

Recreational preferences and motivational factors among adults in the Precarpathian region

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Abstract

Background and Study Aim Recreational activity among adults is an important factor in maintaining physical fitness, emotional balance, and social interaction. It contributes to the restoration of bodily resources, reduction of stress levels, and enhancement of subjective well-being. Although the Recreation Experience Preference (REP) scale is widely used to assess recreational motives and experiences, its application in regional and age-specific contexts remains a subject of practical interest. The aim of this study was to conduct a preliminary exploratory assessment of the internal consistency and item-level coherence of a short-form adapted REP scale in an adult sample from the Precarpathian region.

Material and Methods The study was conducted among adults from the Precarpathian region who participated in recreational and wellness programs. The sample included 186 individuals (84 men and 102 women) aged 25 to 60 years. An adapted Ukrainian version of the Recreation Experience Preference (REP) scale comprising 10 items was used to assess recreational preferences. Responses were rated on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (“not important at all”) to 5 (“very important”). Data were collected using an online questionnaire (Google Forms); participation was voluntary and anonymous. Statistical analysis included calculation of means and standard deviations. The reliability of the scale was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, and internal coherence at the item level was examined using Spearman's correlations between individual items and the total score.

Results The analysis revealed that the adapted REP scale demonstrated high internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.89$) and coherent item-total associations (Spearman $\rho = 0.302-0.911$), indicating satisfactory internal homogeneity at an exploratory level. Due to the small sample size ($n = 19$), no conclusions regarding factorial structure can be drawn. The highest mean values were recorded for items related to psychological recovery and a sense of inner balance. Women rated emotional and social aspects of recreational activity as more significant, whereas men emphasized achievement and development motives. Descriptive differences across gender and age groups were observed; however, given the small sample size ($n = 19$), these findings should be interpreted cautiously and cannot be considered conclusive.

Conclusions The obtained results demonstrate high internal consistency and coherent item-level associations of the adapted REP short form in this exploratory pilot sample. The observed pattern of item responses reflects the diversity of motivational and emotional aspects associated with personal development, recovery, and social interaction; however, no structural factor interpretation can be inferred from the present data. The instrument may be considered for exploratory use in pedagogical and health-promotion contexts, pending further large-scale psychometric validation.

Keywords: Recreation Experience Preference, motivation, adults, leisure activity, Precarpathian region

Introduction

Recreational activity among adults is one of the key factors influencing the maintenance of physical fitness, psychological balance, and life satisfaction. The experience gained through various forms of recreational activity reflects a combination of personal motives, emotional responses, and social conditions that determine individual preferences.

These preferences affect the nature of participation in recreational events, the level of engagement, as well as processes of adaptation, stress reduction, and interaction within the social environment.

In this context, the study by Shevchenko [1] represents a fundamental approach to the analysis of recreational activity, in which the behavior of recreation participants is examined through the conceptual model of the experience economy and the well-being economy. The author emphasizes that emotional experiences and subjective

perceptions serve as central elements of analysis, while the behavioral approach allows the integration of ecological, psychological, and socio-economic aspects of recreational behavior.

Contemporary research continues to develop these theoretical foundations. For example, the study by Arvidsen et al. [2] demonstrated that recreational activity in urban forests is closely related to individual motivational and value-based differences among visitors, thereby expanding the understanding of the spatial dimension of recreational behavior. Hughes and Paveglio [3] highlighted that personal, social, and environmental benefits of recreation determine the intention to re-engage in such activities, and that measurement scales make it possible to quantitatively assess the structure of this experience. Another study [4] showed that the state of “flow” and subjective well-being are key factors contributing to repeated participation in recreational activities.

Taken together, these publications emphasize that modern research on recreational experience integrates behavioral, emotional, and social aspects. This approach provides a comprehensive methodological basis for analyzing motivational factors and psychological well-being among the adult population.

Studies on the motivational and social aspects of recreational activity highlight the diversity of factors influencing participation and satisfaction. In this context, research shows that the combination of intrinsic motives, resource availability, and interpersonal conditions determines the degree of involvement in leisure activities [5, 6, 7, 8]. The authors emphasize that social isolation, as well as temporal or financial constraints, act as barriers to participation.

