

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The Effects of Perceived Social Support, Family Climate, and Adult Attachment Styles on Digital Game Addiction in Esports Players

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Main Points

- Players who played for 5 – 7 hours were found to be more addicted to games than those who spent not more than an hour.
- Players who make their friends in the digital world are more addicted to games than those who form friendships in the real world and those who make friends in both the digital and real worlds.
- Regression analysis indicated that having a fearful attachment style has a significant impact on game addiction.

Abstract

There have been many different game designs that users find suitable and numerous devices on which various games can be played. The development of digital games over the last 30 years has led to the creation of electronic sports. The main purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between electronic sports players' perceived social support, family climate, adult attachment styles, and game addiction. The present study examined the game addiction levels of 211 Turkish electronic sports players who are members of the university electronic sports societies in Ankara. The majority of the participants in this research are male and gamer-type players. Players play games almost every day of the week (38.9%), spend 2 – 4 hours a day on games (50.7%), and watch electronic sports streams (49.8%) for an hour in a day. Half of the players (57.3%) earn an income from the games they play. Simple linear regression analysis indicated that having a fearful attachment style and playing frequently had a significant impact on game addiction.

Keywords: Esports, game addiction, social support, family climate, adult attachment style

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Introduction

Electronic sports (esports) emerged as a result of the development of digital games in the last 30 years. Esports is a modern phenomenon that involves competition among digital gamers (Bornemark, 2013). According to Lee et al. (2014), esports is “a competitive, recreational activity using mental and physical abilities in a virtual environment similar to reality.” Esports, also known as organized video game competitions, cybersports, virtual sports, and competitive gaming (Jenny et al., 2017), is seen as a profession whose popularity, number of players,

audience size, and revenue are increasing every year. Esports involves video games but not every video game is classified as an esports game. For video games to be considered as esports games, certain rules and organization based on these rules as well as competition between gamers are required. Weiss (2011) evaluates esports in this context and defines competitive gaming as playing according to the rules accepted by the majority of leagues and tournaments.

The motivations of esports players to play games diversify the types of esports players. Esports

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players play games to socialize, earn income, play competitively, become professional players, and so on (Bányai et al. 2020; Law, 2016; Thiel & John, 2018). Thus, esports players consist of professional players, retired players, semi-professional players, aspiring players, or who do so entirely for leisure, those who play with friends, those who practice, those who see it primarily as a social activity, and such (Egliston, 2018; Taylor et al., 2009). Also esports players exist both at the professional and amateur level. This shows a tremendous range of different “statuses” in esports.

Different motivations, frequency of playing, and hours spent for games can cause the digital gaming behavior may become a habit, dependence, or addiction. So gaming can negatively impact young people’s daily lives. To date, gaming disorder has not been accepted as an official condition and no valid criteria exist to distinguish high involvement from problematic involvement (Charlton & Danforth, 2007; Kuss & Griffiths, 2011) as evidence is lacking regarding its etiology and course (Männikkö et al., 2015). Previous research showed the inconsistent theoretical frameworks to define problematic gaming (Green & Bavelier, 2003; King et al., 2013).

Griffiths and Davies (2005); Ögel (2012), and Young (2009)’s conceptualization was used in this research. According to them, if gaming influences social life, academic life, emotions, health of young people, gaming behavior can be seen as problematic or addictive. Individuals’ playing behavior is defined as “pathological” if they harm the person; if it causes significantly negative results than normal, it is defined as “problematic” (Griffiths, 2005). Gaming behaviors of esports players were discussed in this context.

According to the literature, individuals who grew up in a negative family climate, who did not develop a secure attachment style with their caregivers, and who perceived low levels of social support are vulnerable to digital addiction (Yüksel & Baytemir, 2010; Zorbaz et al., 2015). As these significantly affect individuals, examining the underlying causes and consequences of such behaviors is critical to improve the well-being of young people. However, there has been very little research done on esports players in Turkey. Therefore, this study set out to assess the influence of family climate, perceived social support, and adult attachment styles on the digital game addiction of esports players. There is limited research to address game addictions of esports players. Since esports players play games frequently and for long periods of time, they are among the risky groups that may encounter game addiction. It is thought that this research will contribute to the literature because it focuses on both the family and the individual.

