THE BENEFITS OF E-LEISURE FOR THE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: THE USE OF XBOX 360 KINECT

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Abstract - The use of electronic leisure activities has become very common in some areas such as education and rehabilitation. The researches examining the effects of playing video games suggested that there are some positive and negative consequences of using those games as a tool for spending leisure. The main objective of this study is to investigate the benefits of playing Xbox 360 Kinect for the university students. A qualitative research design was adopted to discover the benefits of playing Xbox 360 Kinect games. The sample was included 15 students who are studying at a state university in Turkey. Students played Xbox 360 Kinect games in E-leisure lab at the Sport Sciences Faculty for 30 minutes X 2 days X 4 weeks. After 4 weeks, in-depth interviews conducted to collect data and observation notes were taken by the researcher. Question form was developed for the interviews consistent with previous researches regarding with the effects of e-leisure games. The interviews were ranged between 30 and 45 minutes. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. According to the results of the interviews, four themes were revealed related to benefits gained through Xbox 360 Kinect games. They were labeled as social development, cognitive development, physical development and flow.

Keywords - E-leisure, Xbox 360 Kinect, University Students.

I. INTRODUCTION

The rise and advancement of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has greatly transformed leisure habits and lifestyle by providing individuals with various platforms and resources for leisure, changing not only leisure practices but also time and space. Nowadays, individuals have started to participate in leisure activities in electronic environments and spend their leisure time in simulated electronic environments thanks to technological devices such as computers, smart phones, tablets, virtual glasses, console games.

These changes in technological developments will continue to transform the ways of using leisure time in the future and bring about changes that cannot yet be predicted (Nimrod &Adoni, 2012, Özkeroğlu & Akyıldız Munusturlar, 2020; Russel, 2009). In this context, the concept of electronic leisure time has emerged (Özkeroğlu & Akyıldız Munusturlar, 2020). Electronic applications in today's world are mostly used as a source of information and entertainment, and they offer many activities such as digital games, online education, online shopping, datingand messaging. The time spent with such applications is frequently referred to as "online leisure ", "cyber leisure ", "virtual leisure " or "electronic leisure " in the literature (Nimrod &Adoni, 2012). Therefore, online activities such as sending messages, reading books, listening to music, playing games, writing blogs, passively and mentally involved simulation games, target shooting games as games that require coordination, strategy games that require knowledge and practical problem-solving skills, arcade and all other computer games that require speed and sleight of hand skills, all game consoles such as PlayStation, Nintendo Wii or Xbox Kinect, played individually or in groups, which means physically participating in the activity, all online activities such as sending e-mails, messaging, reading books, watching movies, listening to music, shopping, using social media, watching videos and sharing photos constitute the scope of the concept of electronic leisure (Akyıldız, 2015; Özkeroğlu & Akyıldız Munusturlar, 2020).

Electronic leisure activities have the potential to serve as a resource for young populations in their leisure time in two ways; firstly, as a means of learning, recognizing and experiencing leisure services. The endless information available on the World Wide Web enables young people to learn about and experience a variety of leisure opportunities. The second role of the Internet as a resource in young people's leisure time is to enable participation in many digitally offered leisure activities (e.g. social media, games and shopping, participating in virtual tours).

Many studies indicate that the electronic leisure activitieshave many positive contributions to the mental and physical health of the individual.Hall (2022) asserts that technology has significantly altered the way people partake in their hobbies and recreational activities. For instance, virtual reality experiences that mimic real-world activities like sports, travel, and social interactions are now available. Lampe and colleagues (2008) found that electronicized leisure activities can enrich people's leisure activities. People can enhance their leisure experiences by sharing content, connecting with others who share the same interests and participating in online interest-based communities. This social component in the digital age creates a sense of community, offers social support, and provides social and psychological benefits such as fun, rest,

relaxation, getting to know new people and self-discovery.Similarly, Er& Cengiz (2023) also revealed in their research that individuals who participate in digital leisure activities have high levels of leisure satisfaction and flow experiences in their leisure. With the use of augmented and virtual reality technologies on our tablets, mobile phones and wristbands as electronic leisure tools, it has been found that online physical activity and exercise has the potential to improve physical and psychological health in a range of individuals (Qian et al., 2020); positively affecting attitude towards physical activity by making exercise enjoyable, leading to improved overall health and consequently improved quality of life(Yılmaz, 2022).