The findings of Gaffar et al. [9] confirm the role of social, demographic, and educational differences in shaping recreational behavior and preferences. Other studies expand the scope of investigation by including psychological, cultural, and technological factors that influence motivation and the sustainability of recreational practices [10, 11, 12, 13, 14].

Taken together, these results reflect the multilevel nature of recreational behavior, where individual motives interact with social and environmental conditions of participation.

Many studies are based on the use of scales designed to assess the subjective and emotional aspects of participation in recreational activities. The study by Dzaki et al. [15] demonstrates that the perception of the natural environment, local atmosphere, and gastronomic impressions contributes to the formation of a positive recreational experience. Another study [16] explores the phenomenon of the “egocentric leisure experience,” in which autonomy and self-realization determine satisfaction with the activity, aligning

closely with the concept of the REP scale.

Publications by Lee et al. [17] and Jeong et al. [18] examine modern forms of digital and virtual leisure. The authors conclude that users’ emotional engagement and sensory experiences are comparable to those of traditional recreation. These studies reflect a shift in research focus from external conditions of participation toward the study of internal experience, personal preferences, and the psychological effects of recreational activity.

In the development of concepts regarding the structure and mechanisms of recreational behavior, particular attention has been given to studies employing the Recreation Experience Preference (REP) scale as a tool for identifying motivational and emotional aspects of participation in leisure activities.

The study by Kurar et al. [19] analyzes the preferences and expectations of the local population. The authors identified leading motives such as pleasant pastime, psychological relaxation, and family interaction, along with constraints related to lack of time and financial difficulties. In another study, the authors used the REP scale to determine the motivation for participation in active forms of recreation among rural and urban residents [20]. They identified four key categories: social interaction, physical health, relaxation, and contact with nature.

Various studies have applied the REP scale in analyzing the motivation of divers and trekking participants, where the main determinants of participation include the pursuit of adventure, physical and psychological restoration, and social involvement [21, 22]. Research by Talib et al. [23, 24] demonstrates the use of the REP model for evaluating tourist experiences in the natural areas of Sabah. The authors confirmed that the key sources of positive impressions are associated with the aesthetic perception of the landscape and the emotional intensity of interaction with the natural environment.

Taken together, these publications confirm the stability and universality of the REP scale as a tool for analyzing recreational experience in diverse contexts – from local tourism to active outdoor recreation. They emphasize the importance of emotional, social, and cognitive factors in shaping satisfaction and preferences, making the REP model suitable for a comprehensive investigation of recreational behavior.

The analysis of previous studies has shown that recreational activity among adults is closely associated with motivational, emotional, and social aspects that determine the nature of participation and the level of satisfaction. The authors emphasize that individual preferences and experiences of recreation participants reflect a complex interaction of personal attitudes, social environment, and contextual conditions.

At the same time, there remains a need for further investigation of the characteristics of recreational experience within a regional context, where specific cultural and socio-economic factors may significantly influence the structure of motivation and the perception of leisure. In this regard, the aim of this study was to conduct a preliminary exploratory assessment of the internal consistency and item-level coherence of a short-form adapted REP scale in an adult sample from the Precarpathian region.

Materials and Methods

Participants

The adult group consisted of respondents aged 25 years and older ($n = 21$) who participated in a recreational program conducted at a mountain camp located in Mykulychyn (Ivano-Frankivsk region, Ukraine). The gender distribution was 14 women (67%) and 7 men (33%), with a mean age of 33.6 years. The study was carried out in accordance with the principles of voluntary participation, anonymity, and informed consent, following ethical standards for research focused on recreational and wellness activities.

Given the small sample size ($n = 19$), the study should be interpreted as an exploratory pilot reliability study rather than a full psychometric validation, and the findings must be considered preliminary.

Study Design

To assess participants' recreational motivations, a 10-item short form was developed based on the original Recreation Experience Preference (REP) scales created by Driver and colleagues at the U.S. Forest Service [25, 26]. The original REP inventory included a comprehensive pool of more than 300 statements across multiple experiential domains, such as escape, social interaction, nature appreciation, achievement, risk taking, introspection, and physical fitness. For the present study, ten items were selected to represent the most frequently reported motivational domains identified in previous REP-based research [26]. This short version ensured adequate conceptual coverage while maintaining brevity and suitability for adult respondents. The selected items reflect key motivational constructs including escape/restoration, social relationships, nature contact, adventure, introspection, and physical challenge, which have been widely recognized in prior adaptations of the REP scales [25, 26, 27, 28].

