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Gamers' Foreign Language Learning Motivation[*] [**]

Oyuncuların Dil Öğrenme Motivasyonu

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ABSTRACT

Beyond their enjoyment aspect, digital gaming has gained the attention of language educators since gamers all around the world often exposed to English while gaming in informal settings. Although the exploration of such informal opportunities for language learning through digital gaming has received some interest, the role of learner-directed informal digital gaming on learners' foreign language learning motivation is under-investigated. Therefore, the present study tries to examine the foreign language learners' digital gaming habits and reveal possible motivational impacts of learner-directed informal digital gaming. The design of the present study is quantitative in nature which is a cross-sectional survey study. The data collected through a self-completion survey developed by the researchers. The participants' gaming habits were examined descriptively through demographic questions regarding variables including time spent on games, game mode, and game language. Additionally, participants' perceptions concerning their Ideal L2 self, and Ought-to L2 self were examined. Based on the analysis, the patterns regarding L2 selves and gaming emerged from the study, especially in terms of gaming language, gender, and game modes. It is suggested that informal gaming may positively shape learners' L2 selves, which in turn affects their motivation.

Keywords: *Gaming, Motivation, Extramural English, L2 motivational self system*

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ÖZ

Eğlence yönünün ötesinde, dijital oyunlar, oynayanların informal ortamlarda oyun oynarken genellikle İngilizceye maruz kalmalarından dolayı, dil eğitimcilerinin dikkatini çekmiştir. Dijital oyun yoluyla dil öğrenimi için bu tür informal fırsatların araştırılması biraz ilgi görmüş olsa da, öğrenen tarafından yönlendirilen informal dijital oyunun öğrencilerin yabancı dil öğrenme motivasyonu üzerindeki rolü yeterince araştırılmamıştır. Bu nedenle, bu çalışma, yabancı dil öğrenenlerin dijital oyun alışkanlıklarını incelemeye ve öğrenci odaklı informal dijital oyunların olası motivasyonel etkilerini ortaya çıkarmaya çalışmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın tasarımı, kesitsel bir tarama çalışması olan nicel niteliktedir. Veriler, araştırmacılar tarafından geliştirilen bir anket yoluyla toplanmıştır. Katılımcıların oyun alışkanlıkları, oyunlarda geçirilen süre, oyun modu ve oyun dili gibi değişkenlere ilişkin demografik sorular aracılığıyla betimsel olarak incelenmiştir. Ek olarak, katılımcıların Ideal L2 benliği ve Ought-to L2 benliğine ilişkin algıları incelenmiştir. Analize dayalı olarak, özellikle oyun dili, cinsiyet ve oyun modları açısından L2 benlikleri ve oyun oynama ile ilgili bulgular elde edilmiştir. Dil öğrenenlerin informal ortamlarda dijital oyun oynamasının, onların L2 benliklerini olumlu yönde şekillendirebileceği ve bunun da onların dil öğrenme motivasyonlarını etkilediği ileri sürülmektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: *Oyun oynama, Motivasyon, İnformal öğrenme, İkinci dil öğreniminde motivasyon benlik sistemi*

INTRODUCTION

Digital games, which cover both games played on game platforms and those played on computers (Gee, 2003), have begun to be considered a daily activity for many people as they gained popularity. Nowadays, digital games are closely related to the everyday life of people all around the world, providing enjoyment and engagement for players (Ural, 2009). Nearly 2,6 billion people worldwide played games actively in 2020 (BThaber, 2021), meaning that one of three people is a "gamer" who engages with digital games as leisure time activities. With a broad definition, the term "gamer" can refer to a person who plays digital games on a regular basis and finds playing games fun and engaging. As digital games have begun to gain popularity among all age groups, the persona of the gamer has changed as well. Once, the persona of gamers was limited to a stereotype of people playing digital games excessively, isolating themselves from the social world and being typically introverted and asocial in their lives (Mäyrä, 2008). It was argued that games attracted only subsets of learners who were not part of mainstream culture (Reinhardt, 2019). Today, however, gamers come from a wide range of social

backgrounds worldwide, including both female and male players in various age groups and, indeed, language learners in a sense. As English is the default language used in interaction in many gaming environments, it would be almost impossible for individuals who identify themselves as gamers not to be exposed to English while gaming and engaging in game-related activities in online informal settings (Ağaoğlu & Şad, 2020). According to Waters (2007), the necessity for understanding and interacting in English is highly motivating for gamers since gamers need English to proceed in the game further. Turgut and İrgin (2009), also, highlighted the crucial role of understanding the information throughout the gameplay since the players are motivated to learn unknown words and focus on the meaning of in-game speech and objectives so that they could advance in the game.

