

Positive and Negative Effects of Digital Games in the Digitalization Process

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Introduction

The word “oyun”, one of the oldest words in Turkish (And, 2012: 37), appears among the various names of Central Asian shamans, for example, as “oyun, uyun” among the Yakuts. Female shamans are called “udahan” in Mongolian, the middle shaman “orta-oyun” and the supreme shaman “uluhan-oyun”. The word “play” is used not only for shamans but also for all shamanic ceremonies (e.g. in Turkestan). Thus, with the word play, the origins of theater, dance and various spectacles are gathered at one point (And, 1974, as cited in Hazar, 2017: 3).

Play has become indispensable as a part of human life since the emergence of human beings. Scientists have characterized play in various ways. According to Gross, “Play is an acquisition of experience, it is the experience of the attitude situations that the individual will encounter in daily life in his future life through play. In this way, the child has the chance to experience the events that he may experience in the future in a protected area.” Freud defined the definition of play as “useful activities that help children and young people to help their social development and to find the individual self. Freud also defines it as “a mirror that reflects the child’s movements and self.” Plato suggests that “education should be done in two areas: physical/motor and psychological education. Children should grow up with play by emphasizing the importance of the concept of play in terms of physical education”. Bandura defines play as; “The child communicates in play, expresses himself, has friends and becomes a social being. The socialized child makes observations and acquires new behaviors when repeated” (Duman, 2015). Play helps children to feel good about themselves (Alıncak, 2016). Play is an outlet for the child’s happiness and excess energy in life (Nutku, 2006). Play is one of the basic building blocks of personality, which includes various values such as sociability, ability and intelligence. Play is the most important element that prepares the child for life and guides him/her in his/her life, as well as internalizing the right behaviors in the child’s social life (Alıncak and Tuzcuoğulları, 2016). Play is a form of learning that involves the discharge of excess energy, relaxation and pleasure (Aksoy and Çiftçi, 2014). At the same time, play is an activity that allows children to recognize themselves (Yıkılmaz and Kurşun, 2018; Ayan et al., 2017).

A game is a situation in which there are participants who play the game and objects that are played or spectators who watch those who play, which is fun and allows excess energy to be discharged (Ardahan & Altunpınar, 2018). Play is an important part for the child that he/she enjoys, starts and continues in line with his/her own wishes and supports his/her holistic development (Ogelman, 2014). Therefore, play is a very important educational tool in terms of child development (Alıncak, 2016). Play activities are a need of the child. The child expresses himself/herself more comfortably through play. Everything obtained in the game process provides permanence. As a result, the child starts his communication with his peers and his relationship with the environment through play. In this sense, children try to fulfill some of their needs through play activities (Alıncak et al. 2017). Play is a mirror of social life that appeals to individuals of all ages, which emerges with the jokes that adults make to spend time and children make among themselves for both learning and entertainment (Yıldırım, 2016).

The concept of play is the definition given to all of the enjoyable activities that individuals do in their free time in line with the main purposes and rules, voluntarily, as a means of socialization, as a means of socialization, where excitement situations are common, affecting those who participate in the game and those who watch, and not looking for any material benefit (Hazar, 2006). Alıncak and Tuzcuoğulları (2016) stated that games are activities that make children ready for life, guide their development and are effective in obtaining basic behaviors. Some researchers have also reported that play is a way of expelling excess energy in human life. Some theorists have also adopted the view that individuals exhibit the ability to imitate in their playful activities (Hazar, 2006).

Play is a part of life in which all people express themselves in the best way from childhood to adulthood (Sormaz and Yüksel, 2012; Kulaksızoğlu, 2016). Societies have played games to have fun and relax from the first stages of history to the present day, and with the developing technology, there has been a transition away from the traditional game type and towards digital games (Özdemir, 2005). Digital games are games that offer visuals that people enjoy using devices such as computers, tablets and mobile phones to evaluate the time left for them after they finish their work (Çetin, 2013).

Digital games have become one of the most indispensable games of children in the 21st century and children prefer to play digital games in the first place among the activities to be applied in the first time they find (Hazar et al., 2017). While these games have positive features such as problem solving, analyzing, seeing from different perspectives, they also have many negative features such as violence, fighting and swearing (Aksoy and Çiftçi, 2014).

Various definitions have been made for years regarding the concept of play. The most obvious reason for this situation is that every society and culture has a different understanding of play, which leads to different definitions. According to the changing needs and desires of the society in the process, games are enjoyable activities that can always keep their value in its current state (Tuğrul, 2010). According to the Turkish Language Institution, the word “game” is defined as “entertainment that develops skills and memory, has certain rules, and provides a pleasant time” (TDK, 2023). There are many researchers who have conducted research to reveal and express the different effects of play. While Aristotle explains play as an imitation of the actions that children will realize in the future, Ouantilianus explains play as the first education to be offered to the individual. According to Comenius, play is an effective learning method in the child’s life and plays an important role in the acquisition of rules and order (Eni, 2017).

