EXAMINING SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' MOTIVATIONS FOR PLAYING DIGITAL GAMES

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, it seems that rapidly developing technology has entered every stage of our lives. Nowadays, where the internet, technology and digital games are in every aspect of our lives, we can say that people of all ages and professions use them. The aim of the study is to examine secondary school students' motivation for playing digital games in terms of various variables. The population of the research is 397 students, 203 of whom are female and 194 of whom are male, studying in secondary schools affiliated with Iğdır Provincial Directorate of National Education (MEM). The sample group was chosen voluntarily. "Digital Game Playing Motivation Scale (DOOMÖ)", developed by "Demir and Hazar" in 2018, was used as the data collection tool of the research. The scale is a 5-point Likert type and consists of 3 sub-dimensions. Data were analyzed with the SPSS program. T-test and One Way Anova tests were applied to the data analysis. As a result of the research, it was found that secondary school students' digital game playing motivation scores were high. It was determined that there was no difference between the groups in terms of the play time variable in the curiosity and social acceptance, uncertainty in play desire sub-dimensions of the scale, and those with 4, 3 and 2 game time scores scored higher than those with 1, and those with 4 score 2 in the success and revitalization sub-dimensions. It was concluded that they obtained higher scores than those who did not.

Keywords: Secondary school student, Digital game, Motivation

INTRODUCTION

Play is a necessity, especially for children, where they prepare for the next developmental period, try out what they will do beyond time, and ensure various psychological and psycho-motor development. From past to present, play has a universally important place in human life. A look at play behavior in humans and even animals reveals that play behavior is a fundamental drive, as supported by neuro-scientific play-based findings (Landreth & Ray, 2017; Alıncak, 2016).

Developing technology, with its contributions to the world of science, has become an indispensable part of life from education to social life, including children, youth, adults and middle age. The game-playing behavior, which used to be more traditional in the past, has now turned into digital with the rapid developments in the field of technology and informatics and the increase in economic investments in technology and the digital world. The digital world, which offers easier access to games all over the world at any time and from anywhere, offers an environment for individuals of all age groups as a playground and game tool (Birds & Edward, 2015).

Although the game was played with toy devices in the past, it is thought to have been replaced by digital games today. These consist of games played with electronic devices such as consoles, PCs and tablets. Today's people grow and grow up as a part of digital time (Ayan et al., 2015; Lauricella et al., 2014). While children nowadays play both real games and virtual games, adolescents and adults play electronic games. The interest in toys has been replaced by electronic mobile games. In this case, it is thought that mobile games have now taken a place in our lives. Electronic games are the leisure time activity that people prefer and choose the most (Griffiths, 2010).

Digital games in general have certain characteristics. Regardless of the age of the person who plays games, there are many benefits to the person's life. Gaming is fun, creative, relieves stress, encourages positive social interaction and communication. Children learn to cope with obstacles, control their emotions and fulfill developmental tasks through play (Söylemez, 2021: 13).

Digital games are defined as games in which the person is affected mentally and emotionally, whose positive and negative aspects are open to discussion, supported by digital software, written on graphics or text, played with devices such as computers, tablets, game consoles with technological devices produced specifically for games, played against artificial intelligence with technological devices or with internet access to play with others, games that have their own rules, games in which players struggle to achieve the highest score, and whose popularity is increasing today (Baranowski et al. 2013; Fleer, 2014; Sağlam & Topsümer, 2019; Taylan, Topal, and Ayas, 2018; Yavuz and Tarlakazan, 2018;).

The reasons for people to participate in digital games are motivation sources including the desire to distract, the search for entertainment, incompatibility and miscommunication with the social environment, the intention to challenge, the desire to get away from the environment, the desire to realize what they cannot do in real life in a virtual environment, to spend time fluently and to move to the next level in the game

(Tekkurşun-Demir & Mutlu-Bozkurt, 2019). Digital games, which are described as games played using technological devices like mobile phones, laptops, tablets, and game consoles, are said to have supplanted conventional games, especially with the advancements in technology. In general terms, games were an activity that children did in the past, and with the use of digital games, it has become an activity used by people of all age groups (Yiğit, 2017).

