

Chapter 22

A Study on the Digital Game Addiction Tendency of Generation Z Individuals

Özgün Arda Kuş

Independent Researcher, Turkey

Betül Başer

Independent Researcher, Turkey

ABSTRACT

We are living in an age in which technological developments are stunning. Each change facilitates the lives of humans and introduces innovation. Individuals can complete most of their work independently of time and space thanks to smart devices and internet access. Although these technological developments are built to facilitate our lives, spending too much of our time on these devices also has a dangerous aspect. Continuously spending time on social media via these smart devices, or having the opportunity to play downloaded games all the time, lays the foundation of new behavioural addictions of our age. This study investigates the digital game tendency of Generation Z individuals who were born with this technology and have a good command of this technology by in-depth interview method. The target number of participants for the in-depth interviews considering gender equality is 18 participants. This study aims both to measure the digital game addiction tendency of Generation Z individuals and to synthesise opinions regarding addiction.

INTRODUCTION

Since generations live in similar social structures, each generation has a unique experience specific to their period. Therefore, it is possible to say that individuals have similar characteristics to the generation they belong to and live in (Kupperschmidt, 2000, p. 66). There are many different classifications in the literature. One of the reasons for this is the different political, cultural, economic, social and technological

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events in each country. While selecting the generation classification adopted in this study, the appropriate generation classification was preferred considering the social structure in Turkey. Altuntuğ, (2006, p. 205-206) divides the generations into 5 groups. This classification includes the Silent Generation, Baby Boomer Generation, Generation X, Generation Y and Generation Z. The sample of this study consist of university student Generation Z individuals.

Today, with the development of technology, traditional games are replaced by games played in digital environments. Digital games include computer games, mobile games, arcade games and console games. In this context, digital games include the digital, modularity and interactivity characteristics of new communication environments. With these features, the game creates a personal communication environment that can be incorporated into the act of playing (Binark & Bayraktutan-Sütçü 2020, p. 43). If the individual is able to control the duration of play while exhibiting digital gameplay behaviour, does not neglect the responsibilities or is not disconnected from the real world, this situation is considered normal. However, if the individual has become unable to control the time of play, has developed a tolerance to digital gameplay, or is deprived when playing behaviour isn't present and has moved away from real life, it is possible to talk about a behavioural addiction developed against digital game playing behaviour. This study aimed to reveal the consequences of Generation Z individuals for digital game addiction. The research data was collected through face-to-face in-depth interviews with 18 Generation Z university students via the structured form.

THEORY OF GENERATION AND THE TERM GENERATION

The theory of generation is used to define the identities of the groups. In various study fields such as marketing, psychology, mass communication and management sciences, the classification of the term generation is associated with the fact that individuals were born in a certain year range. In other words, the theory of generational theory refers to the fact that individuals born in a given year range adopt similar behaviours, lifestyles, and social values because they were born at the same age (Chen, 2010, p. 132). While these individuals show similar behaviors and beliefs to that generation group due to certain behaviour and belief types, they show differences from different generation groups. It is possible to express that the generations will be formed according to the characteristics of the period they are in, and their behaviour will be affected, and these characteristics will differ from other generations. The historical development of the theory of generation expressed by Karl Mannheim, Strauss and Howe that emerged from different regions around the world will be explained below.

Sociologist Karl Mannheim was the first scientist to conduct comprehensive and systematic research in the field of management related to generations using social science research methods. In his "Problem of Generations" work, he described generations from a sociological perspective (Jeager, 1985, p. 278). This study was published in 1928, but it was not popularized until the 1950s when the text was translated into the English language. Mannheim's work looked at historical groups that had clear and detectable distinctions rather than revealing the "sociology of ages". (Pilcher, 1994, p. 483).

Mannheim describes the existence of generations by five characteristics of society (1952, p. 290-292):

- New people must be constantly added to society.
- In the following stages, individuals who exist in society must disappear.
- Individuals must participate in a designated part of the process.

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