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Contents

Media and the Impact

What Preteen Girls Learn About Gender Roles From Celebrities
Kara Chan

Digital Game as a New Media, and Digital Game Playing Habits of Youngsters in Turkey
Deniz Yengin, Cem S. Sütçü

How Cyberspace Age Shaped the Political Party’s Identity
Gatut Priyowidodo

Theoretical Research

Television Sports News Between Performance, Violence and Spectacle
Bianca Marina Mitu

New Program Projects Selection for TV Companies
LIAO Sen-kuei, CHANG Kei-teng, DUAN Wan-chun, CHANG Kuei-lun

Television Programs for Teenagers and the Use of Multimodality in Knowledge Popularization
Laura Santamaria, Margarida Bassols, Anna Torrent

Cultural Studies

Representing Islam in China: A Case Study on the Religious Motifs of Uyghur Sermon Poems
WANG Jian-xin
Today, individuals can effectively use all kinds of communication tools with digital transformation. This transformation process is called “The Network Society” by Castells. According to Castells, people are living with long cables or networks that connect each other. With the progressing and spreading technological advances, entertainment sector is booming since 1950s even more dramatically than the computer sector. Digital games sector, in this perspective, has been the intersection area of the entertainment sector and the computer sector. We can include to these three sectors a fourth one: Communication (or Media) sector. With the convergence of these four sectors, there is an enormous sea of possibilities, opportunities and problems faced by humans. Our information society is turning into games. Today, the traditional understanding of play has been replaced by digital games. Digital games as an independent communication tool differ from traditional play in that they include a new communication medium into action. There is a different communication process in these digital games, which especially is an interest to younger generations. Digital games provide an interactive environment with individuals as they allow electiveness, mobility and non-linearity. In an era of economic angst and where real and virtual identities are being discussed, individuals of the information society are searching for something different other than mass communication. They seek after individual experiences. The main focus in this study will be to analyze the habits of play in digital games. The relationship between digital games and their users will also be examined. The quantitative study of digital games will be a useful source for future studies and will bridge the gap in this area.

Keywords: game, new media, digital game

Introduction

In the 1950s with the introduction of computers in human life, the main elements of industrial society changed and the information society was born along with processing of data, information, and knowledge. This change has also brought about an important concept called New Media. This concept created different ways of communication with increased interactivity. Digitization made it possible to clone things that are valuable. Some say that this contributed to the rise of popular culture. On the contrary, others say that all these elements become a human body part with the effects of technological developments. With the increase of means of information, communication, and its over flow, people began to look for the accurate, timely and relevant information. On the other hand, it also created disinformation and misinformation.

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The entertainment sector is fully benefitting from the new media technology, in terms of communication and distribution networks of digital games and in terms of adding more interactivity into games. Digital games are now encapsulating and drawing the gamer through virtual reality tools into a world of imagination. Besides the entertainment sector, many sectors, such as automobile industry, marketing sector or drugs sector use digital games as a means of attracting consumers and thereby increasing sales. Advergames are typical examples of that. With many application areas of digital games, this subject is worth analyzing, in terms of its effect on young generations, since they are the major demandants of digital games and entertainment.

The Concept of Game

The phrase of “game” is defined as a way of spending time with specific rules as entertainment, gambling, exciting talents, performance style of actresses or actors in the theater or movies, a composition of movements made in harmony with music, a work of art created to be performed with instruments or on stage, show, play. Therefore, all kinds of competitions made to develop intellectual and physical skills relying on agility, surprising moves to overcome the rival in wrestling, result of a game such as tennis and backgammon when a player wins a point, trick, trap, fraud, machination (Turkish Language Association, 2011).

“Concept of Game” is a manner of thinking and acting designed according to the behaviors of others and conditions of the situation in an acting and thinking system that is completely different from all aspects unlike ordinary behavioral patterns. Briefly, concept of game is the realization of actions according to the conditions of the environment that the human is present in. There are numerous different studies on game in literature.

In his work named Games People Play Berne defines game as “an event that consists of well defined and predictable consequences that are in continuous development” (Berne, 1964, p. 56). Berne divides game in six sub-classes. These are classified on the basis of number of players, usage of money, on clinic level, regional, psychodynamic, instinctive (Berne, 1964, p. 44). Different characteristics of games makes it difficult to categorize them under specific titles. Various similarities such as height, facial features, eye color, walking style, character etc. are also found in games too (Wittgenstein, 2007, sf. 52). Therefore, instead of considering common features in games, taking similarities and relationships into account is more helpful.