In the literature, there are studies conducted on motivation in our country (Özmen et al., 2023; Tekkurşun-Demir et al., 2018; Polat and Yalçın, 2014; Şirin et al., 2008; Demir and Cicicoğlu, 2018). Today, digital games are thought to directly affect the lives of individuals of all ages in society, especially young people. We can say that they have significant effects especially on children and young people. In such an important issue, it is considered important to examine the attitudes of secondary school students towards their motivation to play digital games in terms of different variables. Answers to the following queries were requested for this purpose. In the motivations of middle school students to play digital games;

1. Do the scale's sub-dimensions differ from one another?
2. Are there any differences in terms of gender, grade level and playing time variables?

METHOD

Research Model

This study is a descriptive research in survey model. Karasar (2014) defined the screening model as "a research model that aims to detect a past or present situation as it exists."

Population Sample

During the academic year 2022–2023, students enrolled in secondary schools connected to the Iğdır MEM participated voluntarily in the study. 412 secondary school students participated in the study voluntarily. Incomplete or incorrectly filled scales were excluded from the study, and the scales filled by a total of 397 students (203 females and 194 males) were evaluated within the scope of the study (Table 1).

Table 1. "Distribution of Personal Characteristics of the Research Group"

"Variables"	Groups	N	%
"Gender"	"Woman"	203	51,2
	"Male"	194	48,8
"Classroom"	"5th grade"	123	30
	"6th grade"	106	26,7
	"7th grade"	103	26
	"8th grade"	65	16,3
"Game Duration"	"1 hour"	108	27,2
	"2 hours"	162	40,9
	"3 hours"	72	18,1
	"4 hours"	55	13,8

Data Collection Tool

The 19-item "Digital Game Playing Motivation Scale (DOMÖ)" scale, whose validity and reliability studies were conducted by Tekkurşun-Demir & Hazar (2018), was used as a data collection tool in the study. The scale is a 5-point Likert type and consists of 3 sub-dimensions. The success and revival dimension consists of 5 items (1, 2, 3, 4, 5), the curiosity and social acceptance dimension consists of 9 items (6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14), and the uncertainty dimension in the desire to play consists of 5 items. It consists of items (14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19). "Ethics committee permission was obtained from Iğdır University Non-Interventional Clinical Research Ethics Committee with the decision dated 15.04.2024 and numbered 2024-11, barcode number E-37077861-900-135225."

Data Analysis

The application SPSS 22.0 was utilized to analyze the data. The t-test and One Way Anova tests were run to evaluate the data since they revealed a normal distribution in the data. A significance level of 0.5 was decided upon.

FINDINGS

The research group's reasons for playing digital games were compared in this part based on factors like gender, grade, and playing time.

Table 2. "T Test Analysis According to the Gender Variable of the Participants"

"Sub Dimensions"	Gender	N	Ort.	Ss	t	P
"Success and Revitalization"	Woman	203	16,79	4,44	-2,331	,020
	Male	194	17,98	4,43		
"Curiosity and Social Acceptance"	1,00	203	31,72	6,88	-3,104	,002
	2,00	194	34,09	6,44		
"Ambiguity in Game Demand"	1,00	203	18,18	4,29	,337	,737
	2,00	194	18,00	5,05		

Table 2 shows the comparison of the participants' play motivations in terms of gender variable. Significant differences were found in favor of men in the dimensions of achievement and revitalization, curiosity and social acceptance (p<0.05). There was no gender difference in the sub-dimension of uncertainty in the desire to play (p>0.05).

Table 3. "ANOVA Test Analysis According to the Class Level Variable of the Participants."