Factors Affecting the Emergence of Game Addiction

Addiction is not just an issue that affects one person. Individual characteristics and environmental factors are elements that coexist in the emergence of addiction (Lobo & Kennedy, 2006). In this context, people’s motivation to play, personality traits, structural characteristics of the game, and social factors all play a role in game addiction (Jeong et al., 2017). Within the scope of this research, family climate, perceived social support, and adult attachment styles were considered.

Perceived Social Support

Individuals are faced with situations that necessitate social support throughout their lives. However, social support gains more importance during the teenage years when intense emotional, cognitive, social, and physical changes are observed (Şahin Baltacı et al., 2012). Young people’s perception of social support, especially family support, helps them adapt to school, succeed in academic life, maintain their mental health, cope with stress, and reduce their negative behaviors (Yüksel & Baytemir, 2010).

According to studies examining the relationship between social support and playing digital games, gaming behavior isolates individuals from their family and social environment, resulting in a decline in social support sources (Mahon & Yarcheski, 1992; Yılmaz et al., 2008). On the contrary, others argue that the internet enables individuals to socialize and access social support resources; it provides a suitable environment for people who are alone in the real world to realize their potential (Morahan-Martin & Schumacher, 2000). In addition, individuals who have a high level of social support as measured by the social support resources they have in the real world do not use games in a problematic or addictive manner. In other words, despite having problems in their daily lives, these people do not see games as a coping mechanism as they are well-supported by their social circle (Yüksel & Baytemir, 2010).

Family Climate

Family members and relationships between family members have many bio-psycho-social effects on individuals. Family climate is defined as positive or negative well-being resulting from the forms of interaction between family members (Cantero-García & Alonso-Tapia, 2017). Young people’s impressions of their families’ feelings and thoughts are important. For this reason, experiencing a negative family climate causes young people to turn to the internet or digital games to relieve stress (Charlie et al., 2011). In a longitudinal study by Charlie et al. (2011), and it was found that young people who are game addicts have poor family relationships. In a study conducted by McClure and Mears (1984), it was revealed that 15% of high school adolescents play digital games to escape from problems. Zorbaz et al. (2015) found that students who have unsupportive family relationships spent a lot of time on the computer and had high addiction levels compared to students with positive family relationships.

Adult Attachment Styles

Attachment styles consist of secure, preoccupied, dismissing, and fearful. Individuals with secure attachment styles have positive thoughts about family life. In cases of loss, such as death or divorce, their secure attachment styles enable them to believe that such situations can be resolved and that they have an internal structure that includes information about adaptive coping methods such as seeking help. However, adults with preoccupied attachment styles demand a strong commitment in their relationships. Individuals raised by an unbalanced caregiver who failed to meet their needs in infancy are extremely susceptible to stress; they are always affected by potential stressors. As a result, they constantly remain close to others and seek their approval (Sümer et al., 2016). Adults with dismissing attachment styles were separated from their caregivers early in life, do not trust others, feel helpless in the face of negative life events, and cannot

suppress negative emotions (Feeney & Noller, 1990). The opposite of the secure attachment style is the fearful attachment style. Individuals with a fearful attachment style want to establish relationships with other people, but they believe that others are unreliable and are afraid of being hurt. Hence, they hesitate to interact with anyone.

Considering the information given above, it is aimed to examine the relationship between family climate, perceived social support, adult attachment styles, and game addiction.

The following questions were sought for the mentioned purpose:

- How often do the players play, what are the motivations of the players?
- What are the perceived social support, family climate, adult attachment styles, and addiction status of esports players?
- Is there a relationship between perceived social support and game addiction of esports players?
- Is there a relationship between the family climate of esports players and game addiction?
- Is there a relationship between adult attachment styles and game addiction of esports players?
- Do socio-demographic variables differ according to the game addiction scale?
- Do esports players' perceived social support, family climate, and adult attachment styles predict their addiction?