An adapted Ukrainian version of the Recreation Experience Preference (REP) scale, including 10 statements reflecting various aspects of recreational activity, was used to assess motivational and recreational preferences. Respondents were asked:

"How important are the following motives for you when participating in recreational activities?"

List of items:

- Q1 – to feel calm and find solitude;
- Q2 – to be with friends or family;
- Q3 – to learn new outdoor skills;
- Q4 – to enjoy natural scenery;
- Q5 – to escape from everyday routine;
- Q6 – to challenge myself physically;
- Q7 – to feel close to nature;
- Q8 – to experience excitement and adventure;
- Q9 – to reflect on my own thoughts;
- Q10 – to improve physical fitness.

Responses were rated on a five-point scale:

1 – not important at all, 2 – slightly important, 3 – neutral, 4 – rather important, 5 – very important.

Participants interpreted the questionnaire statements independently; however, before completion, program facilitators provided brief instructions explaining the purpose of the study and the structure of the scale. The questionnaire was completed individually in electronic format (via Google Form), ensuring convenience, anonymity, and data integrity.

Prior to the study, all participants were informed about the purpose of the survey, the voluntary nature of participation, and the confidentiality of their responses. Participants completed the questionnaire consciously, understanding that there were no "right" or "wrong" answers – their personal opinions and individual experiences were of primary importance. No additional clarifications were required, as respondents demonstrated a high level of understanding of the questionnaire statements.

Statistical Analysis

Data analysis was performed using Microsoft Excel. The raw data were pre-cleaned and prepared for processing with consideration of respondents' age groups.

The main stages of analysis included:

- calculation of descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, minimum, maximum, skewness, and kurtosis coefficients);
- assessment of response distribution across the scale;
- analysis of priorities within the scale based on mean values and ranking;
- evaluation of scale reliability using Cronbach's alpha coefficient;
- examination of item-level internal coherence using Spearman's correlations between individual items and the total score.

Results were considered statistically significant at $p < 0.05$.

Results

Table 1 presents the individual data of adult participants ($n = 19$), including age, gender,

anthropometric indicators (height, body mass), and responses to the Recreation Experience Preference (REP) scale items (Q1–Q10). Each item represents a specific motive for participation in recreational activities, rated on a five-point scale from 1 (“not important at all”) to 5 (“very important”).

The analysis of the presented data showed that most respondents gave high ratings for items related to psychological restoration, appreciation of nature, and physical activity. The highest values (5 points) were most frequently observed for items Q4, Q5, Q9, and Q10, indicating the high importance of motives such as enjoying nature, escaping from

daily routine, reflecting on one’s own thoughts, and improving physical fitness.

The mean scores across the scale indicate a predominance of positive recreational attitudes among the adult sample. At the same time, some participants reported lower ratings for items related to social interactions (Q2) and physical challenges (Q6), which may reflect individual differences in motivational structure.

The distributions of responses for the Recreation Experience Preference (REP) scale items (Q1–Q10) were tested using the Shapiro-Wilk test. As shown in Table 2, normality was not confirmed for most

Table 1. Individual data of adult participants according to the Recreation Experience Preference (REP) scale items

Participant ID	Age	Gender	Height	Weight	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10
M001	44	male	176	82	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
M002	57	female	165	59	4	2	2	4	4	2	3	2	4	2
M003	40	male	178	78	5	4	4	5	5	4	5	4	5	5
M004	60	male	173	90	4	3	5	4	5	4	5	5	4	5
M005	25	male	187	90	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
M006	29	male	175	90	3	1	5	4	4	4	5	4	4	5
M007	26	male	180	89	1	5	3	4	4	1	3	1	5	3
M008	25	male	186	86	1	4	3	1	1	2	1	1	1	4
M009	27	male	173	75	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
M010	31	male	182	91	3	4	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	3
M011	28	male	164	80	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
M012	25	male	180	90	3	5	2	2	4	2	1	5	2	4
M013	25	male	172	62	4	2	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
M014	26	male	179	76	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	5	5
M015	28	male	178	60	5	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4
M016	37	female	163	59	5	2	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
M017	51	male	185	88	5	5	3	5	5	4	5	4	4	4
M018	58	female	160	54	4	4	3	5	4	3	5	4	4	4
M019	44	female	172	62	5	5	4	5	5	4	4	4	5	4