As gaming practices have gained popularity among various age groups, researchers and scholars in education have been drawn into exploring the potential of digital gaming, especially its role in learner motivation. Since most digital games involve rules, objectives, outcome, challenge, interaction, a story to tell (Prensky, 2001), they are considered motivating and engaging for many people. Employing digital games for enhancing learning outcomes, and explicitly motivating learners, has become increasingly prevalent in language learning, as the features of digital games are generally applicable to the language learning context (Reinders, 2017; Reinhardt, 2019). Thus, studies give credence to digital games since they motivate learners to learn the target language and stay engaged. Consequently, numerous studies suggested that using digital games in or out of class supports learning in various areas (Connolly, Boyle, MacArthur, Hainey & Boyle, 2012), especially in language learning (Young et al., 2012). Thus, a growing body of research highlights the potential of using digital games to improve learner motivation, participation, and enjoyment (Peterson, 2010). Offered benefits of digital games are primarily in line with the successful language teaching environments (Reinders, 2017), as in various foreign language learning theories, including the abundant opportunities for comprehensible input and scaffolding through

interaction, and lowering affective factors such as anxiety and increasing motivation (Gee, 2012; Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012).

Although the increased number of studies regarding digital gaming and language learning are existent in the literature, the studies focusing on the learner-directed digital gaming practices in language learners' own natural settings are scarce. The existent studies in the available literature are generally drawn on language learning outcomes; that is, vocabulary (DeHaan, Reed & Kuwada, 2010; Jensen, 2017; Ranalli, 2008; Rankin, Gold & Gooch, 2006; Sundqvist, 2019; Turgut & İrgin, 2009), language proficiency (Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012; Wilde & Eyckmans, 2017), grammar (Zheng, Young, Wagner & Brewer, 2009). Moreover, various studies (Black, 2006; Jensen, 2017; Peterson, 2010; Thorne, 2008b; Thorne, Black & Sykes, 2009) demonstrated that gaming practices carried out in English may create motivation and reason to learn the language and affect learners' attitude and motivation towards foreign language learning.

As for the role of online games in foreign language teaching and learning settings, several studies revealed that commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) games, such as MMORPGs (massively multiplayer online role-playing games), has gained a lot of interest in the applied linguistics literature (Peterson, 2010, 2013; Reinders, 2012; Sykes, Reinhardt & Thorne, 2010; Thorne & Fischer, 2012). For instance, Rankin et al. (2006) observed and interviewed the learners who played an MMORPG game minimum of four hours a week and found that interaction with non-player characters (NPC) increased vocabulary performance and linguistic output in addition to learners' positive views on the use of the game. Furthermore, in a descriptive study, Thorne (2008b) examined the in-game interaction of two gamers, from the United States and Ukraine, in the MMORPG World of Warcraft, through chat transcripts and observation, and observed that playing the game led to a high degree of motivation, and utilization of English to interact in-game. In a similar study exploring learner interaction in an MMORPG game, Peterson (2012) found that politeness practices appeared in-game chat among EFL learners empowered a desire to participate in the group in the game.

Besides the perceived reading and typing benefits, some learners expressed their interaction as motivating and enjoyable throughout the game and emerging interest in playing in the future. Moreover, they mentioned that it was interesting to interact and collaborate with native speakers in the game. Peterson (2012) further claimed that the learners were motivated by the learner-centred nature of interaction in the game.