Methods

In this study, the correlational research design was used to examine the relationship between game addiction and the perceived social support, family climate, and adult attachment styles of esports players.

Participants

The population of the research consists of players who are members of esports societies at universities and esports teams in Turkey. The sample of the study only involves esports players who are members of the esports societies at universities in Ankara and actively play games. Ankara is Turkey's capital. It draws students from all over Turkey due to its location and the fact that it is home to many public and foundation universities. In this respect, this research was conducted with a culturally rich profile. The population of the research is young people who are members of the esports communities of universities in Ankara. However, since the exact number of the population could not be learned and the population could not be reached, the convenience sampling method, which is one of the non-probabilistic sampling methods, was used. The sample was determined as 384 with a 95% CI and a sampling error of .05. However, the specified number could not be reached. A total of 230 young esports players participated in our survey. To acquire a representative sample, 19 players who did not complete or carelessly filled out the questionnaire were excluded. Ultimately, 211 participants were included in this study. All participants gave written or verbal informed consent.

Materials

The researchers used a questionnaire to collect data from players who volunteered to participate in the study. The questionnaire consisted of five parts: the personal information form containing

questions about socio-demographic details, the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support, the Family Climate Scale, the Relationship Scales Questionnaire, and the Game Addiction Scale. Data were collected from February 1 to March 31, 2020.

Personal Information Form

This was designed by the researchers and consisted of 22 items concerning information about the participants and their families.

Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support

The scale of Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) was designed by Zimet et al. (1988) and adopted to Turkish by Eker and Arkar (1995). In 2001, Eker et al. (2001) retested the scale. Its Cronbach's alpha was .89. The scale consists of 12 items, each with 7 point, and 3 subscales: family, friends, and significant others. All the items were averaged to create a score of perceived social support. If the scores obtained from the scale increase, so does the perceived social support score.

Family Climate Scale

Family Climate Scale (FCS) was designed by Björnberg and Nicholson (2007) and adopted to Turkish by Gönül et al. (2018). The scale consists of 34 items with 5 points and 3 subscales: inter-generational authority, cognitive cohesion, and relatedness in the family. The Cronbach's alpha for the scale was .91. All the items were averaged to garner the family climate score. As the scores obtained from the scale increase, so does the family climate score.

Relationship Scale Questionnaire

Relationship Scale Questionnaire (RSQ) was designed by Griffin and Bartholomew (1994) and adopted to Turkish by Sümer and Güngör (1999). The scale consists of 18 items with 7 points and 4 subscales: secure, preoccupied, dismissing, and fearful. Five items resulted in either a secure subscale or a dismissing subscale, while four items created either a preoccupied subscale or a fearful subscale.

Game Addiction Scale

Game Addiction Scale (GAS) was designed by Lemmens et al. (2009) and adopted to Turkish by Baysak et al. (2016). The scale consists of 21 items with 5 points and 7 subscales: salience, tolerance, mood modification, relapse, withdrawal, conflict, and problems. The Cronbach's alpha for the scale was .96. All the items were averaged to create a score for game addiction. As the scores obtained from the scale increase, so does the game addiction score.

Procedure

The data obtained from the questionnaires were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 25.0. Before conducting the hypothesis tests, the skewness and kurtosis values were tested to see whether they were between -1.0 and $+1.0$ (Hair et al., 2013). Moreover, the Kolmogorov – Smirnov results were significant to determine whether the data were distributed homogeneously.

To analyze the significance of the difference between variables, Mann – Whitney U test, one-way analysis of variance, and Kruskal – Wallis test were used. To reveal the relationship between variables, the Spearman correlation Test was used. In the correlation test, the subscales were considered separately since the sum of each subscale reveals the participants' attachment

style, rather than the total score of the RSQ, which is used to measure adult attachment styles.