Huizinga defines game as “something that is “unreal” but also fascinating which draws players inside greatly while the freedom of working with awareness goes on around, while “accustomed life”, in other word existing life goes on as is outside”. It is an activity independent of any pecuniary advantage, i.e., it is without any gain. The game has unique time and space limits and it is an activity that has unchanging specific rules and a regular style within those borders (Huizinga, 1980, p. 13).

Caillois defines game as “a doubtful, inefficient, rule based and a deceptive activity consisting of free parts” (Caillois, 2001, pp. 10-11). According to Suits, playing game is to take part in an activity, in a story in a directed way, following only allowed rules that are effective in the decision of loosing, accepted rules are only intended for realizing this activity (Suits, 1978, sf. 34). Definition of game for Avedon and Sutton is “The game is defined from the simplest level as a voluntary control mechanism and it is an opposition between forces in this mechanism and imbalance limited with rules for the existence of the rules” (Avedon & Sutton, 1971, p. 7).

According to Salen and Zimmerman, game “All players are defined by the rules and they are all in an artificial conflict. This official conflict is come to an end as digital (numeric) case” (Salen & Zimmerman, 2004, p. 96). Juul defines game as “a transferable activity that consists of rules with variable and digital results, different results being assigned with different values, players exerting effort to affect the result, result focused


According to these definitions, game does not address a specific purpose, realized with or without rules, but in all cases it is a basis for physical, cognitive, linguistic, emotional and social development where the child takes part voluntarily and with enjoyment, a part of the real life and the most effective learning process for the child. Game is an entertaining and optional activity generally outside the real world, indefinite and with unique rules and cultures. In the concept of game, features of limitedness, orderliness and nonseriousness draw attention. Within this context game is an event that puts the individuals into an activity that has rules, not serious, with entry and exit limits, imposing a feeling that is not real but felt as if it is real. Game is reviewed according to this definition.

Emphasizing that there are limits in game, Huizinga states that the game has a Magic Circle within this context. It represents a world that contains rules regarding the game and having result, within Magic Circle that can enter and exit the game and defines a circle with limits According to this theory, each game has a magic circle. Players are required to enter and exit this invisible Magic Circle to start the game. Playing the game is realized according to the rules that are established within this circle or already known. Mat wrestling and Japanese Sumo wrestling are the most distinct examples to be given for the concept of magic circle.

Reinforcing the features of games, game is an event that puts the individuals into an activity that has rules, not serious, with entry and exit limits, imposing a feeling that is not real but felt as if it is real. Features of limitedness, orderliness and nonseriousness contained within this definition of game are transferred to media which are considered as new. Within this context, the concept of new media gains importance.

**Digital Game as a New Media**

The term “media” itself poses a similar problem. If we take media to mean ways in which we communicate with one another, then we must examine early cave paintings that date back at least ten thousand years. New Media might not be an ideal term for such arrange of technologies, but it is one that is increasingly recognized internationally and one that is generally associated with the technological transformations in communication that have recently taken place. New communication concept creates rapid evolution. McLuhan’s “Global Village” concept still remains, albeit with the effects of technological changes.

New communication media are analyzed under five principles indicated by Manovich: numerical representation, modularity, automation, variability and transcoding (Manovich, 2001, pp. 27-48). Lister has analyzed the characteristic features of new communication medias within frame of technological necessity: digitality, interactivity, hypertext, dispersal and virtuality (Lister, 2003, pp. 9-44).

Digitalization is the common point of these principles. A digital universe is addressed. Objects contained in the new communication media are expressed digitally. Objects which shift to digital from analog or in different structures produced in digital, can be in digital, can be variable upon code transformation through automation-thanks to their modular structure feature.

When new communication media are analyzed, digitalization stands as a basic feature. Digital universe is completely expressed in numbers and digitalization feature is added to the communication media. Interaction has an important role in the new communication media. Receiver being transmitter or increasing the control of the source on the message in the communication process is interaction (Geray, 2003, p. 18).

