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Participation - Exploring the Role of Involvement in Recreational Tennis and Implications for Other Racket Sports



Recreational tennis is more than just hitting a ball over the net—it is a social, psychological, and physical experience. According to a recent study by Karakullukcu et al. (2025) entitled *“Re-participation intention in individuals playing tennis for recreational purposes: investigation of differences based on low and high involvement”* (Frontiers in Psychology, 16, 10.3389/fpsyg.2025.1546405), people who perceive tennis as an important part of their leisure time (high involvement) are much more likely to stay committed long-term than those with a lower personal attachment.

TABLE 1 Demographic characteristics of participants.

Age	Mean	S.D.
	21.95	2.44
Gender	<i>F</i>	%
Male	172	52.6
Female	155	47.4
Education level	<i>F</i>	%
Secondary education	17	5.2
Bachelor's degree	297	90.8
Graduate degree	13	4.0
Purpose of participation	<i>F</i>	%
Socialization	166	49.2
Physical health	122	37.3
Mental health	44	13.5
Participation frequency	<i>F</i>	%
Once a week	185	56.6
Twice a week	103	31.5
≥Three times	39	11.9

High Involvement vs. Low Involvement

In the study, participants were grouped according to their level of “involvement,” meaning the extent to which they identify with and value tennis as a key leisure pursuit:

- **High Involvement:** Tennis is viewed as central to their lifestyle, bringing them purpose, enjoyment, and identity.
- **Low Involvement:** Participants see tennis as a fun but less critical activity, without a deep emotional or personal investment.

Analyses showed that people in the high-involvement group consistently expressed a stronger intention to keep playing tennis. Their enjoyment, social bonds, and perceived benefits propelled them to rejoin or continue in the sport.

Re-Participation Intentions: The Power of Personal Meaning

A standout discovery in this research is that a strong personal connection—often called *leisure involvement*—correlates with higher re-participation rates. In other words, if tennis feels meaningful to participants, they develop deeper loyalty and motivation to keep coming back.

Key factors contributing to this involvement include:

- **Social Connectivity:** Training partners, friendly matches, group events.
- **Sense of Achievement:** Skills gained, personal progress, measurable goals.
- **Physical and Mental Benefits:** Stress relief, fitness improvements, self-confidence.



Implications for Other Racket Sports

These findings have practical implications beyond tennis. Sports like squash, badminton, padel, or table tennis share similar structures and social elements. The “involvement effect” often looks the same:

- **Higher Involvement = Greater Willingness to Continue**
- **Social and Emotional Investment = Higher Satisfaction**

Whether you run a club or organize a league, creating a community spirit and showcasing the benefits of participation can help transition casual players into deeply engaged, long-term participants.

Practical Recommendations

Based on the study (Karakullukcu et al., 2025), organizations or facilities looking to increase sustained participation might:

- ## Full Reference to the Study

Karakullukcu, O. F., Ayhan, C., Kalkan, T., Okudan, B., Talaghir, L.-G., & Iconomescu, T. M. (2025). *Re-participation intention in individuals playing tennis for recreational purposes: investigation of differences based on low and high involvement*.



Conclusion

3/3