



Parents' Awareness About Their Children's Tendency to Digital Games, Digital Games' Appropriateness to Children's Development, Safety and Drawbacks in Early Childhood

Yunus GÜNİNDİ

Aksaray Üniversitesi, Eğitim Fakültesi, Temel Eğitim Bölümü, Okul Öncesi Eğitimi A.B.D.

Mehmet ÖZKAYA

Aksaray Üniversitesi, Eğitim Fakültesi, Bilgisayar ve Öğretim Teknolojileri Eğitimi Bölümü

Since the first usage of the Internet in Turkey in 1993, it has experienced many changes and developments in information and communication technology today. In the web 1.0 environment where only the content is provided and the static pages are included, while the users are the readers, the web 2.0 has reached a level that users can read and write and contribute to the content. Over time, there is a transition to the web 3.0 environment where users can interact with content, as well as content-content interaction. Web 3.0 has made it possible user profile definitions from user data and user-specific content is available. This can be defined as the period in which the end user has the authority to read, write and execute. Similar changes and developments can also be seen in technological equipment. Especially, it can be said that the influence of entertainment and game world and the acceleration of the development of hardware have been experienced. Smaller and more convenient portable devices than desktop computers now seem to use technological devices everywhere. Technological devices, which are large and small at every stage of life, cause every child to grow up with information and communication technologies in the early years. This change and development exposes children to more technological content than ever. Especially the fascinating characters of digital games, interesting visuals and impressive effects encourage children to interact with these elements. The positive and negative aspects of this world, which is attractive to all age groups, has been an important field of study by educators and researchers. However, the fact that countless digital games are easily accessible on the mobile environment, the appropriateness of games to children's age and development, and their safety concern parents as much as researchers and educators. In this study, it was aimed to examine the tendency of children to digital games in early childhood, the appropriateness of digital games to the development of children, the awareness of parents about their safety and drawbacks. In this direction, a form consisting of semi-structured interview questions was prepared online and the opinions of the parents were taken. In the study, interview technique and document analysis method were used from qualitative research methods. In the interview form 26 questions included about “the parents' educational status, working status, the age of the child, the gender of the child, the status whether the child goes to school, in which game platform they play, game names, how many hours child play digital games at weekday and weekend, how the parent decides



whether it is appropriate for the child's age and development when choosing the games, how the parents decide whether the games are appropriate, how the parents cope with child's willingness to play etc.” Also at the end of the form, parents' general thoughts about digital games were asked. Participation in the work has been carried out on a voluntary basis. In the study that 93 parents participated. 81 (87.1%) participant were mothers and 12 (12.9%) participants were the father of the child. 55 (59.2%) of the participants stated that they are university, masters or doctoral graduates and 20 (21.5%) are high school graduates. 18 (19.3%) were graduated from secondary school or primary school. 64 (68.8%) participants were working and 29 (31.2%) were not working. 46 (49%) were female and 47 (51%) were male. 81 of the parents (87%) stated that his child plays digital games on weekdays, while the mean duration is 60 minutes, 12 (13%) does not allow their children to play on weekdays. Similarly, 79 (85%) of the parents stated that child plays digital games on the weekend, while the mean duration is 90 minutes, while 14 (15%) does not allow their children to play games on weekends. In the study, it was found out that the most preferred platforms for children to play are mobile phones, tablets, desktop or laptop computers and game consoles. It was stated that children mostly meet digital games by family (mother, father, sister, or brother: 82%). 26 of the participants (28%) stated that they do not review the games in terms of security and suitability. Parents who examined the games stated that they evaluate games about sexual content, visuals and communication language used, as well as whether or not included violence. The other answers given to open-ended questions in the form were analyzed by content analysis method. In the light of obtained findings, it can be said that parents did not research enough about the appropriateness and safety of digital games, did not play digital games with their children, did not evaluate the games together, and even did not know the names of the games their children played.

Keywords: digital games, safety, drawbacks, developmentally appropriate, early childhood