Johan Huizinga describes people who play games as “ludens” and people learn their daily life by playing games. According to Huizinga, playing games is an important activity in the lives of individuals and individuals even express themselves through games. Play is a collection of voluntary behaviors that people carry out entirely of their own volition. For this reason, playing games are activities that depend on a person’s

pleasure and a time when they have no work (Huizinga, 2015). According to Piaget, it is defined as discovering, experimenting and adapting to objects coming from the external environment (Aral, Gürsoy and Köksal, 2001).

Based on the definitions of play, play can be defined as a set of activities that allow children to relax physically and spiritually, express their wishes, make sense of social life and gain experience, improve all areas of development, are enjoyable for children and are generally played as an imitation of social life (Cinel, 2006). It has been observed that motoric features develop more quickly and social behaviors improve with educational games (Ayan et al., 2015). Playing games is actually a need, it has always existed and will continue to exist in the lives of humans and all other living things. Games are activities that are beneficial in many developmental areas such as social skills, peer relations, cognitive development, language development, motor development, especially in childhood. When important factors such as gaining the ability to express oneself freely in school life and supporting language development are carried out together with games, it is easier to achieve these gains. Play prepares the child for real life. Through play, children can express their emotions, feel happy and show positive psychological developmental characteristics. In addition, playing games in children is also effective in variables such as making choices and problem solving (Yalçın & Bertiz, 2019).

Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to discuss the positive and negative effects of digital games on children.

Digital Game Concept

With the advancement of technology, differentiating living conditions, urbanization in cities, and the decrease and disappearance of places to play on the streets, people spend their free time with technological devices such as televisions, phones, computers, and tablets. In this context, we come across digital games, which have an important place in life (Gentile, 2009). Digital games are multimedia applications that can be played by computer and portable technological devices (such as phones and tablets) within the framework of certain rules, according to the tastes of people, strategy, action, etc. types, which can be played alone or with different people by connecting over the internet or offline (Kılıç, 2021).

Researchers examining digital games from different perspectives have defined digital game characteristics. In the definition made by Prensky (2001), it is stated that games consist of twelve features as listed below:

- Games are enjoyable and entertaining.
- Games help to engage passionately and are immersive.
- Games have certain rules. These rules constitute the structure of games.
- Games are interactive and provide active participation of the players.
- Games have motivating purposes for the player.
- The difficulty of the games can be adjusted according to the success of the player. In this way, players can be kept in the game.
- There are situations in games where players are victorious and their ego can be satisfied.
- Games have feedbacks and outputs. Through these, players learn.
- Games have problems that need to be solved. They are effective in developing

players' creativity.

- Games involve challenge, race, competition and struggle. These are exciting for players.
- Games have stories. Players become part of this story and experience the emotions in the story.
- There is interaction between players in games. In this way, social groups are formed.

Definition of a Digital Game

A digital game is a set of systems with rules and objectives in which user interfaces such as a screen, mouse, keyboard or joystick interact with computer software. Digital games are games programmed using various technologies that offer a visual environment to the user. These games, which are programmed with different software and using different technologies, are classified as digital console games, computer games and online games according to the technology used (Gökçearsalan & Durak, 2014). Players can play alone against artificial intelligence or against each other online (Bozkurt, 2014). According to many scientific studies, digital games are an important tool for learning skills such as tactical thinking, reaction time, and problem solving in terms of their contribution to child development. There are many scientific studies on these games that have benefits for children's development, especially mental development (Hazar, et al., 2017).

The concept of digital games has emerged with the development of technology and its important place in life. Although the development of technology and the emergence of digital games are relatively old, they are defined in different ways. In the literature, it is seen that the concepts of video games and computer games are used interchangeably, and some researchers also state that the concepts of digital games and console games can be added to these (Mitchell & Savill-Smith, 2004).

Digital games are defined as games that are played using various technological devices (computer, game console, mobile phone, tablet, etc.) and allow user input and can be played online or offline (Bozkurt, 2014; Kılıç, 2021). These games provide a visual and auditory environment (Çetin and Erbay, 2021; Aksel, 2018; Erboy and Akar Vural, 2010).

In his study, Çetin and Erbay (2021) defines digital games as simulations in which visual and auditory elements produced by computer technologies are present and these elements are controlled through different hardware within certain time and rules. In the Digital Game Report (2020) published in 2020, digital games are defined as software based on computer technologies, based on text and visuality, and a leisure time activity that can be used alone with different technological devices or on electronic platforms with multiple, physical or online methods. Budak (2020) generally defines digital games as the integration of technology with games and the playing of these games by children and adults through digital devices.

