Chapter 19
Digital Game Addiction and Children

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the topic of digital game addiction and children. The study addresses the effects of digital games on children, addiction symptoms, and the impact of addiction on children's social, academic, and psychological development. According to the results of the research, symptoms of digital game addiction include excessive time spent playing games, loss of control, preoccupation with games, developing tolerance, neglecting social and academic responsibilities, and experiencing physical health problems such as sleep disorders and eye strain. Digital game addiction can negatively impact children's social skills, academic performance, and psychological well-being, thus reducing their quality of life. Therefore, it is recommended for parents and teachers to limit children's use of digital games and encourage them to engage in other activities. Parents and teachers should monitor children's use of digital games, recognize addiction symptoms, and take necessary precautions.

INTRODUCTION

Digital games are one of the most popular entertainment tools for children today. However, these games can also pose a significant threat to children. In particular, the increasing prevalence of digital game addiction in recent years has had a negative impact on many children's physical and psychological health. Children's sleep patterns, eating habits, and social relationships can also be affected by digital game addiction. Therefore, the issue of digital game addiction is a topic that needs to be closely monitored by both parents and the digital gaming industry. This part will address the issue of digital game addiction and children and provide information on studies conducted in this area, risk factors, protective factors, and treatment methods.

Game

Games are an activity played to improve communication among people, develop the ability to follow rules, enhance personal skills, and increase knowledge accumulation. Games are often played using different factors such as skill or luck, and sometimes involve a situation of winning or losing. Games are enjoyable for all age groups and include various activities. This activity is fun and enjoyable, allowing us to take a break from daily life and enjoy doing something different. Playing games is not only a fun hobby, but also a social activity (Kuss & Griffiths, 2012). Game is a versatile tool that contributes to the social, mental, and biological development of children. It is particularly beneficial to their development during primary school and pre-school periods. Games contribute to children's sociocultural and psychological development, while also helping to develop communication, language, and sharing skills. Additionally, games help to develop important skills such as decision-making, problem-solving, and environmental awareness (Yalçın & Bertiz, 2019).

Game is the most natural learning environment that prepares children for their lives. During play, children learn by experimenting on their own, develop their potential abilities, effortlessly gain many skills, and escape from the pressures of adults and the outside world. Games are played during childhood, and as children age, the frequency of games decreases, their variety changes, and their characteristics disappear. However, the effect of play on children's physical, cognitive, psychological, social, and language development is of great importance that nothing else can replace (İnce & Işır, 2016). Although games are often preferred to meet children's sensory, cognitive, and psychological needs, they can also negatively affect their mental climate.

In the past, games that were played with friends in physical environments such as playgrounds and streets have become digitized and particularly popular among young people who closely follow technology, following the impact of computers and the internet on every aspect of life. These games have become part of popular culture due to the influence of technological advancements.

Digital Game

Digital games have evolved over time to go beyond the classic definition of games, and can now be played alone or against others, either online or offline, with humans or artificial intelligence. These games have emerged as a product of human-machine interaction and have become the most intense virtual environment in individuals' daily internet use.

Kirriemuir (2002) stated that there are various types of digital games. These types include games played with input devices such as gamepads connected to a television console, games accessible via satellite or digital subscription systems played on a television, games played on a personal computer or Macintosh, arcade-style games known as game cabinets, games played on portable devices such as Gameboy, and finally, games played on electronic devices such as cell phones or handheld computers. These games can be classified as browser games, massively multiplayer online role-playing games, real-life simulation games, online shooters, and 3D games. Within the game, players often socialize through conversation and messaging, and can collaborate to achieve game-related goals. Virtual personalities are represented by avatars and play roles. Simulation games offer an environment in which virtually anything that can be done in real life can be done in a virtual metaverse. These games simulate real life activities and allow for activities that could be carried out in a second life to be conducted virtually (Kuss & Griffiths, 2012).

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