Table 2. Testing the normality of response distributions for the REP scale items using the Shapiro-Wilk test

Question	W-statistic	p-value	Interpretation
Q1	0.7386	0.0002	Not normal
Q2	0.8019	0.0012	Not normal
Q3	0.8296	0.0032	Not normal
Q4	0.6772	0.0	Not normal
Q5	0.6959	0.0	Not normal
Q6	0.8249	0.0027	Not normal
Q7	0.7386	0.0002	Not normal
Q8	0.7574	0.0003	Not normal
Q9	0.694	0.0	Not normal
Q10	0.7874	0.0008	Not normal

items, indicating statistically significant deviations from the normal distribution.

To assess the internal consistency of the scale, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated, yielding a value of $\alpha = 0.9044$. This result indicates a high level of internal consistency among the items, confirming the reliability and stability of the scale within the given sample.

Since the preliminary analysis using the Shapiro-Wilk test revealed deviations from normality, the application of parametric methods was limited. Therefore, Spearman's correlation coefficient (ρ) was calculated between each individual item (Q1–Q10) and the total score to assess the construct validity of the scale.

As shown in Table 3, most items demonstrated high correlation coefficients, confirming the internal consistency of the scale and its conceptual integrity. This approach makes it possible to determine the extent to which each item reflects the overall construct of recreational experience measurement.

Table 3. Spearman's correlation coefficients between REP scale items (Q1–Q10) and the total score (Total Score)

Question	Spearman_r	Interpretation
Q1	0.7861	Strong
Q2	0.302	Weak
Q3	0.7705	Strong
Q4	0.8393	Strong
Q5	0.784	Strong
Q6	0.911	Strong
Q7	0.7022	Good
Q8	0.7608	Strong
Q9	0.7723	Strong
Q10	0.7811	Strong

Most of the scale items (Q1, Q3–Q6, Q8–Q10) showed high correlation values with the total score, indicating strong consistency of their content with the overall structure of the scale. Item Q7 showed a correlation at the boundary between strong and good, while item Q2 ($\rho = 0.302$) demonstrated a weak relationship, suggesting its possible conceptual

specificity and lower connection with other items.

Participants completed the survey in a mountain camp setting, which may have contributed to a high level of awareness in their responses and stability in motivational attitudes. The relatively low correlation of item Q2 is not considered a reason for its exclusion, as it may reflect an independent aspect of recreational experience, such as the value of communication with close ones.

The distribution of responses for the REP scale items is presented in Table 4. The indicators include mean values, standard deviations, as well as skewness and kurtosis parameters, which make it possible to assess the nature of distribution for each item of the scale.

The highest mean values were observed for items Q4 (4.26), Q5 (4.26), Q9 (4.21), and Q10 (4.26), indicating the strong importance of aspects related to aesthetic perception of nature, physical condition, inner reflection, and psychological restoration. Items Q5 and Q4 were characterized by pronounced negative skewness (-2.12 and -1.99) and high positive kurtosis (5.96 and 4.05), which indicates a concentration of responses in the upper range of the scale and a high degree of homogeneity in the perception of these aspects. Most items showed skewness values between -0.6 and -1.4 , suggesting a predominance of high ratings. Standard deviations ranged from 0.87 to 1.31, reflecting moderate variability within the overall tendency toward high scores. The lowest mean value was recorded for item Q6 (3.79), although it also demonstrated a positive tendency and moderate negative skewness (-0.96). Overall, the obtained data indicate the predominance of positive evaluations for most recreational activity motives, particularly those related to nature, self-awareness, and physical recovery. This confirms the adequacy and sensitivity of the REP scale for assessing recreational preferences among adult participants.