Game generally includes qualities which require physicality. However, development of means of communication has rendered the transformation of game necessary. Video game is a game where a visual user
interface is created using a video device. Released as a recreational tool on the market in 1971 for the first time, video games have been developed and widespread within the last 40-year period. Development of video games have enabled designing text-based adventure and role playing games in time. While video games are defined as “single, unique tool” but they can also be defined as a world of images (Wolf, 2007, p. 14). Combination of video and game gains a single quality just like the concepts of videotape, videodisc (Wolf, 2008, p. 3).

Video game can be defined as a game played with mechanical tools. Being a new communication media, the video game is the transfer of a reading system to a world with the system of indicators and by adding coded sounds. Video console system which is considered as the marriage of television and console drags the user to a different position. Video game creates a more complex integrity. User integration develops quickly. There is no standard in the game. Games with a dynamic structure require the users to get familiar with the interfaces again.

Working as an engineer in a television company, Ralph Baer’s idea of a game system that operates with the television was the starting point of video games with the game named “Chase Game”. In these periods games different from each other were being produced. Pong game which accelerated the development of video games can be mentioned in them. Produced in 1972 by Nolan Bushnell as the owner of Atari company, Pong game takes the game of tennis as basis with a two dimensional graphic design.

Game platforms derived from the video game culture that commenced with pong. Media such as arcade, console, portable, mobile, computer, online games etc. are increasingly in use. “Game consoles are recreational devices with computer based databases offering the chance of playing games through an image (television, monitor)” (Forster, 2005). Game consoles are also named as “video game console”. The phrase “video” here is used for electronic devices which display image in pixels. Today, concept of “video game” generally covers the image systems in all varieties and formats. Birth of console gaming was realized with Magnavox Odyssey company and today Microsoft XBox 360, Nintendo Wii and PlayStation 3 consoles defined as seventh generation are used. The game market, which is a part of the consumption society extensively reaches out to the masses the masses through console systems. Usage frequency of console systems which reach to larger masses have importance.

Conventional games are games which based on interpersonal communication, relying on physicality and creativity. However, the concept of children’s games are gradually being erased from our minds. Even the game of hide and seek played by Athenians is being lost from Children's repertory of games today. At this point, childhood itself is consumed.

Transformed into fantasy today, game is sort of a tool for achieving “a sort of entertainment against relentless real life, a form perception and interpretation of life in an image that is not owned” for classes and segments which commoditized or adopting the fate of commoditization to see this relentless reality with semi-awareness (Oskay, 1997, p. 168). Digital games create a more complex integrity. User integration develops quickly. There is no standard in the game. Games with a dynamic structure require the users to get familiar with the interfaces again. Each new technology bears the traces of the former one. Digital games include Atari games, computer games, console games, mobile games and all different varieties (Binark & Sütçü, 2008, p. 93). Within this context, digital game is a personal communication media that contains digital, interaction, virtuality, modularity features of the new communication media and adding such features to the performance of gameplay. These media can contain and include concepts and features which are defined as old or traditional within themselves.

Technological advancements and progression of digital systems which have an extended structure, that
occurs through the production of new media every other day requires the definition of digital game event to be extended every other day. Containing the qualities of traditional game understanding, digital game gives birth to a new understanding of game. Physical based understanding of traditional game with digital game approach has left its place to digitally produced game media. Developed through physical applications and using a tool, the game media is transformed into a medium that is realized with the participation of users relying on a visual system. This process of transformation brings together new features. Digital game as a new communication medium contains various game types such as computer, video, console, mobile games. Digital games are media which have the features of the new communication medium. The study was carried out in line with this definition.

**Digital Games Industry**

Constructing an accurate picture of the size of the global games industry in terms of software and hardware is a difficult task. The information released by government, consultancy and press reports fails to give a global perspective and also have contradictory information. In 2002 the digital games industry was worth more than the film industry in the USA (i.e., compared to $10.3 billion to $9.3 billion) respectively.

![Digital Game Production Lifecycle](image)

*Figure 1. Digital Game Production Lifecycle (Source: Kerr, 2006, p. 42)*

When we look at the key segmentation of the digital games industry we see that there are four segments.
The first one is console games, the second one is standard PC games, the third one is massive multiplayer online games and emergent games (MMOGs) and fourth one is mini casual games. The four market segments are grouped according to the following four characteristics (Kerr, 2006, p.45-48):

1. Market concentration: monopoly, oligopoly or numerous companies.
2. The revenue model: shop sales, online sales, subscription, pay per-play, free, advertising.
3. Degree of openness in hardware system: open, mixed, closed.

