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WOMEN DAY AS TRADITIONAL LEISURE ACTIVITY: A STUDY ON ATTITUDES OF TURKISH WOMEN TOWARDS "INVITATION DAY"*

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Abstract

The aim of the study is to determine the attitudes of Turkish women, organizing and participating to "invitation days" towards days. A questionnaire, consisted of two parts, was applied to a total of 379 women participating to "days" as a leisure activity. 5-likert scale was used to evaluate items. According to the results, six factors were determined as; "refraining from stress", "social relations and nostalgia", "gaining new knowledge", "economy", "hand crafts and cultural activities", "experience of meal". The total Cronbach's alpha coefficient was found 0,88. ANOVA test results showed that a significant difference was determined for some of the factors based on age groups, income status, monthly participation frequency to invitation days and occupational situations.

Keywords: Turkish Women, Leisure, Invitation Day, Attitude, Traditional Activity.

Introduction

Research on women and leisure emerged as a body of knowledge about 25 years ago (Henderson and Hickerson, 2007: 591). More recent leisure researchers, however, have examined the changing role and status of women in today's society, and a number of critical issues such as: the interrelationships among the type of work women do inside and outside of the home, in a career; the nature of family relationships; women's prior leisure experiences and interests; perceptions of work, family, and leisure roles; and current leisure perceptions of meaning and behavior from a lifespan perspective (Henderson, Hodges and Kivel, 2002: 253-271). Although research on women, gender, and leisure has been conceptualized in western cultures for the past 20 years, studies of women and leisure in developing countries is a new phenomenon. These global studies point to new directions that may have a positive effect on the broader body of leisure knowledge. In the past five years, the studies about women especially in developing countries raised issues about the culturally bound meanings of leisure that change as the women life innovations (Henderson, Hodges and Kivel, 2002: 262). The aim of this study therefore is to survey and determine the attitudes of Turkish women, organizing and participating to invitation days which is a traditional alternative leisure activity for women.

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Gender is a set of social relationships that are produced and reproduced through people's actions (Henderson, 1994: 1-7). Gender imposes specific roles and responsibilities on both men and women in society (Jun, Kyle and O'Leary, 2006: 459). The traditional understanding of women's place in the developing world views the household as a site of gender politics where relations of hierarchy, authority and power are brought to bear on women and shape them into subjects according to this social environment (Bialeschki and Henderson, 1986: 299-308). Women are bounded more likely than men by constraint indicators such as time availability, transportation access, fear of crime, family responsibilities, lack of partners, lack of skill and ability, and lack of self-confidence (Jun, Kyle and O'Leary, 2006: 459). Furthermore women spend more time than men on household obligations and commitments (Horna, 1989: 228-241). So both employed and non-employed women have less time for leisure than their husbands (Thrane, 2000; 109-122).

The lifestyles of women continue to change as they enter the workforce but societal expectations of women's roles make this transition slowly. People still expects women to keep family and home as their priority because of their social role. This role on the home sphere would seem to provide a common world for leisure participation as an important component (Bialeschki and Henderson, 1986, 299-308). It should be noted, however, that women are not simply subjects of household space, its timetables and its routines. They create, through their collective and strategies, space and time for themselves. Through these processes, women reconstitute their lives outside institutional arrangements (Ilcan, 1998).

There is an alternative leisure activity for women which named as Invitation Day provides a common world in their home in Turkey. Invitation Day is a good leisure chance for women to meet with their friends, relatives and with new people (Sabirli, Sonmez, Sevil and Argan, 2008). It provides a ground where women get to know each other, meet new women, share information, gossip (Khatib, 1996: 241-276), discuss certain issues, serve food... etc. (Ekal, 2006). Women's increased contact with the outer world by Invitation Day, an event which has gradually changed its form and name in Turkey (Ozbay, 1999: 555-568). There is little research identifying Invitation Day, thus, further study is required to assess the participation of Turkish women's on Invitation Day as a leisure activity. Taking into account the theoretical gap in the literature, the purpose of this paper is to determine the attitudes of Turkish women, organizing and participating in "invitation days" towards days.

This paper is structured as follows: The following section introduce a theoretical framework of general knowledge and history about leisure and women in Turkey, and Invitation Day. The other section outlines our research purposes and presents the methodology. Following section presents results of this study and the final section draws some conclusions from these results.