"Sub Dimensions"	Source of Variance	Kt	Sd	Ko	F	p	Sig. Dif.
"Success and Revitalization"	Between groups	803,171	3	267,724			4,3,2>1
	In-group	5246,079	394	17,487	15,310	,000	4>2
	Total	6049,250	397				4>3
"Curiosity and Social Acceptance"	Between groups	1173,223	3	391,074			4,3,2>1
	In-group	12675,748	394	42,252	9,256	,000	4>2
	Total	13848,970	397				4>3
"Ambiguity in Game Demand"	Between groups	447,052	3	149,017			4,3,2>1
	In-group	6162,369	394	20,541	7,255	,000	2>3
	Total	6609,421	397				4>3

Groups; "1st group: 5th grade, 2nd group: 6th grade, 3rd group: 7th grade, 4th group: 8th grade"

Table 3 shows the comparison of the scores obtained from the sub-dimensions of the scale in terms of the grade level of the participants. In all three sub-dimensions, intergroup differences were found in terms of grade level ($P < 0.05$). As a result of the Tukey LSD test conducted to determine between which groups the difference was between;

In all three sub-dimensions, it was found that 8th graders scored higher than other grades, and 6th and 7th graders scored higher than 5th graders. In other words, we can say that as the grade level increases, the game motivation of middle school students increases.

Table 4. "ANOVA Test Analysis According to the Participants' Playing Time Variable"

"Sub Dimensions"	Source of Variance	KT	sd	KO	F	p	Sig. Dif
"Success and Revitalization"	Between groups	477,376	3	159,125			4-1, 3-1
	In-group	5571,874	394	18,573	8,568	,000	2-1, 4-2
	Total	6049,250	397				
"Curiosity and Social Acceptance"	Between groups	212,783	3	70,928			
	In-group	13636,187	394	45,454	1,560	,199	-
	Total	13848,970	397				
"Ambiguity in Game Demand"	Between groups	109,585	3	36,528			
	In-group	6499,836	394	21,666	1,686	,170	-
	Total	6609,421	397				

Groups; "1st group: 1 hour, 2nd group: 2 hours, 3rd group: 3 hours, 4th group: 4 hours or more."

Table 4 shows the comparison of the scores obtained from the sub-dimensions of the game motivation scale in terms of the game duration variable. In the sub-dimensions of curiosity and social acceptance, uncertainty in the desire to play, no difference was found between the groups in terms of the variable of playing time (p>0.05), while in the sub-dimension of achievement and revitalization, it was determined that those with 4, 3 and 2 playing time obtained higher scores than those with 1, and those with 4 obtained higher scores than those with 2 (p<0.05). In other words, it can be said that those with higher playing time have higher achievement and revitalization scores.

DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

Included in the study is a discussion of the noteworthy findings on gender, grade level, and playing time variables in relation to secondary school students' motivation to play digital games. The results showed that all of the middle school kids' scores on the incentive to play digital games were above average when we looked at the averages of their scores on the scale.

Ryan et al. (2006) argued that playing digital games relaxes people psychologically. In different studies, it has been stated that individuals who regularly play digital games relax by getting away from stress (Snodgrass et al., 2011; Russoniello et al., 2009; Wack and Tantleff-Dunn, 2009). When middle school kids' reasons for playing computer games were broken down by gender, it was discovered that men were far more likely to be motivated by achievement and revitalization, curiosity, and social acceptance. On the contrary, there are studies stating that social media addiction has a negative impact on people's lives (Griffiths, 2010; Dinç, 2021; Yurdadön and Dinç, 2021).

The sub-dimension of the scale measuring ambiguity in game desire did not show any gender differences. Kudaş et al. (2005) discovered that there were gender-specific differences in the sub-dimensions of achievement, revitalization, curiosity, and social acceptance. They also found that male participants scored significantly higher on these sub-dimensions than female participants. It is possible to say that the study's findings and ours are comparable. Consequently, it may be concluded that women are less motivated than men to play video games on their phones. When Demirel et al. (2019) examined the motivations behind high school students' digital game playing, they found that girls are less inclined to play than boys. They explained this by saying that girls are more likely to communicate quickly with their peers and other students, have more dominant emotional traits, and are more easily influenced by their surroundings. However, it is also said that guys are impacted for other reasons, such dominance and the need to win by showing their competitive sides and having fun with the game.

In a similar study, it was stated that male pre-service teachers were more interested in digital educational games than female pre-service teachers and that males play more digital games than females (İşçi & Yeşiltaş, 2020). In a different study, we can say that the motivation of men to play digital games is higher than that of women, and therefore the target audience of digital games generally consists of men, that men prefer game halls more, and that it consists of activities such as adventure, action, war, and football, which are especially

interesting to men (Çınar et al., 2020). In the study conducted by Namlı and Demir (2020), men were found to have a higher tendency to play digital games than women. Griffiths and Davies (2005) stated in their research that men's success in games causes them to be more motivated for the next game.

