

## THE EFFECT OF TODAY'S GAMES AND TOYS AND STREET GAMES AND TRADITIONAL TOYS UPON THE MENTAL DEVELOPMENT, SOCIALIZATION AND PERCEPTION OF CHILDREN

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### ABSTRACT

*It is known that children generally learn a number of things from the media and imitate them by watching. The most apparent changes are the internet and multichannel televisions, which constantly make their presence felt in the daily life of children. Conservative ideologies that have started to spread in the whole world especially since the beginning of the 2000s and their administrative extensions have a discourse aimed at inspecting the social life and they proceed with relevant solutions. Realizing that not many users volunteered to pay money for online services; internet corporations have targeted the interest fields of individuals more efficiently, collected and filtered all consumer behaviors and become able to offer a number of services possibly for free.*

*This method has been effective especially upon child consumers. Especially games and toys witness every phase of a child's adventure of growing and this identification contributes to their development and mental health. Games and toys prepare individuals for social life. Game rules and toys, which are the symbols of life, require individuals to get used to the order, be supervised and have a compliance. In almost every age; games enable children to isolate themselves from the tangible world, become free individuals that could take responsibilities, create their own fictional world and play any role. Children learn many things by trying on their own during games. Children recognize themselves and obtain a number of information about the world while playing with their toys. Games and toys are no more materials alone; they diversify with children's imagination. Apart from families, toys are the only thing that children interact with as from their birth. Everything they see become meaningful once they begin to recognize objects.*

**Keywords:** *Games and toys comparison, Mental Development, Socialization and perception*

### INTRODUCTION

Games and toys have an important place in the development of children. While games amuse children and help them consume their energy; toys are a necessary element of games. Games and toys are important as they prepare children for future. It would not be wrong to suggest that games and toys have been replaced by computer games today. Children suppose that they play games moving nowhere and keeping their eyes on the monitor instead of playing games that require a physical mobility. However, such an understanding of game blinds them and affects their health seriously rather than

developing them. It is a common fact that such games have a negative effect upon children's psychology and physiology.

Games are the best educational appliance for children as they provide a social, physical and cognitive development. Children learn competition, joy and how to control the environment by using the game materials and communicating with other kids. When they play with their friends, they learn how to be respectful toward the rights of other people, share, cooperate and take responsibilities. (Ünal, 2009:96)



(Image 1- <http://yumurtaliekmek.com/dunya-cocuk-haklari-gunu>)

Children's behavior of playing games is affected by elements (game materials) like their age, game environment/area, teacher and toys (Saracho, 2002). Being one of these elements; toys play an important role in the life of children. While playing games, children generally need an object or something similar to that object that would match their role in the game. These objects are called toys in general. Toys include all playing materials that order the movements of children, assist their mental, physical and psychosocial development and develop their imagination and creative talents throughout the steps of development.

Toys have a great variety today. They could have different materials, different colors and different characteristics. However, the best toy is the one that a child would like to play with over and over again and get more games and more pleasure every time. Toys arouse curiosity in children, activate their muscles, increase entrepreneurship – imagination and encourage problem-solving. They also enable parents to participate in this different life.

The younger the child is, the less important the materials are to be realistic. Variety of things to be used by children as game materials might cause them to give different and rich meanings to those things in their imagination. Selection of toys is so important that it can not be done randomly. Primary factors to be considered while selecting toys include child's age, gender and development level.

Playing games in a confident area via sufficient tools will positively affect the development of children. Considering from this point of view; both games and toys play an important role in the preschool period (Oktay, 2002).

Mentioning the concepts of game and

Natural child identity, which used to be ignored but got engrossed in technological innovations in time, is escalated each passing day and conflicts with the world of grown-ups. The technological lantern that holds children as from their birth deeply affects their mental nourishment and innovation methods and thus, it may also cause some changes in the ways of playing games.

At this point, computer monitor that could be positioned as a device apparently paving the way for the process of communication may interrupt communication and reveal the "contactlessness" of children in a paradoxical way. Assessing from this point of view; games that used to play the role of entertainment, socialization and cultural transfer have recently turned into a practice of playing against computer with either null subjects or the rules of the electronic world. In addition to this, majority of games that we all used to play in our childhood outside of computer games are still played in preschool educational establishments. (Arslan, Örnek, 2015:197)

Games and toys play a very important role in teaching children the features of their gender. Because parents buy toys that are convenient for the gender of their children and affect them to play games according to their gender. Once children get old enough to make selections, they should be allowed to select their toys. In the meantime, it is very useful for children to be informed by their parents about toys. Besides, encouraging children to make their own decisions at young ages may positively affect their personality.

toy together signifies that these different

disciplines (and sub-disciplines) will add many more things to one another via thoughts, information exchange and synthesis concerning the games of children in the long term. Considering the studies regarding games in the development psychology; the condition seems to

be remarkably problematical from these aspects. Even though the rapid increase of studies regarding games has produced some valuable outcomes, the general pattern of these studies is dispersed and unconnected.