Literature Review

Women and Leisure in Turkey

Leisure interests and skills are important in creating and maintaining a sense of self (Kleiber, Hutchinson and Willams, 2002: 219-235). Leisure activities are defined with freedom of choice and enjoyable concepts. To be enjoyable to the participants, leisure has to be perceived as freely chosen (Passmore and French, 2001: 67-75). Researchers identify four characteristics of the leisure experience: it is freely chosen; intrinsically satisfying, optimally arousing; and requires a sense of commitment (Mokhtarian, Salomon and Handy, 2004). Leisure is an important component of a balanced lifestyle, one which reflects the quality of life (Lee, 2000). While leisure is assumed to be an important aspect in the quality of life for people, some women do not acknowledge the potential for leisure in their lives. Women have expressed a need for leisure experiences as an opportunity for expressing autonomy, self-definition, and choice often not present in other aspects of their lives (Henderson, 1990: 228-243).

While it may be an individual's decision as how to use one's leisure time, such1 decisions are structured. A number of factors impact on leisure activity preferences and participation levels.

The most important factor is gender uncertainly (Eryasar, 2007). Women have been heavily influenced by the traditional structures that dictated sex roles, family structures, work, and appropriate characteristics for women (Henderson, Hodges and Kivel, 2002: 253-271). It has been shown that women's leisure activities are bounded because of their roles in society (Demir and Demir, 2006: 36-48) and that women's leisure activities are more likely to be home-centered (Eryasar, 2007). Other factors which affect women's participation in leisure activities include their paid-work status and where they live.

Turkey has experienced a substantial increase in the number of well-educated working women and these changes in Turkey's macro environment have exerted considerable influence on the traditional roles of men and women in society since 1980s (Uray and Burnaz, 2003: 77-85). There has been an increase in the number of well-educated women, and their level of income has also risen but the level of support for women's roles within the family did not see any changing. In all of these modernism movements, it is indicated that marriage and children are the national duties of Turkish women. The women who are wives and mothers have been expected almost exclusively to fulfill the domestic roles of physical and emotional care of their husbands and children (Kulakaç, 2006: 837-852).

Even after several generations, Turkish families are still strongly oriented towards their original cultural traditions, values, and ways of life. Demonstrating the cultural tradition in Turkish society, lives of Turkish families are strongly shaped by gender based power imbalance. This unequal power relation is evident in their leisure domain, and the notion that married women have the right to free time is not strong among Turkish women (Iwasaki, 2007: 81-99). Non-employed Turkish women prefer handcrafts, knitting, and visiting activities whereas employed women prefer cultural activities (Demir and Demir, 2006: 36-48). Turkish women's leisure participation also changes according to whether they live in big or small settlements (Eryasar, 2007). Women's leisure includes many group activities, the most important leisure activities in small settlements in Turkey are visiting friends, relatives, neighbors and Invitation Days.

Invitation Day as Traditional Leisure Activity of Turkish Women

Invitation Day in Turkey is a leisure activity, organized by women, held in women's homes on a reciprocal basis (Sonmez, Sevil, Sabırlı and Argan, 2008) and which allow them to spend time in each other's company (Khatib, 1996: 241-276; Passmore and French 2001: 67-75). In the research literature three categories of leisure activities are described: achievement leisure; social leisure; and time-out leisure. According to this classification Invitation Day activities encompass all categories of leisure activities.

This traditional leisure activity of Turkish women is alternatively named Reception Day, Gold Day, Currency Day, and Money Day. Invitation Day is sometimes named Gold Day because the women in the group buy a gold present for the woman who organizes and prepares the Invitation Day at her home. So the cost for the invitation day is minimized and women are able to save some money for the future (Ekal, 2006).

It is essential to distinguish the differences between Gold Day and Invitation Day. The term Invitation Day contains Gold Day because they have the same content. It is used a specific term as Gold Day by Turkish women because guest women collect money to present a gold coin as a gift to hostess woman. Both concepts are formal occasions in which women receive their guests in a guest room which is the best part of the house, dress up and serve special food. On a Gold Day, it is promised that the equal contributions of money are giving to eradicate the differences between the women who attend. In principle, as long as a woman can provide the specified amount of money, she can be a part of the Gold Day. The Gold Day is composed of a group of women and each woman is visited only once during the period in which the Gold Day cycle is completed. Invitation Day in small towns can be differentiated from Gold Day Associations in urban areas. Gold Day is practiced by middle-class urban women with comparable statuses who set up groups, and the

eligibility of each woman to be a member is negotiated before the meetings start. Usually, close neighbors or kin form the initial group, while other women may join later if another member introduces them to the group (Ekal, 2006).