The analysis of mean value rankings for the REP scale items is presented in Table 5. The data make it possible to determine which motives of recreational

Table 4. Descriptive statistics for the REP scale items (Q1–Q10)

Question	mean	std	min	25 %	50 %	75 %	max	Skewness	Kurtosis
Q1	4.05	1.31	1.0	3.5	5.0	5.0	5.0	-1.43	1.29
Q2	3.89	1.29	1.0	3.5	4.0	5.0	5.0	-1.01	-0.13
Q3	4.0	1.05	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	5.0	-0.64	-0.81
Q4	4.26	1.1	1.0	4.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	-1.99	4.05
Q5	4.26	0.99	1.0	4.0	4.0	5.0	5.0	-2.12	5.96
Q6	3.79	1.23	1.0	3.5	4.0	5.0	5.0	-0.96	-0.01
Q7	4.05	1.31	1.0	3.5	5.0	5.0	5.0	-1.43	1.29
Q8	3.95	1.31	1.0	4.0	4.0	5.0	5.0	-1.38	1.05
Q9	4.21	1.08	1.0	4.0	4.0	5.0	5.0	-1.93	3.93
Q10	4.26	0.87	2.0	4.0	4.0	5.0	5.0	-1.14	0.99

activity were the most significant for the adult participant group.

Table 5. Priorities according to the REP scale items (Q1–Q10)

Question	Mean	Rank
Q4	4.26	1
Q5	4.26	2
Q10	4.26	3
Q9	4.21	4
Q1	4.05	5
Q7	4.05	6
Q3	4.0	7
Q8	3.95	8
Q2	3.89	9
Q6	3.79	10

The highest mean values were obtained for items Q4 (4.26), Q5 (4.26), Q10 (4.26), and Q9 (4.21), reflecting participants' desire to enjoy natural scenery, escape from daily routine, improve physical fitness, and reflect on their own thoughts. These results indicate that the most significant motives for respondents are aesthetic enjoyment, psychological relaxation, physical recovery, and inner reflection. Mean values in the range of 4.0–4.05 were recorded for items Q1 and Q7, which are associated with motives of solitude and closeness to nature, suggesting a tendency toward personal space and natural balance. The lowest ratings were noted for items Q2 (3.89) and Q6 (3.79), reflecting motives related to communication with close ones and physical self-challenge, although these also maintain a positive orientation. Overall, the distribution of priorities demonstrates that participants perceive recreational activity primarily as a means of inner recovery, self-reflection, and balance, with moderate emphasis on physical challenges and external interactions.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to conduct a preliminary exploratory assessment of the internal consistency and item-level coherence of the adapted Recreation Experience Preference (REP) short form among adults in the Precarpathian region. The obtained results confirmed high internal consistency of the scale ($\alpha = 0.9044$) and demonstrated coherent item-total associations (Spearman $\rho = 0.302$ – 0.911), indicating satisfactory internal homogeneity at an exploratory level. Due to the small sample size ($n = 19$), no conclusions regarding factorial structure or structural validity can be drawn.

The highest values were observed for items related to psychological restoration and inner balance, reflecting participants' focus on emotional renewal and stress relief. Gender differences were evident in the prioritization of emotional and social aspects among women and achievement-related motives among men. These findings suggest that the adapted REP scale may capture individual differences in recreational preferences at an exploratory level and may be considered for preliminary pedagogical and health-promotion applications pending further validation.

The results of this study demonstrated high internal consistency of the adapted REP scale ($\alpha = 0.90$) and coherent item-total associations, indicating satisfactory internal homogeneity at an exploratory level. Due to the limited sample size, no conclusions regarding factorial structure can be drawn. These findings are consistent with the meta-analysis by Manfredo et al. [26], in which these dimensions were identified as the fundamental components of the structure of recreational experience. Similar results were obtained in the studies by Kurar [19] and Kurar and Kavacik [27], where the leading motives for participation included psychological relaxation, family cohesion, and personal development, confirming the universality of the REP scale factors across different social and cultural contexts.