## HISTORICAL ADVENTURE OF GAMES AND TOYS

The concepts of game and toy have existed in a diversified way in every culture and geography of the world from past to present. Human beings have used games as a domain in both intellectual and physical ways by using some tools. Even though games have been able to create a common language around the world from past to present; the meaning attributed by every individual or society to games extends the definitional area of concept. (Yılmaz, Erdoğan, 2015:64)

The term “game” has a number of meanings. We can see this in more common and original usages especially in our language. The actual mystery of games, which date back to particularly ancient ages, is observed on the traces of statues that were found during excavations carried out by archeologists. Game is an action that we apply and enjoy either by ourselves or with others as from childhood and where we express ourselves on different platforms with new and different roles in various periods of our life. According to the Dutch culture historian Huziga; “game is a rich function in terms of meaning. Game includes an independent element that exceeds the direct needs of life and gives a meaning to action. In this sense, game has a meaning.” (Huizinga, 1995:17)

Many philosophers like Plato, Martin Luther, Michel de Montaigne, J. Amos Comenius, John Locke, Friedrich Froebel, Sigmund Freud, and Maria Montessori had expressed their opinions about games throughout history.

Especially the determination of researchers regarding the types of games and toys in the Aegean region of Anatolia in ancient ages could reach and inform us specifically via archeological findings like ceramic, relief, mosaic, fresco (wall painting), statue and other scripts.

For instance, the primary games and toys could be arranged as follows: (Çakır, Öztürk, 2015:165)

### Games

- Amorous Games
- Ball Games
- Askoliasmos (bouncing on single foot)
- Micatio (a number prediction game played with fingers)
- Walnut Game
- Ostrakinda (a male team game played with oyster shells)

### Toys

- Tintinabula
- Humming Top
- Hoopla
- Yo-Yo
- Iygks (a holey toy like a disc)
- Dolls (anthropomorphic toys)
- Toy Car
- Animal Shaped (zoomorphic) Toys
- Toys like Miniature Wares and Foods
- Swing
- Teeter Totter

It is emphasized to train children in two fields as physical education and mental education, and also “raise children with games”. Game is a core that determines the entire life of a child. Game is a therapy in overcoming mental maladaptations.

Game is a cultural transition. Children’s games enable children to join the world of grown-ups. According to Metin And; “Game is the timar of children. A child that never plays will never become a foal and useful for soil. A dervish never gets weary of weddings and a child of games.” Because game is a stimulant factor that provides the development of body. Children could get rid of many harmful tendencies and primitive behaviors with the help of games.

Above all, game is an optional and a voluntary action rather than ordered or compulsory. In this respect, they are played in free times. However, when games become a ritual or a ceremony, they combine with the concept of

task. Thus, games should be free. (And, 2012:28)

Socialization is a process of controlling society and a way of providing an order in group life. Socialization provides the knowledge and technics that are required for sustaining the social order for the members of society in a planned and purposeful way. Children's creation of realistic or imaginative game scenes during games will enable them to reveal different events and problems, and make decisions within games. This condition requires children to use their cognitive skills for finding answers to questions. New conditions and questions compel the cognitive level and enable children to proceed to another phase of the moral development. (Asayesh, 2015:566)

Occasional changes and variations are observed in the aforementioned primitive Anatolian games and toys.

They are as follows: (And, 2012:241)

- Amorous Games
- Ring Games
- Ball Games
- Stick Games
- Rock and Cannonball Games
- Running, Chasing, Rescuing, Using Force
- Jumping, Leaping, Bouncing
- Hiding, Proportioning
- Mute, Mystification, Joke Games
- Dramatically Ceremonial Games

Considering today's games and toys; it is observed that they have a large variety in parallel with educational, medical and technological developments. However; there has been a decrease

## METHOD

### 1.1. Study Model

Being among the qualitative research models; descriptive analysis method was used in this study. This model enabled the acquired data to strikingly interpret the views of the observed and the observers.

### 1.2. Study Group

In this study, we observed ten 3rd grade students that were selected according to their

in the interest in children's games and game areas today, due to the increasing urbanization. Playgrounds have been replaced by workplaces. Children are unable to find places to play as the areas spared for them are neglected. Thus, they have started to play at home. Children's games have been replaced by computer games. Parents that prefer smart mobile devices as toys rather than establishing a communication with their children obstruct their socialization without knowing.

Toys and games that used to amuse children according to age groups have been replaced by digital games and similar toys today. Virtual games develop children's visual and technological perception and skill on one hand, and blunt their skills of establishing a personal communication and getting social on the other.