Simple linear regression analysis was conducted to test whether the independent variables predicted the dependent variable (GAS). The assumptions required for linear regression (Can, 2016) were met only for the RSQ fearful subscale. Since there is no correlation between the MSPSS and FCS scales with GAS, these independent variables were not included in the regression analysis.

Ethical Approval of Research

All study procedures were approved by the Hacettepe University Institutional Review Board with number: 12908312-300/0000102 2533 and date: February 26, 2020. All participants gave written or verbal informed consent.

Results

This research, which was conducted on players who are members of the esports societies of 11 universities in Ankara, found that the majority of the participants (89.1%) are male. The average age of the players is 20.65 ± 1.92 . The vast majority of players (70.1%) establish friendships in both the real and digital worlds. Almost half of the esports players have one sibling, and the parents of the vast majority (81.5%) are alive and living together.

The majority of esports players (77.7%) consist of gamer-type players. Players mostly play games every day of the week (38.9%), spend 2 – 4 hours a day playing games (50.7%), and watch esports streams (49.8%) for 0 – 1 hour a day. League of legends (LoL) is the most played game. More than half of the players (57.3%) receive income from the games they play, with most earning between 1 and 250£ per month. Pro gamers earn a higher income than gamers. Over a fifth of the players (21.8%) had previously participated in an international tournament and over half (54.3%) of this group won a prize in these competitions. Moreover, 43.6% of the players had previously participated in a national tournament and most of them (64.5%) earned a reward in these tournaments. The main gaming motivations of players are having fun, spending time with peers, earning an income, escaping from problems, competing with others, enjoying themselves, socializing, playing as a habit, and experiencing the feeling of success. Table 1 shows the demographics of esports players and hypothesis test between GAS and socio-demographic information. Also, results from Table 1 are not providing information about causal effects, it shows relationship between GAS and some variables.

There was no significant difference in game addiction based on the players' gender, their parents' marital status, player types, frequency of playing games, stream watching, income through games, and their participation in national or international tournaments ($p > .05$).

However, a significant difference was observed between the players' daily game play times and their style of making friends; their game addiction had a p value of $<.05$. Players who played for 5 – 7 hours ($M = 65.01$, standard deviation (SD) = 16.47) were found to be more addicted to games than those who spent no more than an hour. Players who make their friends in the digital world ($M = 68.00$, SD = 8.23) are more addicted to games

Table 1.
Findings Regarding Hypothesis Tests Between Game Addiction Scale and Socio-Demographic Information

	n (%)	Range	Mean \pm SD	GAS (p)
Sex				
Female	23 (10.9)	38 – 104	66.86 \pm 18.52	.167 ^α
Male	188 (89.1)	21 – 105	60.10 \pm 15.87	
Marital status of parents				
Married	172 (81.5)	21 – 105	60.68 \pm 16.95	.737 ^α
Seperated	39 (18.5)	35 – 85	61.54 \pm 13.01	
Player types				
Progamer	47 (22.3)	32 – 105	60.10 \pm 15.87	.060 ^α
Gamer	164 (77.7)	21-104	66.86 \pm 18.52	
Number of hours gaming per day				
0 – 1 hours	10 (4.7)	9 – 82	49.00 \pm 17.91	.008* ^β
2 – 4 hours	107 (50.7)	32 – 105	59.57 \pm 15.67	
5 – 7 hours	63 (29.9)	21 – 103	65.01 \pm 16.47	
8 – 10 hours	20 (9.5)	35 – 86	57.80 \pm 14.25	
11+ hours	11 (5.2)	35 – 84	65.54 \pm 16.99	
Frequency of playing games per week				
Every day	82 (38.9)	26 – 105	64.08 \pm 17.55	.066 ^γ
5 – 6 times	69 (32.7)	21 – 98	60.50 \pm 15.38	
3 – 4 times	45 (21.3)	32 – 86	57.24 \pm 13.19	
1 – 2 times	15 (7.1)	29 – 104	55.40 \pm 18.89	
Number of hours stream watching per day				
Never	105 (49.8)	29 – 88	55.44 \pm 15.92	.162 ^β
0 – 1 hours	77 (36.5)	21 – 105	59.37 \pm 16.69	
2-4 hours	11 (5.2)	23 – 103	62.70 \pm 15.70	
5+ hours	18 (8.5)	44 – 86	67.18 \pm 14.76	
Make friends from				
Real world	49 (23.2)	33 – 105	55.18 \pm 14.65	.002* ^β
Digital world	14 (6.6)	55 – 81	68.00 \pm 8.23	
Both of them	148 (70.1)	21 – 104	62.03 \pm 16.88	
Income through games per month				
Not earning	90 (42.7)	32 – 103	60.15 \pm 15.35	.783 ^β
1 – 250£	41 (19.4)	21 – 104	63.39 \pm 18.63	
251 – 500£	14 (6.6)	36 – 98	59.50 \pm 14.81	
500 – 2000£	16 (7.6)	32 – 105	63.93 \pm 20.44	
2000£+	19 (9.0)	35 – 84	59.05 \pm 16.34	
Earning irregular revenue	31 (14.7)	29 – 92	59.54 \pm 14.40	
Participation in international tournament				
Yes	46 (21.8)	32 – 97	59.82 \pm 14.29	0,722 ^α
No	165 (78.2)	21 – 105	61.12 \pm 16.81	
Participation in national tournament				
Yes	92 (43.6)	32 – 103	60.83 \pm 14.91	.944 ^α
No	119 (56.4)	21 – 105	60.84 \pm 17.31	