Segment 1 includes games developed for both handheld and console platforms and is clearly the most significant in terms of market share at least according to current industry reports. Segment 2 includes offline and multiplayer/networked PC games but not MMOGs. Current statistics suggest that this segment has a much smaller market share than segment 1, particularly in Japan and the USA. However, developers do not need specialist development kits to develop for a Windows or Apple personal computer given that they are based on common standards and open architecture. In addition, developers do not have to pay a licence fee to a hardware manufacturer. These facts are reflected in a cheaper retail price than console games. The downside of this openness is that there are a greater number of games competing for shelf space and sales. Segment 3 is strongly vertically integrated and a small number of large companies control development, publishing and distribution. However, the underlying technologies are open platform, as in segment 2, and currently based on PC and Internet common standards. Developing a persistent world requires significant investment not only in initial development but also in ongoing costs including maintenance, expansions and customer/community support. The final segment, segment 4, covers the development of mini or casual games for platforms like i-TV, mobile phones, PDAs and the Internet. This sector is embryonic but in general is characterized by shorter development cycles and lower production costs than other segments. There are numerous players and a mixture of open and proprietary technologies. There are also many revenue models: pay-per-download, pay-per-play, and advertising (Kerr, 2006, pp. 48-49).

Ben Sawyer of Digitalmill observes that the game industry value chain is made up of six connected and distinctive layers (Flew, Humphreys, 2005, pp. 101-114):

1. Capital and publishing layer involved in paying for development of new titles and seeking returns through licensing of the titles.
2. Product and talent layer includes developers, designers and artists, who may be working under individual contracts or as part of in-house development teams.
3. Production and tools layer generates content production tools, game development middleware, customizable game engines, and production management tools.
4. Distribution layer or the “publishing” industry, involved in generating and marketing catalogs of games for retail and online distribution.
5. Hardware (or Virtual Machine or Software Platform) layer or the providers of the underlying platform, which may be console-based, accessed through online media, or accessed through mobile devices such as the iPhone. This layer now includes non-hardware platforms such as virtual machines (e.g., Java or Flash), or software platforms such as browsers or even further Facebook, etc.
6. End-users layer or the users/players of the games.

Digital games have brought computer forms such as simulation, artificial intelligence and interactivity into homes through popular entertainment. They are virtual reality and cyberspace in the here-and-now and the
everyday. Colliding with established media forms and cultural economies they have generated new forms, new modes of consumption, muddying commonly accepted boundaries between media consumers and producers, between the subjects and objects of new media. The study of digital games illuminates not only the specific forms, practices and cybernetic pleasures of digital game play, but also offers a unique insight into the nature of contemporary media culture and subjectivity more generally, asking profound questions about the material, political and libidinal relationships between the human and the technological (Giddings & Kennedy, 2006, p. 145). 

Methodology

According to Watkins, young men have consistently been among the early adopters, explorers, and users of new communication technologies (Watkins, 2009, p. 105). Mentioning about his research on digital game habits of youngsters, Watkins states that when we sit and talk with young people today about media and communication technology and a fascinating generational ethos comes into clear view: the idea that they are not simply consumers of media but also creators and participants in media. Peter, a 21 years old college student, described games this way: “It is more than just sitting in front of a screen just having stuff thrown at you. You are interacting in a story (Watkins, 2009, p. 106). This description from a youngster is important for us too. It shows the level of interactivity reached by digital games, which cannot be reached by any other media such as TV or cinema.

Digital game environments allow users to gather ideas by allowing them to gain virtual experiences as opposed to real life events. Due to their rich visual content, digital games have the characteristic to shorten the learning period of individuals. Digital games offer users fantasy worlds where they can lose themselves in different identities. This way, through “modeling”, users are able to “free” themselves. Alongside surveys, the study will also make use of literary sources. In this research we began studying young people’s digital game media behaviors up close. Turkish students are the universe of the study. The data collection method is through conducting survey.