Positive Effects of Digital Games

The fact that games played in digital environments have reached large masses in different age groups has been the subject of many studies. These studies cover the effects of digital games on people. It is known that digital games create environments such as entertainment, leisure time activity and socialization like traditional games. It is seen that people get away from the stress of daily life, experience different emotional states with games, enjoy, reduce stress and experience emotional satisfaction. It is also said to meet social needs such as meeting new people, chatting and establishing friendship relationships. In addition to these, it is also stated that it improves skills such as hand-eye coordination, quick thinking and decision-making (Wang et al., 2015; Karataş and Erden, 2012; Kelleci, 2008).

Since the development of digital games, a large number of studies have been conducted on the effects of digital games on children's developmental areas. Although digital games are played by all age groups, they are also widely used by preschool children Ataman-Yengin, (2012) . In line with the research conducted, it has been revealed that games have both advantages and disadvantages, and that these vary according to the types of games played by children and the time spent in the game. Digital tools have become a part of children's daily lives. In the preschool period, digital play, designed with the development of technology, can be used as a powerful educational tool for successful and active learning. The use of digital games in education is beneficial for increasing learning motivation and cognitive development (Zaranis, Kalogiannakis and Papadakis, 2013).

It has been found that digital games are chosen due to factors such as being entertaining, spatial visualization, communication, language, helpfulness, empathy, and interesting elements (Toran et al. 2016; Anderson and Warburton, 2012). However, despite its benefits, it reveals many problems such as addiction in the preschool period and parents have a duty at this point (Yıldırım, 2018). Preschool children are observed to imitate and imitate the adults around them (Akkoyunlu and Tuğrul, 2002). In the studies conducted, it has been determined that normalizing spending time with digital games by avoiding excessive use and these games have positive contributions such as relaxing the person (Prot, Anderson, Gentile and Swing, 2014; Mustafaoğlu and Yasacı, 2018).

Following and consciously using digital games greatly benefits children's mental, social, spiritual, etc. development areas. Finding the right digital game activates cognitive skills, helps children to stay calm in stressful situations, develop multitasking skills, and concentrate their attention for a long time (Çakır, Horzum, & Ayas, 2013; Lin & Hou, 2015). Digital games also have benefits such as children's acquisition of computer literacy skills, visual skills, imagination, and mathematical thinking (Horzum, Ayas and Çakırbalta, 2008).

Negative Effects of Digital Games

In addition to the developmental features of digital games when they are used in a supervised and aware manner, they cause psychomotor and emotional problems in children when they are used for too long (Horzum, Ayas and Çakırbalta, 2008). In this part, families have a great role and should prefer games that are appropriate for children's developmental levels and age. Digital gaming can cause many problems such as violence, obesity, skeletal and blood flow disorders, sleep problems, distancing from real life, dry eyes, attention deficit and decreased academic achievement, fatigue and drowsiness, tendency towards violence, impaired perception of time and place, and impaired interpersonal relationships (Özdemir and Karaboğa, 2021; Gentile, Swing, Lim and Khoo, 2011; Chiu, Lee and Huang, 2004; Wan and Chiou, 2006). Children who use too many digital games attend social activities for very little time and move away from social spaces as time passes. In this way, it can lead to disruption of daily life tasks, problems in social relationships, problems in talking to each other and keeping up with each other, being alone, and desensitization towards moving away from society. It has been determined in the researches that violent games attract the most attention regarding the disadvantages of digital games. The first research on the violent tendency of digital games started in 1976, there has been a significant increase in the studies on digital games since the 1980s, and in 2000, due to visual and auditory developments in technology, it has involved children more (Aydoğdu Karaaslan, 2015).

It is important to note that especially in children who play digital games, communication with their peers decreases, violent games increase the tendency towards violence and aggression levels, and desensitize children to violence (Brown and Bobkowski, 2011; Lemmens et al., 2011). When we look at the disadvantages of digital games, fatigue and sleepiness, decrease in self-care skills, tendency towards violence, deterioration

in time and place perception, distancing from real life, deterioration in interpersonal relationships, and causing addiction constitute an important part of these (Chiu, Lee, and Huang, 2004; Wan and Chiou, 2006).

The world of digital games may have a different perception of time and space from the physical world we know. This can lead to disruption in children's perception of reality and inability to make sense of it (Ögel, 2012; Ministry of Health, 2018).

Conclusion

Children who use too many digital games attend social activities for shorter periods of time and withdraw from society as time passes. In this way, it can cause disruption in daily life, problems in social relationships, problems in talking to each other and keeping up with each other, being alone, and desensitization towards moving away from society (Ministry of Health, 2018).

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