^αMann – Whitney U; ^βKruskal – Wallis; ^γOne-way ANOVA; * $p < .05$. SD = standard deviation; GAS = Game Addiction Scale.

Table 2.
Psychometric Properties For Perceived Social Support, Family Climate, Adult Attachment Styles, and Game Addiction Scales

	Mean	SD	Min.-Max.	Cronbach's α
MSPSS	62.88	15.94	13-84	.878
FCS	121.98	19.43	55-164	.901
RSQ	74.62	13.04	36-108	.828
Secure	21.67	4.96	11-35	.066
Fearful	15.01	5.77	4-28	.662
Preoccupied	16.36	4.98	4-28	.302
Dismissing	21.56	6.98	5-35	.717
GAS	60.83	16.27	21-105	.902

Note: SD = standard deviation; MSPSS = Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support; FCS = Family Climate Scale; RSQ = Relationship Scale Questionnaire; GAS = Game Addiction Scale.

than those who from friendships in the real world ($M = 55.18$, $SD = 14.65$) and those who make friends in both the digital and real worlds ($M = 62.03$, $SD = 16.88$) (see Table 1).

When players' responses to the scales were examined, it was seen that they have a moderate perception of social support, with much of it coming from their families; their family climate is neither positive nor negative. They are also fairly distributed among all four attachment styles. Additionally, they moderately use games in a problematic manner. Table 2 shows psychometric properties for scales.

The correlation between the perceived social support, family climate, adult attachment styles, and game addiction was tested. Table 3 shows correlations between scales. It was found that as the players' family climate changes positively, the degree of perceived social support increases ($r = .55$, $p < .001$). Their problematic gaming behavior decreases if they have a secure attachment style ($r = .25$, $p < .001$). Results show the correlation between variables but not partial correlations.

Since the only variable that satisfies the regression analysis assumptions is fearful attachment subscale, only this variable is included in the analysis. Having a fearful attachment style

significantly predicts game addiction ($\beta = .20$, $t = 3.042$, $\Delta R^2 = 0.03$, $p < .05$). The fearful attachment subscale is a predictor variable that accounts for 4% of the changes in the GAS. The remaining percentage can be explained by other reasons.

When other variables are kept under control, one SD ($SD = 5.77$) increase in the fearful attachment subscale causes a .580 SD increase in GAS, i.e., 7.23 points. These findings are presented in Table 4.