The achievement and revitalization dimension, the curiosity and social acceptance dimension, and the uncertainty in the game desire sub-dimensions showed significant differences when the motives of middle school students to play digital games were examined in terms of the grade level variable. It was found that the eighth graders scored higher than the other grades in the sub-dimensions of passion for play and social adaptation, and the sixth and seventh grades scored higher than the fifth grade in the achievement and revitalization, curiosity and social acceptance, and uncertainty in the desire to play sub-dimensions.

In this way, video games at grade levels in high schools are played with more motivating power. In Bozkurt's (2020) study on incentives for playing digital games, social acceptance and curiosity were higher in eighth graders than in fifth graders, according to regions. It is seen that there is no significant difference in the processes of desire to play. The motivations of digital game activities in high school rates have permanent values in the success and revival dimension, the curiosity and social acceptance dimension, and the sub-dimensions of game hope depending on the success level variable. Higher scores will come from eighth graders in the sub-dimensions of passion for play and social adaptation, growth in the sub-dimensions of achievement and revitalization, curiosity and social acceptance and proportions, and higher scores from seventh graders in the fifth grades. Desire to play in lower dimensions. In this way, video games at grade levels in high schools are played with more motivating power. In the research conducted by Bozkurt (2020) within the scope of digital game playing incentives, places that arouse social acceptance and curiosity in eighth grades are higher than in fifth grades. It is seen that there is no significant difference in the processes of desire to play.

When the motivations of secondary school students to play digital games were analyzed in terms of the variable of playing time; it was seen that there was no difference between the groups in terms of the variable of playing time in the sub-dimensions of curiosity and social acceptance and uncertainty in the desire to play, while in the success and revitalization sub-dimension of the scale, it was determined that those with 4, 3 and 2 playing time obtained higher scores than those with 1, and those with 4 obtained higher scores than those with 2. In this sense, we can state that students with high play time have higher achievement and revitalization scores. Mustafaoğlu and Yasacı (2018) found that in the daily digital game playing time of the participants aged 7-15, boys played for more time than girls. They determined that the average daily digital game playing time of the participants was 3 hours. Köse (2014) found that 18.9% of the participants aged 13-14 played computer games every day and 13.7% played 3-4 times a week.

As a result, it was observed that middle school children had high motivation scores for playing video games. Regarding gender-related characteristics, it was shown that males scored higher than girls in the areas of achievement and renewal as well as curiosity and social acceptance. Regarding the grade level of secondary

school students' motivation to play digital games, it was found that there was a substantial difference in all sub-dimensions of the scale, with students in the eighth grade scoring higher than students in other grades.

Furthermore, the study found that there was no significant difference between the groups' game durations in the sub-dimensions of curiosity, social acceptance, and uncertainty in game desire. However, in the sub-dimension of achievement and revitalization, the groups with 4–3 and 2 game durations scored higher than the 1–2 game duration group, and the 4 game duration group scored higher than the 2 game duration group.

Conclusion

As a result, it was observed that the scores of the middle school students' motivation to play digital games were high. It was determined that there were significant differences in favor of men in terms of gender variable in the dimensions of success and excitement and curiosity and social acceptance, while men scored higher than women. It was observed that there was a significant difference in all sub-dimensions of the scale in terms of the grade level variable of the middle school students' motivation to play digital games, and those in the 8th grade scored higher than those in other grades. In addition, it was concluded that there was no difference between the groups in terms of the play time variable in the sub-dimensions of the scale, curiosity and social acceptance, uncertainty in game desire, and those with a play time of 4, 3 and 2 scored higher than those with a score of 1 in the sub-dimension of success and excitement, and those with a score of 4 scored higher than those with a score of 2.

SUGGESTIONS

It is thought that it is important to increase the number of informative activities in schools in order to increase the awareness of female students in terms of game motivations, achievement and revitalization, curiosity and social acceptance. In addition, considering that playing time increases success and vitality, necessary environments can be created to partially increase the playing time of students. It is thought that conducting the research with larger sample groups would yield different results.

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