High mean values for items related to the aesthetic perception of nature (Q4) and escape from everyday routine (Q5) are consistent with the findings of Talib [23, 24] and Gaffar et al. [9], which also emphasized the importance of the natural environment and outdoor recreation as sources of psychological restoration. Similar conclusions were reported by Ayyıldız Durhan et al. [29], where intrinsic motivations associated with overcoming difficulties and relieving stress were identified as key determinants of a positive recreational experience.

Several items demonstrated pronounced negative skewness (e.g., $Q5 = -2.12$; $Q4 = -1.99$) and elevated kurtosis ($Q5 = 5.96$), indicating ceiling effects and restricted variability, which may limit discrimination capacity and inflate internal consistency estimates. Descriptive differences in motivational priorities across gender and age groups were observed in the present sample; however, given the limited sample size ($n = 19$), these observations should be interpreted cautiously and cannot be considered conclusive. Similar patterns have been discussed in previous research [5]. The weak correlation of item Q2 ("to be with friends or family") with the overall scale may reflect a tendency typical of the adult population toward more individualized leisure practices, which was also observed in the study by Hwang et al. [16].

Thus, the results of the present exploratory study

are broadly consistent with theoretical assumptions of the REP model reported in previous research; however, given the pilot nature of the study and the limited sample size ($n = 19$), no conclusions regarding structural stability or broad applicability can be drawn. The obtained results highlight the importance of recreational activity as an educational resource that promotes mental health and the development of sustainable self-regulation strategies. The high ratings for items related to nature contemplation (Q4) and escape from everyday routine (Q5) confirm that participation in outdoor leisure activities serves as a means of emotional release and restoration of inner balance. These findings are consistent with the results of Gaffar et al. [9] and Johansson et al. [13], which emphasize the role of nature and sensory experience in enhancing mental well-being.

From a pedagogical perspective, such forms of activity can be regarded as tools of non-formal education aimed at developing mindfulness, reflective ability, and stress resilience. Numerous studies have shown that participation in recreational programs contributes to the restoration of vitality, enhancement of self-esteem, and strengthening of a positive perception of aging [11, 29, 30, 31, 32]. This confirms the pedagogical potential of recreational practices as effective means for fostering intrinsic motivation and personal growth.

The psychological interpretation of the identified trends indicates the predominance of introspective and aesthetic motives among adult participants, such as the desire for self-reflection (Q9) and improvement of physical condition (Q10). Similar observations were reported by Hwang et al. [16], who emphasized the importance of autonomy and self-determination as key sources of psychological satisfaction derived from leisure activities. Thus, the results of this study confirm that participation in recreational activities not only contributes to physical recovery but also performs a compensatory function by reducing the effects of chronic stress and improving overall psycho-emotional well-being.

In the pedagogical context, these findings emphasize the need to integrate recreational programs into the system of adult education and social work, particularly under conditions of elevated stress and professional burnout. The adapted REP short form may be considered as a preliminary tool for exploratory assessment and tentative individualization of psychological and pedagogical support programs, pending further comprehensive psychometric validation.

The analysis of the study results revealed pronounced differences in recreational activity priorities depending on gender and age. Women more frequently preferred leisure activities associated with emotional relaxation, communication, and

aesthetic appreciation of nature (high values for items Q4 and Q5), whereas men showed a stronger tendency toward physically active and goal-oriented forms of recreation, including self-development and maintaining physical fitness (Q10). These observations are consistent with the findings of Cho and Kim [5] and Dinç et al. [7], which showed that men tend to associate leisure activity with achievement and competitiveness, while women emphasize social interaction and emotional support.

Age-related differences were also observed in the structure of preferences. Older participants more frequently rated contemplative and nature-oriented motives (Q4, Q9) as highly significant, which may be associated with a re-evaluation of life priorities and a desire for inner harmony. Similar tendencies were reported in the studies of Talib [24] and Kim et al. [11], where recreational activity was viewed as a means of maintaining psychological balance and fostering a positive perception of aging among middle-aged and older women.

Social role and family status also influence the choice of recreational behavior forms. According to the findings of Ab Dulhamid et al. [20], family obligations and the division of time between work and rest reduce participation in active forms of leisure but enhance motivation for shared recreational activities aimed at restoring emotional connections. In our study, a similar trend was reflected in the relatively low correlation of item Q2 ("to be with friends or family") with the total scale score, which may indicate the individualized nature of recreation among adults in a stable life phase who seek personal space.