Discussion

Game Addiction in the Context of Youngs' Esports Activities

The study, which included 211 players who are members of the esports societies at universities in Ankara, found that the majority of the participants were male. According to studies, most of the players are in Turkey and those around the world are predominantly male (Ferguson et al., 2011; Mentzoni, et al., 2011; Mustafaoğlu et al., 2018). Moreover, the participants' mean age was 20.65 ± 1.92 . Research reveals that esports players are between 17 and 25 years of age (Baltezarević et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2021). This can be explained by society's attribution of digital games and violence to boys, as well as parents' raising their children with gender inequality and reinforcing these attitudes throughout childhood.

When the digital game activities of the players were examined in this study, it was determined that most of the players were gamers, and the games they played were violent. The reason why esports players are predominantly gamer types can be explained by the fact that esports is still unknown in Turkey and is not recognized as a traditional profession. Despite their skills and interest in esports activities, young people are still viewed as gamer-type players due to reasons such as insufficient income, lack of job security, opposition from families, and lack of equipment. Nonetheless, the players still attempt to show their gaming skills by working harder and establishing international relations (DiFrancisco-Donoghue & Balentine, 2018).

This study's results found that young people play games almost every day and watch game-related video streams. Moreover, those who play games frequently and for longer periods are more addicted to games than those who play for a shorter time and less frequently. Other studies have also revealed that game

Table 3.
Correlations (Spearman) Between Perceived Social Support, Family Climate, Adult Attachment Styles, and Game Addiction

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. MSPSS	-						
2. FCS	.555**	-					
3. Secure	.254**	.083	-				
4. Fearful	-.103	-.069	-.308**	-			
5. Preoccupied	-.173*	-.147*	-.001	.263**	-		
6. Dismissing	.041	.012	-.098	.579**	.010	-	
7. GAS	-.125	-.100	-.115	.204**	.113	.177	-

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$.

MSPSS = Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support; FCS = Family Climate Scale; GAS, Game Addiction Scale.

Table 4.
Regression Analysis Summary for Fearful Attachment
Subscale Predicting GAS

Variable	B	Standard Error	β	t	p
Constant	52.128	3.067	-	16.996	.000
Fearful Attachment Subscale	.580	.191	.206	3.042	.003*
R = .206	R ² = .042	Adjusted R ² = .038			
F = 9.254	p = .003**				

Note: *p < .05, **p < .001.

addicts spend more time on games than non-addicts (Lemmens et al., 2009). However, it is difficult to conclude that the time spent by esports players alone is sufficient for determining game addiction. The negative effects of gaming behavior on a person's life help us understand problematic gaming behavior or gaming addiction. Although it is easy to predict that people using chemical substances might become addicted to them, it is quite difficult to claim that anyone who plays games will become addict to gaming (Bektaş, 2018). Even if a person plays video games for 14 hours a day, if such an activity does not cause negative consequences, the gaming behavior cannot be considered as an addiction (Weinstein, 2010). When negative consequences of excessive gaming behavior are observed, Kuss and Griffiths (2012) suggest that the concept of addiction is appropriate.

In this respect, considering that the time spent on playing games and the frequency at which they are played increases, the biopsychosocial health of young people can be affected; it can be inferred that the time spent playing games may be one of the risk factors for game addiction. Playing games for a long time reduced sleep duration and productivity compared to playing for a short time (King et al., 2012); esports players who played games more than 10 hours have problems with their family (Civan Kemiksiz, 2019); students who play games 6 or 7 days a week are more addicted than students who play 3 days a week (Kim & Kim, 2015). In other words, playing games on the computer for a long time have negative effects on the biological, psychological, social, and academic well-being of young people. Aside from the consequences of players' gaming behavior, the fact that the game's content is often violent has some negative effects on young people. Games with violent or action-oriented content cause players' heart rate and blood pressure to rise and more dopamine to be released in the brain. By normalizing the violence, they see in the game, gamers may engage in aggressive thoughts and behaviors in their daily life (Anderson and Bushman, 2001; Gentile et al., 2004).

