A Qualitative Research on the Effect of Internet Games and TV Series on Primary School Students' Perceptions of Violence

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to analyze the effect of internet games and tv series on the primary school students' perceptions of violence. Within this framework, student's remark will be obtained via making them draw pictures and watch tv series. This research is designed within the framework of descriptive analysis *which is a type of qualitative research based on analyzing and understanding the social facts within their environment. The study group is composed of 72 eighth-grade students from two primary schools located in Afyonkarahisar. 37 of these students are male, 35 of them are female. The research has benefited from totally 55 students from two primary schools as sample. Initially, some of the students were asked to draw a picture regarding the internet games and Tv series they watched and then watch a short video prepared by the researcher in order to understand students' perceptions of domestic violence. As a consequence of this study, it has been observed that totally 16 pictures contain violence including the violent tv series from 6 students, one emotional tv series from one student and violent computer games from 10 students. It has been seen that the remaining 14 pictures don't include violence. As a result of the research conducted qualitatively in order to analyze the effect of internet games and tv series on primary school students, 31 students were asked to draw pictures related to internet or Tv series they watched or followed.*

Keywords: Internet games, tv series, primary school students, violence.

1. Introduction

Human beings among all living creatures possess some high traits such as learning, expressing their opinions, having fun and entertaining. Throughout history, the means used by humans to reach information, process and spread the attained information for learning has shown great variety. In order to reach knowledge, the education of humans initially starts within family in an informal way and then it turns into a more formal structure and it takes place in many planned and programmed institutions like schools today. Particularly, the technological developments in the 20th and 21st century play a crucial role in education of human beings. Not only parents and schools but also visual and auditory and both visual and auditory technological tools called as media informally (such as Tv, internet) have an effect on students.

Television broadcast was first seen in UK in 1936 and then it spread to U.S, the Continental Europe and other countries. (RTÜK, 20007) As for Turkey, it started in 1968. (İspirli, 2000: 105). According to the communication experts, media creates a "cultural environment" feeding violence gradually, making people insensitive to realities of violence and causing us to perceive world more threatening than as it is. Considering the conducted researches, it is seen that children exposed to media violence tend to commit crime or adopt behaviors including crimes. (Dillon, 1999). It is indicated that children even momentarily exposed to violence in a programme or movie are more likely to show aggressive behaviors when compared to their peers who haven't watched it. Although it is known that heredity or parental influence has effect on the formation of personality characteristics, it is seen on the report that the young having aggressive behaviors consume violent media at the same time. In other words, the more the young watch television broadcasts with violent content, the more he/she develops aggressive behaviors as a vicious circle. As a consequence of the focus group discussion with children and their parents on the conducted

study, the following conclusions have been obtained: parents' and children's definitions of violence are not consistent, they have made different definitions; parents and children are less concerned about the violent content included in media; if it creates a problem, parents think that they can reduce the effect of media violence; if parents are inconsistent with the concerns about the violence in media, more problems arise because of other effects (sexual content in television broadcast, etc.) The results obtained from the experimental part of the study are as follows: children watching tv with their parents tend to show less violent behaviours after they watch a television broadcast with violent content. (Brocato et al. 2010:95-96-101). Thus when parents watch tv and advertisements with violent content together with their children, they can lessen the harmful effects on them. (Brocato, 2010: 105). General Aggression Model, Social Learning Theory and Training Theory have shown that media violence consumption leads to bad worldview, aggressive reactions to social conditions and learned hostile acts. In this study, it has been found that violence is widespread on video game advertisements and this violence is gradually increasing. (Combs, 2010: 40). It has been stated that constant exposure to the broadcasts with violence content can bring about "the syndrome of dirty worthless world" which is a world having hard rules and underestimating the violence of real world. Aggressiveness is accompanied by fear, anxiety, insecurity and depression (Dyson, 2003). Taking a figure seen in a violent movie as a model by a child may result in tragic outcomes. We can see some striking similarities between the criminal acts of violence and fictional incidents presented on tv programs. We can even come across attacks, rapes and murders in which these fictional incidents are clearly taken as a model. Violence rate of the 80 movies which were watched has been found as 33.1% (1851.3/5600 sec) in the study. (Ayrancı, Köşgeroğlu, Günay:2004:133-140). According to the studies conducted in U.S., it has been stated that the young spend more time, about 50 hours a week, in front of the tv than they spend in school. (Özkalp,2001:122). Based on this fact, it is understood that television has a strong influence on people's moods. The psychological effects of television are that the programs with violent and hard content lead people especially children and the young to show these behaviours.   (Akman,1995:103). Considering Bandura's Social Learning Theory, studies proving that violence on television is imitated by children are available. Violence elements of movies, tv series, cartoons even news on tv can strengthen the involvement of youths in crime. These elements may lead to criminal behaviors among the young who are on the way of establishing his/her identity and tend to imitate the behaviors of the characters in programs. (Sadi, 2007: 28). It is known that the young watch the programs aimed at adults, as well. Violent elements can be found at these programs. We can see that a young person taking them as a model can show aggressive behaviors. (Sadi, 2007: 28). Children between the ages of 8-12 are more sensitive to violence on television. These children could have emotional, behavioral, learning and motivation problems. (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 1999 akt. Muscari, 2002: 585). Combs (2010:39) has come to a conclusion in the content analysis of his study that violent content of video games and video games presentations is much higher than the findings taken from the previous studies. (%78.9). Especially in today's world, internet is one of the media tools of computer connected to each other by networks and fulfiling the duties of educating, informing and entertaining.