Another affordance of digital games related to language learning motivation is lowered anxiety and increased risk-taking through the gameplay. Positive effects of gameplay on motivation, willingness to communicate, and many other affective factors regarding language learning have been recorded in various studies in the available literature (Lee & Chen Hsieh, 2019; Rankin et al., 2006; Reinders & Wattana, 2015a, 2015b; Sundqvist, 2015; Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2014; Thorne, 2008a; Thorne & Reinhardt, 2008). For instance, in a study exploring the affective factors in a virtual world, Zheng, Young, Brewer, and Wagner (2009) found that players developed a positive attitude and expressed high confidence compared to non-players. Similarly, in another study, Rama, Black, Van Es, and Warschauer (2012) found that digital games -World of Warcraft context-, provided players with an engaging and lowered anxiety setting, allowing risk-taking while interacting through and about the game. In Sundqvist's (2009) study exploring oral proficiency and out-of-class activities, it was revealed that gamer learners reported lower anxiety while speaking in English when compared to the non-gamers.

The review of available literature revealed that one of the main arguments that support using digital games in education is that they motivate people through their intrinsically engaging properties; thus, they could be used in education to improve learning outcomes further. Based on the review of the related literature, it can be claimed that the motivating aspect of digital games is evident while different game modes and genres offer varying benefits on the motivation, especially employing digital games to enhance foreign language learning.

Motivation is a fundamental element for any learning to take place, specifically for language learning (Dörnyei, 2009; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009). Dörnyei (2009) suggests that the level of motivation for a task is determined by the ideal L2 self. As for the

gaming context, the ideal L2 self may appear as players' wish and readiness to take on the role of a character, avatar, or a persona; and imagine themselves ideally performing it. Additionally, it is believed that benefits provided by digital games also include lowered affective filters that encourage risk-taking with different identities created by players within the game (Gee, 2007; Reinders, 2012), and meaningful context, and engaging objectives that motivate players to continue playing. Beyond players' idealization of themselves through in-game characters, their wish to be a part of the community that emerges around, through and about the game may also contribute to their ideal L2-self-development (Knight, Marean & Sykes, 2019; Sykes, 2018). One example is Nanako, who constructed an identity as a successful English learner by writing anime fan fiction in English (Black, 2006).

Similarly, taking part in an in-game narrative where the role-play is carried out may shape learners' L2 identity by creating a connection between the player and the in-game environment, characters and immersing them in a virtual world. Online virtual environments provided by digital games are considered as a part of the real-life environments and individuals may create a new identity through the virtual experiences (Yağbasan & Şener, 2019). As Gee (2007) underlines, players have the opportunity to experiment through a variety of identities, including "projective identity", which he defines as long-term and mostly consistent identity performances that players project onto their in-game characters. Similarly, as Thorne (2008a) suggested, players' desire to build social relationships around the game may help build multilingual identity and motivate language learning (Sykes et al., 2010). For instance, an American gamer mentioned in Thorne's (2008b) study showed a strong interest in learning Russian after establishing a social bond with his Russian gamer friend through the World of Warcraft game. Similarly, the findings of the experimental study of Lee and Hoadley (2007) revealed that players are motivated and engaged through the role and identity play within the game. Such examples acknowledged in the studies signpost that the social bonds established among gamers around and through digital games might potentially create interest towards other cultures and might be the indicator of integrative

motivation. Considering the affordances of digital games, it can be asserted that taking a role and immersion into the virtual world in a fully English narrated story might have the potential for developing and visioning of ideal L2 self of gamers.

The review of available literature revealed that plenty of studies examined the role of gaming in language learning and teaching settings. Moreover, the studies in the literature highlighted that digital games contribute to the language learning motivation of gamers. However, it is observed that most of the studies in the available literature were conducted in a formal setting in which language learners were asked to play digital games. Thus, exploring gamers' language learning motivation in an informal gaming setting might contribute to the growing interest in the field. Considering this gap in the literature, the present study intended to explore the learner-initiated informal digital gaming practices in accordance with the foreign language learning motivation. That is, the gamers and non-gamers' informal digital gaming practices and possible effects of digital gaming on their foreign language learning motivation were investigated.

In order to shed light on gaming practices and gamers foreign language learning motivation levels especially considering the participants' L2 selves (Ideal L2 and Ought-to L2), the following research questions were posed.