Invitation Day is different from other meetings and visits of Turkish women. The friends, relatives make a group or more groups to organize this activity. They organize the arrangements of the Invitation Day and determine the dates when woman will organize and prepare the Invitation Day at their homes. This activity is arranged to continue the organization on a cyclical basis, gathering once a month in one of women's house, until each woman has become a host. The hostess provides light refreshments while the guests present the hostess with a gift in the form of a non-currency gold coin, a piece of gold jewelry or a sum of money equivalent to a predetermined amount of gold. This gift can change according to decision of women. Invitation day variations on the same principle are also found in Northern Cyprus. Objects such as ornamental silver-backed mirrors may be given instead of gold, in which case the term Silver Day is used or some groups present the hostess with money in pounds Sterling or Euro (Khatib, 1996: 241-276). Women often do not bring their children and they dress in their best outfits in invitation days (Ozbay, 1999: 555-568).

The members of Invitation Day groups are most likely to be middle-class women who are salaried or involved in their own or their husbands' businesses. If they are housewives, their husbands will be relatively well-off (Khatib, 1996: 241-276). Wealthier women and those considered upper-class or postgraduate women, can participate in or organize Invitation Days with their friends too.

Women organize Invitation Days when men are outside or at work. They use reception rooms which are not open to daily life and in use as a showcase for the household. The rooms are kept clean for guests and the doors are closed to daily family activities. Thus, a reception room which had been the important domain becomes a window opening onto the outer world (Ozbay, 1999: 555-568). Women already purchase symbolic items for preparation before Invitation Days. Host women clean their houses, change equipment in their houses, make decorative modifications, and prepare different foods and drink. Women consume and prepare luxury products for other women on Invitation Days (Sabırlı, Sonmez, Sevil and Argan, 2008). In this way they display their houses, furniture and their abilities as housewives, to other women.

Invitation days also provide a path for middle-class women to begin moving into a form of public life, and a school for modernization for such middle-class women. Manners, fashion, child-rearing practices and relations among spouses are discussed on these occasions (Ozbay, 1999: 555-568). Women are able to develop themselves with the activities which they undertake during Invitation Days (Sonmez, Sevil, Sabırlı and Argan, 2008). Furthermore, Invitation Days offer benefits such as providing a time of relief from stress, developing social relations and sharing nostalgia, gaining new knowledge, practicing handicrafts and cultural activities, and experiencing a shared meal. Turkish women share common enjoyments and boredoms, cope with stress, develop their communication skills, learn new things and make economic and moral investments through their participation in Invitation Day leisure activities (Sonmez, Sabırlı, Sevil and Argan, 2008). Non-employed Turkish women, who include retired women and housewives, participate in Invitation Days as a form of social recreation, to take time out from their busy lives, avoid daily stress, and share something with other women and save money (Sabırlı, Sonmez, Sevil and Argan, 2008). Invitation Day represents the socializing work of Turkish women and there is no similar leisure activity in other parts of the world. The European Union Grundtving Projects, which promote adult education and life-long learning, have benefited from this Turkish tradition. European research into the educational methods of Turkish women and mothers, and found that Turkish women learned new things from each other, were more sociable and could discharge and decrease stress by sharing their problems with other women. They encouraged the initialization of similar projects in some countries like Poland, Bulgaria, Holland, Germany, Spain and the Czech Republic.

In the 1960s and 1970s, especially elite women in towns, the hostess opened her house to 20 to 80 women on a particular day of each month which is named as invitation day. The guests stayed about an hour in the house of the hostess, where they were served food and drink (Ekal, 2006). Invitation Days simply involved women visiting each other and had no further aim in the 1970s (Tunc, 2005). However, the days differed from informal and intimate neighborhood and familial relations (Ozbay, 1999: 555-568). In these years they took pains to wear beautiful clothes, but they started to show themselves off with their appearance, clothes, furniture, prepared foods, etc. after the 1970s (Tunc, 2005). The Invitation Day came into its present form in the 1980s, when it was most commonly used as a term by women in middle class districts in Istanbul (Ekal, 2006).

These Invitation Days concept changed firstly to Money Days, then to Gold Days and than Currency Days when the dollar was thought to be a better economic enterprise than gold in the course of time (Tunc, 2005). Gold Day is traditional and popular in Turkey, and Gold Day groups are becoming increasingly popular, although they are unevenly distributed. Some cases are reported that wealthy women in Ankara and Istanbul throwing organize all their Gold Day parties in hotels, where each guest give gift to the hostess consists of a gold item. In one provincial town near Izmir, Gold Day gatherings are described as so popular that they have replaced much of the family visiting, so women see relatives on a regular basis only if they are in the same Gold Day group. Older women report that they feel obliged because a refusal would mean social exclusion or would be seen as not to much neighborly when they do not want or need to join such Gold Day groups (Khatib, 1996: 241-276).