These dull digital games and toys make children aggressive and awkward. Besides, children that play violent computer games become prone to violence. On the other hand, traditional games and toys teach children how to obey the rules, experience defeat as well as victory and express their feelings, dreams and desires via games. They imitate grown-ups while playing. They determine and try to solve their problems.

Today, the most popular and common children's games involve; hide-and-peek, blind man's buff, leapfrogging, skipping rope, jacks, bezirgan head, playing at families and marbles. Indeed, daily life is intertwined with games in many regions of Anatolia. Because children's games and shared toys are among the most important elements that will form a physically, socially and mentally healthy future.

income groups from 1 public and 1 private primary schools (totally 2 schools), which are located in the province of Aydin in the Southern Anatolia (Southern Aegean) and contribute to the variety of games-toys, for totally 1 hour in 1 week and they were left alone with digital games and toys within the first 30 minutes of their spare time and then with traditional street games and toys. We followed children's tendency towards games and toys within this process and tried to assess its effects upon their psychology.

**1.3 Data Analysis**

The acquired data were compiled, computerized, analyzed according to their positive-negative interactions and concluded via qualitative research technics.

**2. FINDINGS**

The study included only 3rd grade students (10 girls, 10 boys from each school and 40 students in total) according to their income groups from 1 public and 1 private primary schools in the province of Aydın and this selection was made based on various past researches, studies and applications. Especially children in this group that were stuck between traditional street games and

simple toys and all digital game-toy preferences including those in the virtual environment were informed without spoiling the essence of the study and intervening. Game and toy preferences were given in an order and in time, and the answers given to indirect questions and other results were statistically compiled and examined.

**Schools were assessed in 2 groups as:**

- a- Public Schools Group- Those involved in middle and high income group
- b- Private Schools Group- Those involved in middle income group.

Besides, the results of studies that were conducted on the basis of game-toy types being suggested and detailed by trainers at these schools are summarized as follows.

**a- Traditional Street Games**

SKIPPING ROPE
BLIND MAN'S BUFF
DUCK DUCK GOOSE
ISTOP
HIDE-AND-SEEK
FOOTBALL/VOLLEYBALL/BASKET BALL

**b- Traditional Toys**

DOLLS
REMOTE CONTROLLED INSTRUMENTS
MODELS
MUSIC TOYS
TOYS FOR PLAYING AT FAMILIES

**c- Remote Controlled/ Digital Toys**

REMOTE CONTROLLED MODEL TOYS
ELECTRONIC DOLLS
TABLETS
REMOTE CONTROLLED CARTOON CHARACTERS
OTHER TOYS

COMPUTER GAMES-MIND GAMES	COMPUTER GAMES – ADVENTURE GAMES
COMPUTER GAMES- FOOTBALL GAMES	COMPUTER GAMES-WAR-VIOLENCE GAMES
COMPUTER GAMES-CITY-VILLAGE-FARM LIFE GAMES	OTHER

**d- Virtual Games**

**Table 1 Public Schools**

**1.1 School Group- Public (Middle and High Income Group) (Totally 10 Students) Table of Traditional Street Games Preference**

**1.2**

The Name of the Game	Girl Student	Male Student
SKIPPING ROPE		0

BLIND MAN'S BUFF	0	0
DUCK DUCK GOOSE		
ISTOP	2	2
HIDE-AND-SEEK		0
FOOTBALL/VOLL EYBALL/BASKET BALL	2	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>



**1.2 School Group- Public (Middle and High Income Group) (Totally 10 Students) Table of Traditional Toys Preference**

The Name of the Game	Girl Student	Male Student
DOLLS	2	
REMOTE		2

**1.3 School Group- Public (Middle and High Income Group) (Totally 10 Students) Table of Remote Controlled/Digital Toys Preference**

The Name of the Game	Girl Student	Male Student
REMOTE CONTROLLED MODEL TOYS		3
ELECTRONIC DOLLS	3	
TABLETS	1	
REMOTE CONTROLLED CARTOON CHARACTERS		3
OTHER TOYS		
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>

**1.4 School Group- Public (Middle and High Income Group) (Totally 10 Students) Table of Virtual Games Preference**

CONTROLLED INSTRUMENTS		
MODELS	1	1
MUSIC TOYS		2
TOYS FOR PLAYING AT FAMILIES	2	
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>

The Name of the Game	Girl Student	Male Student
COMPUTER GAMES-MIND GAMES	2	1
COMPUTER GAMES-FOOTBALL GAMES		2
COMPUTER GAMES-CITY-VILLAGE-FARM LIFE GAMES	2	
COMPUTER GAMES - ADVENTURE GAMES		1
COMPUTER GAMES-WAR-VIOLENCE GAMES		2
OTHER		
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>