Internet is a real phenomenon. This technology has spread to all areas of society including education. (Joia, 1997:301-304). Players in violent computer games must exhibit behaviors such as beating, breaking, destroying and killing in order to overcome the obstacles and level up to following stage. Because there is an idea that the more the violence is used, the more successful a player will be. This type of behavior in the online games improves a number of features particularly score and dignity of a person against the other player. Thus the features of the games encourage violence and desensitization comes concomitantly as the violence becomes common. (Kıran, 2011: 41-42). It has been proved in many researches that violence in computer and internet games highly influences children's and the young's attitudes and behaviors. It has been determined that boys playing computer games including aggression display more verbal and physical aggression to both objects and his playmates when compared to the ones playing non-violent games. (Irwin and Gross ,1995: 337-350). There is a negative relationship between the time devoted to computer games and academic achievement, as well. (Bilgi, 2005: 17).

According to the results of the Households Use of Information Technology Survey conducted in April 2012, 47,2% of the households throughout Turkey have an opportunity to get internet access at home. This rate was 42.9% in the same month of 2011. 27,6% of the households having no internet access at home point out that they do not need internet usage which is the reason why they have no internet connection at home. According to the NUTS-1, computer and internet usage is the highest in TR-1 İstanbul region and found as 62,2% and 60,9% which is followed by TR5-West Anatolia Region with 58,6% of computer, 57,1% of internet usage rate.

Table 1. TSI (Turkish Statistical Institute) 2007-2012 Report on Internet and Computer Usage
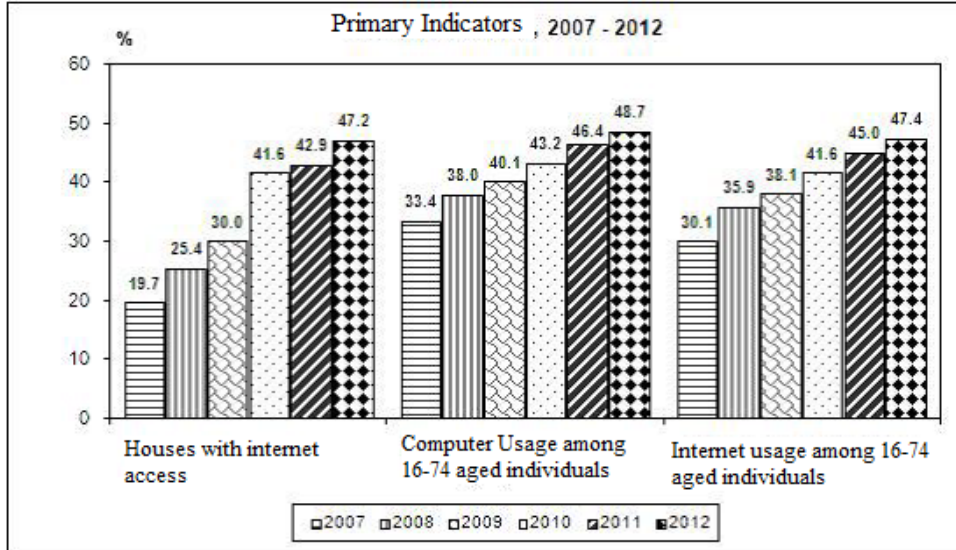
In the first quarter of 2012 (January- March 2012), 37,8% of all 16-74 aged individulas used internet regularly (almost every day or at least once a week). The rate of regular internet use is found as 88,5% among the individuals using the internet in the same period and age group; this rate is 89,7% for urban places, 82,5% for rural places and 90,7% for TR1-İstanbul region according to the NUTS-1. In the first quarter of 2012 (January- March 2012), while 72,5% of the individuals used internet for reading the news, newspapers or magazines online and downloading the news, 66,8% of them for sending/receiving e-mails, 61,3% of them for obtaining information about the goods and services, 49,1% of them for downloading and playing games, music, movie, videos. (TSI, 2012).