Although in Turkey, as in Northern Cyprus, Invitation day is considered specifically a women's activity, more recently men and women have started to hold join in Invitation Days together (Khatib, 1996: 241-276). Invitation Days are changing their shape and name as Aesthetic Days, women get together and collect money to promote an aesthetic occasions (Ortakmac, 2008).

Relationships between Quality-of-Life and Leisure

Leisure may be an important indicator of subjective wellbeing and quality of life, there is very little understanding as to how this occurs. Activity theory suggests a positive relationship between activity and life satisfaction. According to the activity theory, the greater the frequency and intimacy of activity, the greater the life satisfaction. Activity theory suggests both the frequency of participation and the degree of intimacy associated with the activity influence life satisfaction. The greater the frequency and the more intimate the activity, the greater the life satisfaction. Participation in activities is often considered positively related to life satisfaction. Place-centered leisure activities, people-centered leisure activities (e.g. talking with friends and family and participation in community or religious activities) have found to be significantly related to quality life (Rodriguez, et. al., 2008: 163-175).

Motivational Factors of Leisure

People are beginning to suffer the effects of information overload and need time to switch off the constant stream of data with which they are bombarded. The need to escape from stress, mental effort and fatigue is just as important in our fact paced modern society as the need for stimulation and self development. Professional work allows them to satisfy their needs for intellectual stimulation are more likely to seek compensatory activities which offer rest and relaxation in their leisure time (Packer, 2004).

Satisfying leisure experiences are important during all life stages. Throughout life stages, individuals have positive and negative leisure experiences, which may affect leisure aspirations in both the long and short term (Beggs, 2010). Increasingly leisure is seen as an opportunity for self fulfillment, self development or a source of meaning in life (Packer, 2004).

Motivation is an essential element in explaining why individuals participate in leisure activities. It was underlined that the fact that leisure motivation helps to determine the reasons of people engaging in leisure and assists in understanding the consequences of leisure engagements

(Kim and Beck, 2009: 386-405). Leisure participation reason is pointed out as physical and mental renovation. The literature addresses the satisfaction which is occurred as enjoyment, pleasure from leisure participation (Mansuroğlu, 2002: 53-62). From literature leisure participation reasons were classified to six concept; psychological, educational, social, enjoyment-relaxation, physiological and esthetic (Jen, 2007: 1399-1404). As in Torkildsen's study (1992) ten leisure participation reasons were defined as; new experiences like adventure, relaxation, recognition, keeping away from negative life, to be dominant, social communication, mental activity, creativity, serving to people, physical activity. Another classification is stated that there are seven requirements for participating to leisure activities; renovation, education, observation, communication, integration, grouping, cultural interaction (Köktaş, 2004: 125-126). Getaway, risk-taking and exploration, education, friends, relations, environment, and enjoyment are another leisure participation reason classifications of an earlier study carried out by Kim and Beck (2009: 386-405).

Method

Research and Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire for the current study was designed with two sections. The first section measured statements of participation motivation to invitation days as leisure activity. Twenty four statements were designed to measure the participation motivations of women's perceived agreement of each determinant. Based on limited research and literature in this area, henceforth, led researchers to develop a new measurement scale on factors related to participation motivations to the special activity. The statements were determined by the interviews with the women who have been participating to invitation days. To generate statements that comprising the domains of motivations about participation to invitation days, in-depth interviews were conducted to twenty five women in Eskisehir, Turkey. In constructing the sample of in-depth interviews, respondents were selected on the basis of being representing the population in terms of demographic characteristics and participation behavior. In addition, the items also were developed from a combination and synthesis of information in the literature (Torkildsen, 1992; Mansuroğlu, 2002: 53-62; Köktaş, 2004: 125-126) and in-depth interviews and adapted to the invitation day context. Then, the researchers generated total 24 items based on interviews and literature sources. A pilot study was carried out with thirty eight women, participating in invitation days to test clarity of the statements used in the questionnaire and its final shape was given after the necessary corrections. The statements were presented and respondents were asked to indicate their women on a five-point Likert scale. Responses to the items were elicited on five-point scale ranging from "5= strongly agree" to "1= strongly disagree". Second section of the questionnaire is consisted of demographics (age, marital status, income status, educational levels) and participation characteristics (monthly participation frequency to invitation days) of the women.

