_files/1587722112_unwto-walking-tourism.pdf
- [66] van Leeuwen, M., Klerks, Y., Bargeman, B., Heslinga, J., & Bastiaansen, M. (2020). Leisure will not be locked down—insights on leisure and COVID-19 from the Netherlands. *World Leisure Journal*, 62(4), 339–343. <https://doi.org/10.1080/16078055.2020.1825255>
- [67] Wall-Reinius, S., & Bäck, L. (2011). Changes in visitor demand: Inter-year comparisons of Swedish hikers' characteristics, preferences and experiences. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 11(sup1), 38–53. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15022250.2011.638207>
- [68] Waterman, A. S., Schwartz, S. J., & Conti, R. (2008). The implications of two conceptions of happiness (hedonic enjoyment and eudaimonia) for the understanding of intrinsic motivation. *Journal of Hap-*

- piness Studies*, 9(1), 41–79. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10902-006-9020-7>
- [69] Wilcer, S. R., Larson, L. R., Hallo, J. C., & Baldwin, E. (2019). Exploring the diverse motivations of day hikers: Implications for hike marketing and management. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*, 37(3), 2-18. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332914434_Exploring_the_Diverse_Motivations_of_Day_Hikers_Implications_for_Hike_Marketing_and_Management
- [70] Wilson, W. R. (1960). *An attempt to determine some correlates and dimensions of hedonic tone*. [Doctoral Dissertation, Northwestern University]. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing. <https://www.proquest.com/openview/641c48fafcf4cc45aa000783c266fc98/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y>
- [71] Wu, Y., Kinoshita, K., Zhang, Y., Kagami, R., & Sato, S. (2022). Influence of COVID19 crisis on motivation and hiking intention of gen z in china: Perceived risk and coping appraisal as moderators. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(8), 4612. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9027947/>
- [72] Yıldırım, A., & Şimşek, H. (2005). *Sosyal Bilimlerde Nitel Araştırma Yöntemleri [Qualitative Research Methods in Social Sciences]*. Seçkin Yayıncılık.
- [73] Yu, R., Cheung, O., Lau, K., & Woo, J. (2017). Associations between perceived neighborhood walkability and walking time, wellbeing, and loneliness in community-dwelling older Chinese people in Hong Kong. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 14(10), 1199. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28991205/>
- [74] Yuniawati, Y., Ridwanudin, O., & Pancawati, D. (2019). An investigation into hiking motivation. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 9(3), 782-788. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Oce-Ridwanudin/publication/334495475_An_Investigation_into_Hiking_Motivation/links/5e61c3b7299bf182deed71f0/An-Investigation-into-Hiking-Motivation.pdf
- [75] Zayed, K. N., Ahmed, M. D., Van Niekerk, R. L., & Ho, W. K. Y. (2018). The mediating role of exercise behaviour on satisfaction with life, mental well-being and BMI among university employees. *Cogent Psychology*, 5(1), 1–13. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/epdf/10.1080/23311908.2018.1430716?needAccess=true>
- [76] Zhang, C. (2020). Hiking to well-being: Leisure benefits for personal and social development. *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, 513(2020), 1–7. <https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1755-1315/513/1/012068>
- [77] Zhang, L., & Leung, J. -P. (2002). Moderating effects of gender and age on the relationship between self-esteem and life satisfaction in mainland Chinese. *International Journal of Psychology*, 37(2), 83-91. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00207560143000252>
- [78] Zheng, H., Ehrlich, F., & Amin, J. (2010). Economic evaluation of the direct healthcare cost savings resulting from the use of walking interventions to prevent coronary heart disease in Australia. *International Journal of Health Care Finance and Economics*, 10(2), 187-201. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25652890>
- [79] Zwart, R., & Ewert, A. (2022). Human Health and outdoor adventure recreation: Perceived health outcomes. *Forests*, 13(6), 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.3390/f13060869>