In Tahir and Chaudhary' research (2011) which they conducted with the male and female students of the Department of Information Technology and Management at Balochistan University, it has been discovered that the students of the Department of Management Systems commit more violent acts than other students. It is considered that this is because they have more internet access than other students. Based on a pilot scheme, it has been found that there is a positive correlation between the students' violent, uncomfortable, disturbing behaviors and their voilent attitudes and behaviors related to computers. This context includes guessing a friend's or visitor's password, entering into the information system without permission, breaking the security system for fun or financial gain or creating virus. (Tahir and Chaudhary, 2011: 14).

2. Method

Research Model
This research is designed within the framework of descriptive analysis which is a type of qualitative research based on analyzing and understanding the social facts within their environment. Qualitative research approach requires that researcher should be flexible, reshape the research process according to

the collected data and pursue an approach based on inductive method on the analysis of both research design and collected data. (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2006). Within this scope, it has been tried to describe the primary school students' remarks and drawings related to internet games and tv series.

Study Group

The study group is composed of 72 eighth-grade students from two primary schools located in Afyonkarahisar. 37 of these students are male, 35 of them are female. Convenient sample used in the research has been selected as a sample by the method of convenience sampling among nonrandom sampling methods. (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2006: 99) The research has benefited from totally 55 students from two primary schools as sample. Initially, some of the students (31 students from Class 8/A at Oruçoğlu Primary School) were asked to draw a picture regarding the internet games and tv series they watched and then the students (24 students from Class 8/A at Atatürk Primary School) were asked to watch a short video prepared by the researcher in order to understand their perceptions of domestic violence. After that, their remarks concerning the movie they watched were asked. The students are attending the schools at the city centre and they have medium and medium high socioeconomic level.

Data Collection

The criteria demonstrating the validity of the semi-structured interview form used in the research are as follows: the first criterion is the use of the method of participant confirmation. The accuracy of the current themes is supported by students' responses. The second criterion is that the data has been obtained by talking comprehensibly to students face-to face. As a third criterion, the directors put forward remarks and suggestions explaning (interpreting) main themes. These criteria are considered as the criteria aimed at proving the internal validity of the research. (Yıldırım, Şimşek; 2006). The confirmation of the prepared assessment tools by two academicians'(expert) remarks is the first criterion to provide for the reliability of the research. As a second criterion aimed at providing for the reliability, students' remarks (from the primary source) have been reflected as they are by direct-tranfer method at the findings part. (Yıldırım, Şimşek; 2006).

3. Results

31 students at the age of 13-14 from Class 8/A at Oruçoğlu Primary School were asked to draw pictures regarding the tv series they watched and the computers games they played. As a consequence of this study, it has been observed that totally 16 pictures contain violence including the violent tv series from 6 students (Muhteşem yüzyıl, arka sokaklar, kurtlar vadisi), one emotional tv series from one student (Adını Feriha Koydum) and violent computer games (caunter, wolfeam ,metin 2, gta) from 10 students. It has been seen that the remaining 14 pictures don't include violence (pepe, pis yedili, calluio, pess 2012).

Figure 1: Drawing of Metin 2 Game in Turkey by student

It is a game played on the internet online. In this game, many players can participate in by being online. Players kill the realistic animal characters with swords, guns etc. Metin 2 having constant level increases gives players an opportunity to establish their own empire (http://shiftdelete.net/online-oyun-metin-2-2236.html) In figure 1, the student has drawn a picture of a warrior in Metin 2 holding a sword in his hand.

Wolfteam becomes a new breath for the ones loving DVOFPS in terms of its science fictional structure. In this game, there are a lot of modes that can be played. Unlike the werewolves we have seen in movies, we are able to control ill-tempered and fast werewolves and make our competitiors suffer from our claw attacks. We have an opportunity to choose soldiers if you insist on choosing humans. Gun, Sniper and Knife modes were added to the game a short time ago. These new modes doubled up the fun of the game. (http://www.frmtr.com/wolfteam/3539165-wolfteam-nedir-nasil-oynanir.html).