Sample

The sample is comprised of 379 women participating in invitation days as a leisure activity in different levels in Eskisehir, Turkey. Eskisehir is a city that may set an example in terms of its social and economic structure, as it is located on an important intersection point in Turkey. In this study, a convenience sampling method enclosing gathered invitation days in homes and restaurant employed. Three trained researchers were each responsible for distributing 150 self administered questionnaires. From the 450 questionnaires distributed, 395 were returned for a response rate of 87.7 %. Of these, 16 responses were rejected because many items were left blank, yielding a final usable response rate of 84.2% (n= 379). In order to complete the questionnaire, self-administrated questionnaires were used by three trained researchers assigned to each leisure activity, invitation day. Self-administrated questionnaires are filled by respondents at researchers' presence. The questionnaires were collected during visits to themselves and then asked to speak with women. The researchers explained the purpose of the study and administered the questionnaire to those who agreed to participate. In other words, participation in the questionnaire survey was voluntary. In

order that respondents had a clear idea of the phenomenon being investigated, the researchers first briefly explained the purpose of the study to participants, and then proceeded to handing in questionnaires to women who agreed to participate to the research voluntarily. The preliminary briefing of participants and filling the questionnaires lasted approximately 15 minutes. The venues of the research were homes and restaurants where invitation days were arranged in. Data collection lasted about four weeks.

Results

Characteristics of sample

The largest age groups of respondents were 31-40, represented by 34.6%, and 41-50, represented by 34.6% of the respondents. Majority of the participants were married 86.0%. In terms of education level, 1.8% of participants were uneducated, 34.6% were graduated from secondary school, and 31.7% were graduated from university. Housewives comprised 52.0% of all respondents, 16.6% were public officials, 10.3% were retired. In addition, the monthly household income showed a wide distribution: about 10% of the respondents earned less than \$463 monthly, 35.9% earned \$464–\$927, 21.1% earned \$928–\$1390, and 11.9% earned more than \$2318 per month. On the other hand, 52% were unemployed, 48% were employed and, 34.0% of women participate in invitation days twice in a month (Table 1).

Table 1: Characteristics of the sample

| Demographics and Invitation Day Participation | Frequency | Percent |
|--|-----------|---------|
| Age | | |
| 20 and < | 3 | 0.8 |
| 21-30 | 53 | 14.0 |
| 31-40 | 131 | 34.6 |
| 41-50 | 121 | 31.9 |
| 51 and > | 71 | 18.7 |
| Marital status | | |
| Married | 326 | 86.0 |
| Single | 30 | 7.9 |
| Other | 23 | 6.1 |
| Income (average monthly) | | |
| 463 U.S. \$ and < | 66 | 17.4 |
| 464 -927 U.S. \$ | 136 | 35.9 |
| 928-1,390 U.S. \$ | 80 | 21.1 |
| 1,391- 1,854 U.S. \$ | 41 | 10.8 |
| 1,855- 2,317 U.S. \$ | 11 | 2.9 |
| 2,318 U.S. \$ and > | 45 | 11.9 |
| Education level | | |
| Uneducated | 7 | 1.8 |
| Primary school | 93 | 24.5 |
| Secondary school | 131 | 34.6 |
| University | 120 | 31.7 |
| Post graduate | 28 | 7.4 |
| Occupation | | |
| Housewife | 197 | 52.0 |
| Laborer | 31 | 8.2 |
| Public Official | 63 | 16.6 |
| Retired | 39 | 10.3 |
| Student | 5 | 1.3 |
| Administrator | 9 | 2.4 |
| Tradesman | 6 | 1.6 |
| Self employed | 18 | 4.7 |
| Other | 11 | 2.9 |
| Participation to invitation day (average monthly) | | |
| 1 | 123 | 32.5 |
| 2 | 129 | 34.0 |

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-----|------|
| 3 | 78 | 20.6 |
| 4 and > | 49 | 12.9 |
| Occupational situation | | |
| Employed | 182 | 48.0 |
| Unemployed | 197 | 52.0 |

Factors of Women Attitudes towards Invitation Day

There is a total of 24 scale items, which may influence or determine Turkish women's attitudes towards invitation day; thus principal component factor analysis was used to sort out and classify these variables as well as to convert them into main factors. In parallel to Kaiser's (1974: 31-36) criteria, only factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 were retained and only items with factor loadings and communalities of greater than 0.475 were included in the final factor structure. Cronbach's alpha values for each dimension were computed to confirm the factor's internal consistency.