The aim of this study is to investigate the benefits of playing Xbox 360 Kinect as an e-leisure for the university students.

II. METHOD

2.1. Research Model

As the purpose of this research was to discover and understand the benefits of Xbox 360 Kinect gaming as an e-leisure activity, qualitative research design was adopted.

2.2. Population and Sample

The study group of the research consisted of 15 university students between the ages of 19-22 who did not have physical disabilities that would prevent functional skills for the study.Convenience sampling method was used to create the sample. At the stage of selecting the sample, the researchers explained the purpose, scope and application process of the research to the 1st and 2nd year students of Eskisehir Technical University Faculty of Sports Sciences Undergraduate Program. After the information, 15 university students who agreed to participate were included in the study.

2.3. Data Collection Tool

The 15 university students included in the sample participated in an Xbox exercise program that included e-leisure activities for 4 weeks, 2 days a week for 30 minutes each.The program was carried out in Eskisehir Technical University Faculty of Sports Sciences Electronic Leisure Game Laboratory. There are 3 Xbox console game stations in the laboratory where 3 people can play games at the same time. The exercise program was programmed in the form of 3 stations consisting of a total of 30 minutes, 10 minutes at each station. The games played at these stations were created as 3 different stations; Dance Central, Kinect Adventures, and Kinect Sports-Volleyball.

After the completion of the 4-week exercise program, in-depth interviews were conducted with the participants.Semi-structured interviews were employed to reveal the benefits of Xbox game playing among the university students. The researchers carried out all interviews and analyses to preserve an all; encompassing viewpoint. They continued conducting interviews until they achieved theoretical saturation - a point where the concepts were fully explored and no new information emerged from the interviews.

The interviews involved questions that were open-ended, focusing on the advantages of active video gaming, specifically Xbox gaming. A series of expansive questions, which align with prior research in e-leisure, were formulated for these conversations. With the agreement of the participants, the interviews were taped, and each conversation varied in duration from 30 to 45 minutes.

1. What positive experiences or gains have you had playing Xbox games?
2. Can you tell us about the most enjoyable or relaxing moments while playing Xbox games?
3. Have you learned or developed any skills while playing Xbox games? How have these skills contributed to your daily life?
4. Have you experienced any social interactions related to Xbox games? If yes, how did these interactions benefit you?
5. Did Xbox games improve your problem-solving or strategic thinking skills? How did you notice these improvements?
6. Did you encounter any challenges or obstacles while playing Xbox games? If yes, what kind of learning or coping process did these challenges or obstacles create for you? How did you benefit from these processes?

Table 1: Semi-structured Interview Key Questions

2.4. Data Analysis

The interviews were written down word for word. The researchers also wrote notes about how each person acted, what they said, and other things that happened without words during the exercise program. To make sure the data was good and reliable, the researchers listened to each interview three times and coded it on their own. Then, they read each line of the interview closely and reread it three more times to make sure the coding was right. The researchers then came together to agree on the coding. They worked out any differences by agreeing with each other.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to the results of the interviews, four themes were revealed related to benefits gained through Xbox 360 Kinect games. They were labelled as social development, cognitive development, physical development and flow.

One of the participant views that were effective in the emergence of the social development theme is as

follows; "…It was a lot of fun to talk to other participants about how much fun the games are and to think about the opportunity to play multiple games that we enjoy together, Xbox will definitely be an important part of my leisure hobbies from now on."

The participant opinions related to the theme of cognitive development can be listed as follows;
"I need to follow moving objects quickly and react with the right timing."

"I had to logically evaluate the situations I encountered in the game, find the best solution and react at the right time,deciding quickly what to do next were things that mentally exhausted me for the first time in front of the screen." Regarding the theme of physical development, which emerged as another benefit of e-leisure activities, participants expressed the excitement of doing physical activity while having fun; "It was a great pleasure to be in front of the screen and dance as if I was on stage, to have fun freely with the music I like and to sweat."

Finally, participant comments that can be given as an example regarding the flow experience are as follows;

"I officially forgot myself, my work, my homework, my troubles, I had a headache before I came here and it officially passed, I enjoyed it very much, I definitely did not understand how the time passed."

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the interviews revealed that Xbox 360 Kinect games offer a range of developmental benefits. These include social, cognitive, and physical development, as well as promoting flow, which is an immersive state of focus and enjoyment. This suggests that playing Xbox 360 Kinect games as an e-leisure may be a beneficial activity, beyond simply being a source of entertainment.

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