Our survey was organized into four parts. The first section of the survey, Part One, collected some basic personal demographic data. Part Two, “General Media,” asked young people questions related to which media they own, use, and spend the most time with. Part Three of the survey addressed the “New Media” with a particular focus on how often they use the Internet, the range of activities and experiences they seek out on the Web, and degrees of happiness and satisfaction with their web-based experiences. A subset of questions—on frequency of use, intensity of use, and attitude; focused specifically on social-network sites. “Digital Games Media” was the central focus of Part Four. The questions in this section addressed how young people’s consumption of game was evolving in the age of digital downloads, consoles, and tools that make movement-sensing easy. Data collection is selected from Marmara University, 400 students and all details collected between March and April 2011 to do this survey. The answers to the questions in the survey have been transferred to a Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) environment, where descriptive and inferential analyses will lead us to understand the habits of play in digital games in Turkey.

Findings

In this study which focuses on digital games, the data have been gathered through the survey method. The demographic data (gender, age, education and income level) and data acquired through the survey have been collected from the students who are the respondents of the study. Four hundred students have been directed
questions through the survey portal of Marmara University. The survey consists of 14 closed end questions. Two of the questions are about the demographic features and the other two are about playing conditions and the remaining ten are about digital game playing habits. The last ten questions have been prepared according to the likert scale (ordinal scale). Likert scale is about to measure persons’ approach to evaluate their adhere level to a sentence. They can answer as “entirely agree or disagree”.

Data have been collected from 400 students based on the survey method by means of internet environment. The male and female students are 65% (260 students) and 35% (140 students) respectively.

Table 1  
**Distribution According to Gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2  
**Distribution According to Ages**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group of ages</th>
<th>13-18</th>
<th>19-24</th>
<th>25-30</th>
<th>31-36</th>
<th>37-over</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>75.5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Distribution questions have been directed to the participants of five different age groups. Distribution is measured for the age groups 13-18, 19-24, 25-30, 31-36 and 37-over. The participation rate of those in the 19-24 age group is higher than the others with 75.5%. It is observed that the participation rate of the age group 37-over is the lowest (Table 2).

Table 3  
**Distribution According to Playing Digital Games**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Play</th>
<th>Not play</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>85.75</td>
<td>14.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Almost 86% of the participants play digital games (Table 3). The platform where the participants play digital games vary. 41.75% of the participants play digital games on mobile, 23.25% play on computer and 19.5% play on console platforms (Table 4).

Table 4  
**Distribution According to Platforms of Playing Digital Games**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platforms</th>
<th>Computer</th>
<th>Video</th>
<th>Console</th>
<th>Mobile</th>
<th>Tablet</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>23.25</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>41.75</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other questions are intended for learning the other users’ digital game playing habits. Five point likert scale is used in respect to the questions below for learning digital game playing habits. The results derived from these questions are given in Table 5.

Cronbach alfa (α) coefficient is calculated to test the reliability of the scales. The lower value of Cronbach α coefficient (close to 0), which is the most common reliability method, has shown that the variables are not
The majority of the participants (76%) believe that playing digital games is not a waste of time. They were undecided about considering the digital games as a leisure activity and they gave uniform responses. Almost 61% of the participants felt relaxed while playing digital games whereas 47% were indecisive about learning with the digital games. Those participants who argue that digital games provide interaction are both involved and not involved in different environments with digital games. The users who are aware of the virtual aspect of the digital games consider the digital games as integral part of their lives (76%). 74% of the participants spend a lot of time at digital games. In light of such data, the participants are aware that digital games are virtual and they spend excessive time with them. However, digital games are of minor importance to their lives.

**Conclusions**

Interaction takes place at the centre of the digital games as a new communication media. As a result of interaction (electiveness, variability, nonlinearity), users become the essential part of the game and guide the games and thereby affect the result of the game. The environments of such games have their own rules. Within this context, Huizinga’s Magic Circle Theory applies not only to traditional understanding but also to the digital games. Magic Circle suggests that the users are drawn into different worlds with these games outside their real worlds and they become a part of this simulation.

Users act in fictitious games and this fictitious activity spreads out widely every day. Users reenact the characters in the games through modelling and a relation is established between the user and character. Users assume any character they like in the fictious world through digital games. By this means purgation process starts. However, social learning process is also realized as a result of purgation. Social learning process enables the users to get used to many applications which they practise easily in real life.

Digital games as new media advance interactively and effects masses. Therefore, it creates a dependency. The young users who spend time in this limited game field seize the opportunity to express and satisfy themselves interactively. Digital games are used as the most common instrument of today’s environment as leisure activity and they continue to be indispensable for the youth.
References