The research participants' motivations for playing games were to have fun, spend time with friends, earn money, escape from problems, and compete. Previous studies found that having fun, developing personal skills, (Lee & Schoenstedt, 2011), escaping from problems (Chen et al., 2010), experiencing success (Kim & Ross, 2006), belonging to a team, interacting socially (Trepte et al., 2012), and desiring to have an esports career were the motivations of esports players (Mustafaoglu et al., 2018). Through

games, esports players hone their critical thinking skills, cognitive functions, fast decision-making mechanisms, and creative thinking skills (Granic et al., 2014; Wagner, 2006). In addition, they improve their ability to work in a team as a result of the increased social interactions (Hayes & Silberman, 2007). However, engaging in esports to avoid responsibilities and problems is linked to the problematic use of digital games (Kardefelt-Winther, 2016). Gamers who have dysfunctional or maladaptive coping styles use games as a means to avoid problems (Paulus et al., 2018). This may be harmful in the future, especially for children and youths who are still developing their coping mechanisms, as it may lead to the adoption of unwanted thoughts and behavior patterns. In addition, due to the nature of esports, it is important for the player to compete with others and achieve a successful outcome. These factors contribute to players reinforcing their gaming behavior and engaging in games for longer periods and at frequent intervals. This situation increases the likelihood of game addiction (Lemmens et al., 2009).

Game Addiction in the Context of Youngs' Perceptions of Social Support, Family Climate, and Adult Attachment Styles

With the development and widespread use of games, a new social environment has emerged for young people, where they can make friends (Trepte et al., 2012). It was observed that among the young people participating in the study, those who made friends in the digital world were more addicted to games than those who only had friends in the real world. In other words, making friends through the games make them more likely to play. Moreover, real-world friendships reduce the risk of and protect young people from being addicted to digital games (Yüksel & Baytemir, 2010).

Based on this research's outcomes, players with fearful attachment styles are more prone to game addiction than others. Other studies (Ayas & Horzum, 2013; Çalışkan & Özbay, 2015; Kim & Kim, 2015) have found similar results. Young people who have developed a secure attachment style tend to have high self-esteem, enjoy their close relationships, share their feelings with other people, and seek social support from those around them when they need it (Schimmenti et al. 2014). In this context, players who have not formed a secure attachment style, or who have a fearful attachment style, have negative views of themselves and others. This suggests that they have poor self-esteem and have negative expectations of others social support (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Adolescents with fearful attachment styles tend to play games daily when encountering problems at home, school, or with friends, rather than seeking social support and trusting in their ability to solve the issues (Kim & Kim, 2015). The fact that young people have game addiction can be attributed to a lack of a protective element in their environment, i.e., not having a secure attachment style. Young people's propensity to play games to distract themselves from their issues leads to game addiction as the frequency and duration of their play increase.

Limitations, Directions/Suggestions for Future Research

Sample selected only university students as an easy way to reach esports players. This could be a limitation in terms of the inferences for the whole population. At the same time, the low proportion of female participants reduces representativeness for female esports players.

Family climate, perceived social support, and adult attachment styles, which are among the social and familial factors that influence young people's game addiction, have been discussed in this study. However, many internal and external factors affect the formation and development of game addiction. These factors should be considered separately and in combination with other studies. It is recommended that qualitative research methods be used to obtain detailed information from esports players regarding the relevant factors.

To ensure and protect the bio-psycho-social well-being of children and adolescents, skills that enable them to control their digital playtime should be developed and supported. In addition, protective factors against game addiction must be identified and strengthened. The needs of the developmental period in which the players playing behavior, appropriate interventions should be carried out by social workers and psychologists. School – family cooperation should also be established to combat game addiction. Furthermore, for families to have appropriate attitudes and behaviors toward games and their children, awareness-raising programs about digital games and esports should be carried out in schools.

Game addiction is included in the third appendix of The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-Fifth Edition (DSM-5), under the Conditions for Further Study section. This research was conducted as an answer to the DSM-5's call for lack of data on internet game addiction. In addition, enlightening studies are needed to reveal the esports activities of not only young people but also children and adults across various developmental stages.

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