

# Chapter 29

## Digital Games and Violence

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### ABSTRACT

*Play plays an important role in the child's emotional, cognitive, and physical development. Children play a role in social relations with social behavior, coming from the top of social conflict, social maturation, and self-esteem. The experiences gained while playing games give the child the ability to find solutions to the problems they face in the social environment. The game, which is the main object of amusement, has moved from the social environment to the virtual atmosphere as a result of technological developments. The main theme of this research is violent games, which are often played by children in elementary school age. Many have come up with the fact that violent visual and textual codes are being used. In this context, in regional surveys conducted in Bolu province, digital games played mostly by 8- to 12-year-old children were determined by face-to-face interview with children. Violent elements in these digital games have been discussed within the framework of relevant theoretical approaches through three games that children play most.*

### INTRODUCTION

The play that emerges with the existing process of the human being has a different meaning for the child. The play plays an active role in the child's knowledge, thinking and mental development. In addition, the child, who has an important place in the socialization process of the child, is able to communicate with the environment and gain problem-solving ability. The internet, which has become a part of our everyday life together with technological developments, has also created a different virtual reality environment for children. The concept of the traditional game is also undergoing change and transformation in this virtual environment. In the past, children played with stones, rope, ballgames, and street games, hide-and-seek, traditional games have left their place to digital games played on the internet.

According to the theory of social learning, from the day the child was born, s/he observes the environment and shapes his behavior. S/he adopts the behaviors s/he observes as a role model and starts to use these behaviors in his or her social life. Positive models make it easier for the child to adapt to social

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mediation while negative model patterns make it difficult for the child to be aggressive attitudes and behavioral disorders. It is known that many of the aggressive behaviors have been learned, not acquired innately. In this context, the behavior patterns of role models created in games are influential on violence tendencies of children. The child, who takes the character in the game during the game, becomes addicted to the game by being attracted to the extraordinary, unlimited, uncontrolled power elements in the game. This addiction causes the child to be prone to violence and, after a while, to become desensitized towards violence.

There are undoubtedly many educational and instructively games on the internet. However, violent and sexual games are becoming increasingly widespread, which may lead to negative behaviors in today's main problematic children. Children who spend most of their time on the internet are exposed to these violent games. The main theme of our work is the violent elements in digital games. In this context, the 8-12 age group in Bolu province was determined by the question-and-answer technique in which the violent games played by the primary school students were mostly performed by the students. Children identified after the interviews were examined in terms of violence in which they play the three games they play the most.

### **Functional Meaning of the Game**

The game, which has a long history as much as the history of mankind, has become a part of the social life in which the game has been kept alive in all societies. The game, which prepares the child for a social life, has traditionally been transferred from the beginning to being a source of entertainment and happiness for children in every social process. Along with globalization, the social change process has begun in the whole world. Economic globalization has created differences in gaming culture by changing the type of game and the venue in which it is played. Despite many structural changes in the historical process, play consists of practices that have a different meaning for the child, prepare the child for the future, and enable the child to learn by experiencing events that others will never be able to teach.

The game that is kept alive throughout the society from day to day has an important role in the child's creative development, child's personality, language, brain development and social and emotional development (Yücel & Gündoğdu, 2012: 1). Thanks to the game, children's ability to communicate increases. In addition, the game offers opportunities to help children, empathize, perceive their surroundings and experience events. Paterson and Martin (2013: 11) emphasize that play is an important form of behavior that allows creativity and therefore innovation. It is expressed as a comprehensive term that includes all activities that are "serious" or "non-work" in the meaning accepted by biologists and psychologists, apart from the use of the game in its daily spoken language. Hence the game; it should be thought of as the opposite of "work" because the purpose of the "work" action is to achieve a specific end result (Yavuzer, 2001: 176). The main feature that distinguishes the game from "work" is that it is not a specific result, but a process. In other words, children's games consist of a series of activities aimed at enjoyment. Paterson and Martin emphasize that the purpose of the game is only "play". Lazarus (1883) defines the play as a self-evident, non-specific purpose, brought happiness free activity (Akt.Özdoğan, 2000: 101).

Huizinga describes the play as a voluntary action accompanied by the consciousness of being thrilled with joy and tension created by his own intention within the boundaries of a certain time and space, complying with completely commanding rules. It also expresses that the game is an act that is felt to be outside of daily life, free and fiction, but with it, it is an action that has completely pulled the player into

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