Table 2: Attitude factors of Turkish women towards invitation day

| Factors and Items | Factor Loadings | Mean | SD |
|--|-----------------|------|------|
| Refraining from stress (Alpha= .802; % of Variance=27.041) | | 3.37 | .85 |
| I am getting away from keeping within doors stress by participating to invitation days. | .741 | 3.35 | 1.28 |
| My relationship and communication with my family after participating to invitation days. | .760 | 3.18 | 1.17 |
| I am getting away from stress which I live in my family by participating to invitation days. | .798 | 3.36 | 1.20 |
| I am getting away from work stress by participating to invitation days. | .475 | 3.40 | 1.17 |
| I am getting away from economic and actual stress by participating to invitation days. | .576 | 3.35 | 1.19 |
| I am getting away from loneliness by participating to invitation days. | .564 | 3.60 | 1.21 |
| Social relations and nostalgia (Alpha= .755; % of Variance=8.120) | | 3.70 | .81 |
| I am meeting with new people and acquire new ambience by participating to invitation days. | .495 | 4.02 | 0.97 |
| I am reinforcing and keeping up my relative relation by participating to invitation days. | .760 | 3.89 | 1.17 |
| I am meeting with my new relatives by participating to invitation days. | .814 | 3.41 | 1.32 |
| I think that I am keeping up my culture by participating to invitation days. | .622 | 3.46 | 1.16 |
| I remember old time by participating to invitation days. | .485 | 3.73 | 1.08 |
| Gaining new knowledge (Alpha= .697; % of Variance=6.801) | | 4.13 | .61 |
| I am reinforcing my amity by participating to invitation days. | .589 | 4.29 | 0.73 |
| I am taking and giving recipes by participating to invitation days. | .678 | 4.08 | 0.89 |
| I am testing new tastes by participating to invitation days. | .693 | 4.16 | 0.93 |
| I am taking new knowledge from the women who are participating to invitation days. | .598 | 4.03 | 0.85 |
| Economy (Alpha= .835; % of Variance=5.954) | | 3.08 | 1.14 |
| I am making savings by participating to invitation days. | .818 | 3.04 | 1.28 |
| I am saving up by participating to invitation days. | .914 | 3.36 | 1.27 |
| I am paying my debts by participating to invitation days. | .772 | 2.85 | 1.39 |
| Hand crafts and cultural activities (Alpha= .646; % of Variance=5.497) | | 3.17 | .94 |
| I am taking and giving new handcraft models by participating to invitation days. | .576 | 3.75 | 1.22 |
| I am learning and teaching new handcrafts by participating to invitation days. | .738 | 3.14 | 1.25 |
| I am learning and teaching traditional cultures by participating to invitation days. | .517 | 2.62 | 1.23 |
| Experience of meal (Alpha= .618; % of Variance=5.111) | | 2.64 | .98 |
| I am eating foods that I can't make by participating to invitation days. | .690 | 3.20 | 1.33 |
| I am getting away making meals at home by participating to invitation days. | .641 | 2.23 | 1.26 |
| I am eating meals in a place (restaurant, cafe, etc.) except home by participating to invitation days. | .640 | 2.51 | 1.33 |

Note. S.D. =standard deviation; 5= strongly disagree 1= strongly agree; n= 379

To apply factor analysis on items underlying attitudes of Turkish women towards invitation day, it is necessary to test the Kaiser-Meyer Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy (Zhang, Pennington and et. al., 2003: 228-243; Odabasi and Argan, 2009: 203-218). For attitudes of Turkish women variables, Kaiser-Meyer Olkin (KMO) was 0.840, indicating that the sample was adequate for factor analysis (Kaiser, 1974). The Bartlett Test for Sphericity (BTS) was 3236.702 (p

<.001) which indicating that the hypothesis variance and covariance matrix of variables as an identity matrix were rejected; therefore, factor analysis was appropriate.

According to principal axis analysis, six factors had an eigenvalue equal to or greater than 1.0 (Kaiser, 1960: 31-36), explaining a total of 58.52 percent of the variance. These factors were termed: “refraining from stress”, “social relations and nostalgia”, “gaining new knowledge”, “economy”, “hand crafts and cultural activities” and “experience of meal”. In the factor analysis, the percentage of the variance explained by each factor indicates the relative significance of the factors. Accordingly, the first factor, refraining from stress, explained a large part (27.041 %) of the total variance, having a greater significance than the other five factors. This factor contained six items, relating to participating to invitation day for decrease stress. The second factor, social relations and nostalgia, explained 8.12 % of the variance. Social relations and nostalgia factor contained five items, all-relating to the social relations and nostalgia of invitation day. The third factor, gaining new knowledge, explained 6.801 % of the variance. It consisted of four items, related to learning new things from the other women in invitation day. The fourth factor, labeled economy, explained 5.954% of the variance. It consisted of three items, all-relating to saving money with invitation day. It showed high loadings for the items. The fifth factor, hand crafts and cultural activities, explained 5.497 % of the variance. This factor contained three items, all-relating to the practicing, learning and teaching hand crafts in invitation day. Lastly, the sixth factor, labeled experience of meal, explained 5.111 % of the total variance. This factor contained three items about preparing, eating meal for invitation day in different places (for example: cafe, restaurant...etc). All six constructs met the criterion that a factor loading should be equal to or greater than 0.41. The Cronbach alpha’s were greater than 0.475 and the total of scale reliability was 0.88.