Figure 2: Drawings of Wolfteam and Metin 2 Games by Student

Students have drawn the picture of Wolfteam and Metin 2 games in Figure 2. It shows how these games influence students.
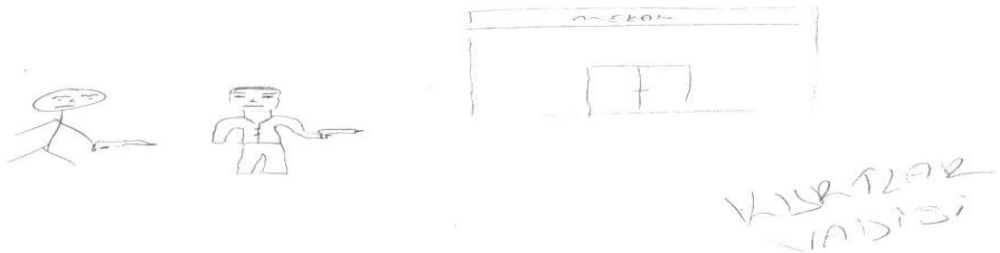

Figure 3: Drawing of the tv series called as Kurtlar Vadisi (Valley of Wolves) by student

Violent scenes in Kurtlar Vadisi may not influence adults much. However, if the eight-grade students watch tv series including violence, it may create an platform aimed at inflicting violence on each other or others. Considering the second step, 26 eighth-grade students from Atatürk Primary School were made to

watch a movie containing domestic violence and then they were asked to respond the following question; " How was the child influenced by the domestic violence used parents?
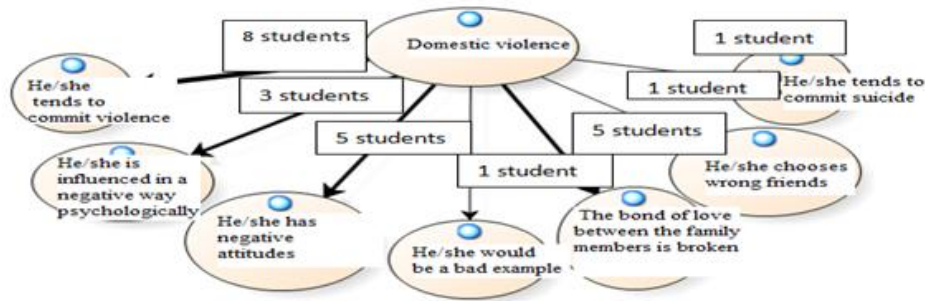

Figure 4: "Students' remarks on domestic violence"

As it is seen in Figure 4, the students having watched the movie state that the child in the movie tends to commit violence (8 students) or has negative attitudes (5 students), chooses wrong friends (5 students). Therefore, the content of the movie has influenced the students having watched it adversely, too.

4. Conclusions

As a result of the research conducted qualitatively in order to analyze the effect of internet games and tv series on the primary school students, 31 students were asked to draw pictures related to internet or tv series they watch or follow , it has been found that 16 of them follow violent computer games or tv series. This situation can reveal students' behaviours such as exposure to violent behavior in the future. (Dillon, 1999; Joia, 1997:301-304; Kıran, 2011: 41-42) In addition, 24 eighth-grade primary school students were asked to watch a movie including domestic violence and they were asked to respond the following question; "How was the child affected by the domestic violence used by parents?" Considering the students' responses, 3 students replied as "He/She is influenced in a negative way psychologically", 8 students as "He/She tends to commit violence", 5 students as "He/She has negative attitudes", 1 student as "He/She would be a bad example", 1 student as "He/She tends to commit suicide", 1 student as "He/She chooses wrong friends and 5 students as "Bond of love between family members is broken. The students especially point out that the individuals growing in this family will tend to commit violence. (5 students). Therefore, this research is supported by the conducted researches. (Brocato et al., 2010:95-96-101; Combs, 2010: 40; Ayrancı et al, 2004:133-140.).

As it is almost impossible to remove the reality of tv and internet from human life today, the media literacy course started to be given in schools about tv and internet should be taught more effectively and tearchers should develop strategies to develop effective cooperation with students' parents. Also, RTÜK (The Radio and Television Supreme Council), schools, education unions and related institutions are required to create a more controlled media world via the effective works because positive or negative phenomenons on internet and tv affect the students. Effective human resource should be created in this field via the cooperation between particularly educational policy makers, education administrators, education unions, shareholders in the field of internet and information in the society, institutions to fight cybercrime and the media organizations. In addition, if RTÜK (The Radio and Television Supreme Council)   introduces scientific criteria (encrypted, approved by parents) for the broadcast of movies

including violence such as Kurtlar Vadisi (Valley of Wolves), it can play role on upbringing of our children more isolatedly and away from violence. Also, based on the data obtained from 2012 Information and Communication Technologies Authority (BTK), (http://www.haberinkalbi.com/teknoloji-haberleri/guvenli-interneti-kac-kisi_kullaniyor1_89149.html) it is a pleasing situation that five million people in Turkey use safe internet.

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