

Chapter 31

Digital Entertainment Culture and Generation Y: An Evaluation on Social Network Games in Turkey

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ABSTRACT

Social Networking Games (SNGs) on Social Network Sites (SNS) is a popular online game genre at the present time. The purpose of this chapter is to explore motivations and investigate exclusively “Generation Y” playing social media games from the point of uses and gratifications theory experience. For this study, a focus group and in-depth interview methodologies were chosen. The results of this study provide evidence that Generation Y in Turkey play social networking games with an aggregate of motivations based on psychological and social reasons, such as to retire from the stress of daily life, to relax, and to spend time with friends as a consequence of sense of wonder and their advices. Based on the fact that they state that SNGs create a feeling of pleonexy, it can also be deduced that Generation Y approaches these games from a critical perspective.

INTRODUCTION

The Internet which has become a part of leisure and entertainment culture, has given rise to important and various studies on this phenomenon. According to this era, SNS are one of the major communication domains which are web-based services such as Facebook and MySpace. Boyd and Ellison (2007) define SNS as web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or

semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. SNG’s concerning a part of SNS, is one of the popular online game genre at the present time. SNG’s are gaming applications which integrated into SNS and in-browser games accessed through social networks incorporating both solo and multiplayer games (Hou, 2011; Lautmann and

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Curran, 2012). In 2012 SNG's constituted 36% of the online gaming market and 13% of the global video game market. The market which counts 5.4 billion Euros in 2012 is expected to be 10.7 billion Euros in 2016 (IDATE, 2012). Youth and the Internet which are two concepts mentioned together in the field of social sciences, Generation Y called as "digital natives" have been subjected to different age groupings and definitions. In this study, we have tried to reveal Generation Y relations with SNG's and deal with their motivations to use social media games, as well as critical readings bowed set forth by the users.

BACKGROUND

A Social Evolution in the Game from Traditional Entertainment Culture to Digital Culture: Social Network Games

Entertainment has been a part of all cultures, from the Chauvet Cave paintings to the iPad (Bates and Ferri, 2010, pp.1-2). In the social sciences, communication sciences, or psychology, still less attention have been paid to audiences' motives and responses to entertainment programs. An important deficit in the field of entertainment theory and research should be mentioned here: why do people do this? Why do we all spend so much time with media entertainment? Psychology tends to explain behavior by showing that there are needs to be fulfilled and motives to be satisfied. Communication science has often claimed that a specific content is gratifying to the audience and that this is what all audiences seek: gratifications (Vorderer, 2011, pp.60 - 62).

However, one of these gratifications tools are games. Based on this, Jesper Juul defined the notion of game as such: "Composed of rules a game is a negotiable activity which has variable numerical results appointed to variant values, and for which a player exert himself/herself to swing the balance and think result-oriented in terms of

affections" (2005, p. 36). Also, games are often played to take over new roles and to explore fictional worlds. Hence, the content and narratives of games provide the opportunity to take a break from everyday life and to escape stress, problems, and negative affect (Reinecke, 2009, p.128). Especially, digitalization and human - computer interaction occurring with the emergence of video games, separate in many ways the modern game with the traditional game (Salen and Zimmerman, 2003). Accordingly, Binark has included the latest communication media features in the act of playing game as "personal communication media" of digital games, and thus has separated from the conventional understanding of the games (2008a, p.45). In this context, digital game can be specified as a personal communication media which holds the features of modern communication media such as digitalization, interaction, virtuality, variability, modularity and integrates them with the act of playing game.

Digital games studies began in the 1980s, appear to be a multidisciplinary area of social sciences (Bryce and Rutter: 2006). The rapid rise of digital games industry; have made it a significant and important field of research culturally and economically. Shaw (2010) states that digital games culture, outside of games industry and production, focuses on gamer identity over three main categories: (1) who plays video games (i.e. types and stereotypes of gamers) (2) how they play (i.e. gamers play practices) and (3) what they play (i.e. games as a cultural texts). SNG's researches emerging with SNS, mainly divided into three main categories: design (i.e. Hamari and Lehtonvirta, 2010), economy (i.e. Guo & Barnes, 2009) and user / usage. User / usage category will be examined in depth on second chapter of background.

Online social gaming has become increasingly popular as a part of Facebook. There are some key features that distinguished SNG's from other digital games. SNG's has a hybrid nature formed by SNS and video games. SNG's are repetitive and simplistic also cooperative and competitive.

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