The last factor, experience of meal, (0.618) had relatively low coefficient score, but the other five factors (refraining from stress 0.802, social relations and nostalgia 0.755, gaining new knowledge 0.697, economy 0.835, hand crafts and cultural activities 0.646 and had near or higher scores than the recommended level of 0.70 (Kim, 2003: 169-180; Nunnally, 1978) (see Table 2).

Typically, reliability coefficients of 0.70 or higher are considered adequate (Nunnally, 1978). Nunnally (1978) further states that permissible alpha values can be slightly lower given that it is above 0.60 for newer scales. As can be seen from Table 2, Cronbach’s alpha values of three factors were above 0.70, indicating a satisfactory level of internal consistency among items in each construct.

Differentiations of Invitation Day Factors

ANOVA and t-test were applied to asses the demographics differentiations of Turkish women’s attitudes towards invitation day (Table 3, 4, 5). According to t test results, there is a significant difference in three factors (refraining from stress, social relations and nostalgia, hand crafts and cultural activities) based on occupational situations.

Table 3: Differentiations of factors based on occupational situations

| Factors | Occupational Situations | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------|
| | t | p |
| Refraining from stress | 3.333 | .001*** |
| Social relations and nostalgia | 4.425 | .000*** |
| Gaining new knowledge | 1.408 | .160 |
| Economy | 1.615 | .107 |
| Hand crafts and cultural activities | 3.429 | .001*** |
| Experience of meal | -.089 | .929 |

*** p≤ .001, ** p≤ .01, * p≤ .05

ANOVA test results showed that there isn’t a significant difference between the factors for the marital status. Age, education level, income status were found significantly different compare to

other variables. Economy and experience of meal were found significantly different for the age. Economy, aspects mean scores of respondents with 21-30 years old women were found higher than the others and for experience of meal factor mean scores of 20 and lower years old women were found higher than the others. As for the educational level; all factors were found significantly different. For all factors literate women's means were found higher than the others but only for social relations and nostalgia factor elementary school graduated women's mean scores were higher than the others.

Table 4: Differentiations of factors based on marital status, age, educational level

| Factors | Marital status | | Age | | Educational level | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|------|-------|---------|-------------------|---------|
| | F | p | F | p | F | p |
| Refraining from stress | 2.714 | .068 | 2.317 | .057 | 11.377 | .000*** |
| Social relations and nostalgia | 0.436 | .647 | .357 | .839 | 9.252 | .000*** |
| Gaining new knowledge | 0.801 | .450 | 1.048 | .382 | 5.479 | .000*** |
| Economy | 1.678 | .188 | 4.884 | .001*** | 9.808 | .000*** |
| Hand crafts, cultural activities | 1.130 | .324 | .332 | .857 | 5.543 | .000*** |
| Experience of meal | 1.545 | .215 | 3.680 | .006** | 2.962 | .020* |

*** p≤ .001, ** p≤ .01, * p≤ .05

As it was seen in table 5; four factors, refraining from stress, social relations and nostalgia, economy, hand crafts and cultural activities, were found significantly different for income level. Women who have 463 US \$ and lower income monthly have higher means than the other women for four factors. There is a significant difference between three factors for participation characteristics of women in invitation days monthly. Women's participation to invitation days four times and more in a month have higher means for refraining from stress, social relations and nostalgia factors, three times in a month have higher means for hand crafts and cultural activities factor.

Table 5: Differentiations of factors based on income status, participation characteristics

| Factors | Income status | | Participation | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|---------|---------------|---------|
| | F | p | F | p |
| Refraining from stress | 5.966 | .000*** | 7.489 | .000*** |
| Social relations and nostalgia | 7.747 | .000*** | 8.591 | .000*** |
| Gaining new knowledge | 2.193 | .054 | 3.603 | .014 |
| Economy | 4.846 | .000*** | 1.607 | .187 |
| Hand crafts and cultural activities | 4.296 | .001*** | 7.085 | .000*** |
| Experience of meal | 1.089 | .366 | .274 | .844 |

*** p≤ .001, ** p≤ .01, * p≤ .05

Discussion and Conclusion

Invitation Day is an alternative leisure activity for women that women can organize or participate in this activity at their homes in Turkey especially for unemployment women. Turkish women participate in invitation days because of some reasons. An important point related to this subject is that the factors about the attitudes of women towards invitation day need to be determined.