**Table 2 Private Schools**

**2.1 School Group- Private (Middle Income Group) (Totally 10 Students) Table of Traditional Street Games Preference**

The Name of the Game	Girl Student	Male Student
SKIPPING ROPE		0
BLIND MAN'S BUFF	0	0
DUCK DUCK GOOSE		
ISTOP	0	0
HIDE-AND-SEEK		0
FOOTBALL/VOL	4	6

LEYBALL/BASK ETBALL		
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>

**2.2 School Group- Private (Middle Income Group) (Totally 10 Students) Table of Traditional Toys Preference**

The Name of the Game	Girl Student	Male Student
DOLLS		
REMOTE CONTROLLED INSTRUMENTS	1	1
MODELS	2	2

MUSIC TOYS		2
TOYS FOR PLAYING AT	2	

FAMILIES		
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>

**2.3 School Group- Private (Middle Income Group) (Totally 10 Students)  
Table of Remote Controlled/Digital Toys Preference**

The Name of the Game	Girl Student	Male Student
REMOTE CONTROLLED MODEL TOYS		2
ELECTRONIC DOLLS	4	
TABLETS	1	1
REMOTE CONTROLLED CARTOON CHARACTERS		2
OTHER TOYS		
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>

**2.4 School Group- Private (Middle Income Group) (Totally 10 Students)  
Table of Virtual Games Preference**

The Name of the Game	Girl Student	Male Student
COMPUTER GAMES-MIND GAMES	3	1
COMPUTER GAMES-FOOTBALL GAMES		2
COMPUTER GAMES-CITY-VILLAGE-FARM LIFE GAMES	1	
COMPUTER GAMES - ADVENTURE GAMES	1	
COMPUTER GAMES-WAR-VIOLENCE GAMES		2
OTHER		
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>

**Table 3 Public Schools (\*)**

**3.1 Game-Toy Satisfaction Table of Public Schools (Female Students)**

Game and Toy	Left the Games Happy	Left the Games Unhappy	Finds the Duration of Games Sufficient	Finds the Duration of Games Insufficient	TOTAL
Traditional Street Games	5	1	1	3	10
Traditional Toys	4	2	2	2	10
Digital Toys	3	3	2	2	10
Virtual Games	4	2	3	1	10

**3.2 Game-Toy Satisfaction Table of Public Schools (Male Students)**

Game and Toy	Left the Games Happy	Left the Games Unhappy	Finds the Duration of Games Sufficien	Finds the Duration of Games Insufficient	TOTAL
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Traditional Street Games	6	2	1	1	10
Traditional Toys	5	1	2	2	10
Digital Toys	4	3	1	2	10
Virtual Games	5	3	1	1	10

\* (Answers given to various indirect questions were assessed)

**Table 4 Private Schools (\*)**

**4.1 Game-Toy Satisfaction Table of Private Schools (Female Students)**

Game and Toy	Left the Games Happy	Left the Games Unhappy	Finds the Duration of Games Sufficient	Finds the Duration of Games Insufficient	TOTAL
Traditional Street Games	6	2	1	1	10
Traditional Toys	5	2	1	2	10
Digital Toys	4	3	2	1	10
Virtual Games	3	4	2	1	10

**4.2 Game-Toy Satisfaction Table of Private Schools (Male Students)**

Game and Toy	Left the Games Happy	Left the Games Unhappy	Finds the Duration of Games Sufficient	Finds the Duration of Games Insufficient	TOTAL
Traditional Street Games	4	2	2	2	10
Traditional Toys	3	3	2	2	10
Digital Toys	5	1	1	3	10
Virtual Games	5	1	1	3	10

- (Answers given to various indirect questions were assessed)

**CONCLUSION**

In the study; Table 1 and Table 2 were assessed concerning totally 20 female and 20 male students at 2 schools; 12 games and 10 toys under

4 groups. According to the results, it was observed that:



- Traditional Street Games preference was intense in both public and private schools as Football/Volleyball/Basketball,
- The distribution of Traditional Toys preference was similar,
- Remote Controlled/Digital Toys preference was intense especially as Electronic Dolls in girls in both groups,
- Virtual Games preference was also intense especially as Mind Games in girls in both groups.

Assessing Table 3 and Table 4; it was observed that students were in the group where those who “Left the Games Happy” were dominant in both groups. This condition was especially intense in Traditional Street Games. Indeed, the desire of playing games, sharing something and succeeding is encountered as an expected result.

This study shows us that GAME is the most important factor for children to socialize, learn valid cultural values in society, prepare for the world of grown-ups and project the behaviors of grown-ups onto their own life.

The actual factor that paves the way for raising a physically, socially and mentally healthy generation is Street Games that are played in childhood and Traditional Handicraft Toys. The fact that they are far from being virtual brings children one step closer to the desired reality.

Our children will set sail for a happier, a more social and sharing world with “non-virtual traditional street games and toys” designed by themselves, rather than a virtual world developed and conditioned by others.

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