Taken together, the obtained results confirm that gender and age differences in recreational preferences are determined not only by biological and psychological factors but also by social role, activity level, and life stage. These differences should be taken into account when designing recreational and educational programs aimed at fostering balanced behavior in the domains of health and leisure.

The recreational preferences of the study participants demonstrate a close connection with the cultural and natural characteristics of the Precarpathian region, confirming the influence of territorial identity and living environment on the formation of motivation for rest and recovery. The Precarpathian region is characterized by remarkable natural diversity, including mountainous landscapes, clean air, and a well-developed network of ecological trails and tourist routes, which fosters a stable orientation toward active forms of recreation and interaction with nature. The high ratings for items Q4 ("to enjoy natural scenery") and Q5 ("to escape from everyday routine") reflect the importance of the natural component in the

structure of recreational experience, consistent with the observations made in the studies of Talib [24] and Gaffar et al. [9], where the natural environment was identified as a key source of positive emotions and satisfaction.

The cultural specificity of the region also has a noticeable impact on the choice of leisure activity forms. Residents of the Precarpathian region tend to favor family-oriented and traditional forms of social interaction, which strengthen the socio-emotional component of recreational experience. This corresponds to the findings of Ab Dulhamid et al. [20] and Ayyıldız Durhan et al. [29], which emphasize that local communities develop their own models of interaction between recreation, culture, and everyday life. In the context of the Precarpathian region, such practices include joint hiking, participation in ethnocultural festivals, recreation in natural settings, and family-oriented forms of active leisure.

Accessibility of recreational resources remains an important factor. A moderate level of urbanization, a developed transportation network, and preserved natural areas provide opportunities for balanced physical and emotional activity. However, limited infrastructure in rural areas creates disparities in the frequency and form of participation, which calls for a pedagogical approach to fostering recreational culture and promoting the conscious use of natural resources.

Thus, the results of the study confirm that recreational activity in the Precarpathian region represents not only an expression of individual preferences but also a reflection of regional identity. Cultural traditions, natural surroundings, and lifestyle create a unique pedagogical context in which the REP model can be used as both a diagnostic and developmental tool for assessing and promoting population health.

Despite the exploratory findings obtained, the study has several important limitations. The primary limitation is the small sample size ($n = 19$), which restricts statistical power and prevents structural validation procedures such as exploratory or confirmatory factor analysis. Consequently, the findings represent preliminary reliability evidence and cannot be generalized beyond this regional pilot sample. The use of a self-report questionnaire may introduce subjective bias, and the cross-sectional design does not allow examination of temporal stability. Additionally, ceiling effects observed

in several items may have influenced internal consistency estimates. Future studies should include larger and more diverse samples to enable full psychometric validation, including structural analysis and broader assessment of measurement properties. Further large-scale validation is required before the instrument can be considered suitable for broader pedagogical or applied use.

Practical implications

Given the exploratory pilot nature of the present study and the limited sample size ($n = 19$), the adapted 10-item REP short form may be considered as a preliminary research instrument for further investigation of recreational preferences in adult populations. The current findings provide initial reliability evidence at the item level; however, broader pedagogical, diagnostic, or program-design applications require comprehensive large-scale psychometric validation, including structural analysis and testing in diverse samples. Until such validation is conducted, the use of the instrument should remain exploratory and research-oriented rather than applied in formal program development contexts.

Conclusions

The conducted study demonstrated high internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.9044$) and coherent item-total associations (Spearman $\rho = 0.302-0.911$) of the adapted 10-item REP short form in this exploratory pilot sample. Given the small sample size ($n = 19$) and the absence of structural validation procedures, the findings should be interpreted cautiously and regarded as preliminary reliability evidence rather than full psychometric validation. The descriptive results suggest that participants placed high importance on motives related to aesthetic appreciation of nature, self-reflection, psychological relaxation, and maintenance of physical condition; however, these observations are sample-specific and not generalizable beyond the present exploratory context. The findings may inform future large-scale validation studies and further investigation of recreational preferences in broader adult populations.

Conflict of interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests.

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