This study represents an attempt to encourage an evaluation of factors related to women attitudes towards invitation days in Turkey by developing a new survey instrument. The results showed that factors could be conceptualized and measured as a six-dimensional construct which comprises refraining from stress, social relations and nostalgia, gaining new knowledge, economy, hand crafts and cultural activities, experience of meal. These findings will provide researchers for

insight of invitation day as an alternative leisure activity for women, and the new perspective in the leisure participation reasons of women.

A similar pattern of results was found by Kim and Beck (2009: 386-405), Jen (2007: 1399-1404) as two of the leisure participation reasons of women, educational and social relations concepts are similar with our study. The literature addresses the different requirements of women for participating to leisure activities (Torkildsen, 1992; Köktaş, 2004: 125-126). Our research findings correspond with literature by replicating the same leisure participation reasons; social communication, relaxation, creativity, serving to people (Torkildsen, 1992), education and cultural interaction (Köktaş, 2004: 125-126).

The role of leisure in stress-coping has been examined from one of two perspectives: leisure activity as a mechanism for coping with stress, or as a psychosocial phenomenon whereby the underlying functions or meanings of leisure act as a resource or strategy for managing stress. As an example for the former approach, Caltabiano's (1994: 17-31) factor analysis of 83 leisure activities (e.g. jogging, camping, visiting friends, listening to music) reported by 340 respondents in Cairns, Australia, revealed three activity groups (i.e. outdoor-active sport; social; and cultural-hobbies leisure) that were perceived to be equivalent in potential to reduce stress. Kleiber et al. (2002: 219-235) suggested that leisure is a self protective coping device that may serve a variety of functions buffering the effects of negative life events, providing a distraction from stress, or generating hope for the future. One way of showing people's strengths or resilience in coping with stress through leisure is the use of leisure as an opportunity or context to gain valued meanings; social, cultural, spiritual, altruistic or empowerment (Iwasaki, Mactavish and Mackay, 2005: 81-99).

A similar pattern of results was found by our study. As a result of this study, Turkish women participate in invitation days because of the refraining from stress. The factor, refraining from stress, explained a large part of the total variance, having a greater significance than the other five factors statistically. The factor, refraining from stress, was third influential factor as Turkish women's attitudes towards invitation day.

Invitation day is a kind of group leisure activity which is a group therapy because of the communion of the feelings and boredoms, common hobbies, interests of people in this leisure activity. Group leisure activities also effect the life quality in terms of coping with the difficulties, enjoying life (Bergland and Narum, 2007: 36-61). Among the traditional measures, leisure activities exert a positive effect on self-esteem. Activities with relatives and activities with colleague have a positive effect on self-esteem for women (Reitzes, Mutran and Verrill, 1995: 260-277).

Creative leisure activities can become an important part of an individual's strategies for coping with illness or disability; through promoting adaptation, creating meaningful goals and providing distraction from pain and anxiety (Creek, 2008: 299-304). Women can develop their creative skills with these leisure activities organized in an environment by themselves thus they can express themselves and feel better. Therefore, this has a positive effect on women's family, work, social and psychological life. Psychological well-being of the women improves both physical and mental health of women (Arbide, 2008: 64-76). In addition to these benefits, women were in a special preparation for social recreation activities with considering their appearance important, wearing feminine dresses so they remember their femininity image (Stalp, 2008: 325-348).

This study adds to the body of research on motivational factors of women in leisure activities by investigating Turkish women attitudes in invitation day. In brief, invitation days have some benefits like social relations and nostalgia, gaining new knowledge, hand crafts and cultural activities, experience of meal, economy according to research results. This research revealed that Turkish women shared common enjoyments and their boredoms, coped with stress, developed their communication skills, learned new things and also made economic and moral investment participating in these invitation day leisure activities which women get together in their houses.

Limitations and Future Research

Finally, the research limitations should be considered. Given the constraints of this study, there are a number of substantive areas that should be addressed by future research. The culture in Turkey is diverse in terms of traditional behaviors especially if one travels to all seven regions. The sample population of this study limited to Turkish women residing in Eskişehir. The results may not adequately represent the total women population in Turkey. A bigger sample that is able to represent Turkey as a whole would enable the research to reach the clearer and more generalized results. Future studies comprising more Turkish women who are participating to Invitation Days in the other cities and countries as immigrants would obviously yield even more meaningful results.

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