- *What is the general profile of the participants?*
- *Is there any relationship between participants' L2 selves (ideal L2 and ought-to L2) and their gender, their gameplay habits, the game mode, and the game language?*

METHOD

The design of the present study is quantitative in nature which is a cross-sectional survey study. In the cross-sectional survey design, the data collection process is carried out in one shot, and the data collection aims to reflect the profile of the population at any given moment Dörnyei (2007). By employing a cross-sectional design, the present study intended to investigate multiple variables concerning digital gaming and collect

data on a range of attributes in one instance to make inferences about possible relationships between digital gaming and the language learning motivation of the participants.

The present study adopted both descriptive and analytic research methods while answering its research questions. It is descriptive because the first research question inquired how frequently or widely the variable of interest occurs throughout a specific demographic. On the other hand, it is analytical since the second research question is intended to investigate the association between related or unrelated parameters. That is, instead of focusing on the individual differences, the present study examined the relationship between digital gameplay practices of the participants and their motivation to learn English in terms of different variables, namely, gameplay habits, game mode, gender, and game language.

Participants

Participants of the study were selected among individuals of an online social media platform based on volunteer participation. The participants in a cross-sectional study are just selected based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria set for the study; thus, the selection of the participants was based on the criteria -who play and do not play digital games- by using purposeful sampling technique and convenience sampling techniques together.

The sample of the present study consisted of 94 participants aged between 14 and 33. The sample included 42 men and 49 women, and 3 who did not identify their gender. Additionally, the gamer participants of the present study were also identified under two groups regarding their gaming frequencies. That is, the single and multi-player gaming frequency of the participants were gathered up into two groups for each; those who spend 1 hour or less per week (*n=46*) were defined as infrequent gamers, and those who spend more than 1 hour per week (*n=47*) were defined as frequent gamers.

Data Collection Instruments

The data of the study is collected online using Microsoft Forms through a self-completion survey developed by the researchers. The first part of the survey gathers demographic data about the gaming frequency, gaming mode (single or multi-player), gaming device, 'gamer' identity, gaming language, and gaming genre. The second part of the survey consisted of 10 five-point Likert type items inquiring language learning motivation of the participants. The researchers developed the items in the second part of the survey from crucial themes emerging from previously published studies, especially drawing on the Taguchi, Magid and Papi's (2009) questionnaire regarding the L2 motivational self-system framework suggested by Dörnyei (2001).

Data Analysis

The analysis of the data was run by the researchers through statistical analysis software for social sciences. First, Barlett's Test of Sphericity and KMO Test was run to measure the suitability of data for factor analysis, and the sampling adequacy was found moderate. The obtained KMO was .741, and Barlett's test of sphericity was significant ($p=.000$). Thus, the data are appropriate for factor analysis.

After measuring the adequacy for factor analysis, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was run for the emergent factors within the items that inquire language learning motivation. Thus, EFA determined two distinct factors that scored by calculating the factor loadings through principal component analysis that were shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Principal Component Analysis of The Items

Items	Component Matrix	
	Component	
	Ideal L2 Self	Ought-to L2 self
Item #8	.839	
Item #10	.822	
Item #3	.804	
Item #2	.705	
Item #9	.683	
Item #1	.435	
Item #5		.819
Item #4		.674
Item #6		.593
Item #7		.545

As seen in Table 1, the EFA revealed that the developed survey consisted of two distinct factors of which the factor loadings were found over 0.43 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). The first factor, which was labelled as ideal L2-self, consisted of 6 items such as "*I can imagine a situation where I speak English to foreigners*" (Item 3), or "*I find learning English really interesting*" (Item 9); and the second factor which was labelled as ought-to L2 self, consisted of 4 items such as "*Learning English is important to me because if I speak English, other people will respect me more*" (Item 5).

According to Hinton, McMurray, and Brownlow (2014), Cronbach alpha value scores between 0.5 and 0.7 show moderate reliability, whereas 0.7 and higher values indicate high reliability. Thus, the final form of the survey's reliability analysis was found satisfactory for the Ideal L2 self (α=*.81*) and acceptable and moderate for the Ought-to self (α=*.60*).

After scoring each participant's ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self, the obtained data were examined in relation to the variables in detail by performing independent samples tests. That is, the difference between sets of scores is analysed using independent sample tests in order to see if it is large enough to reach statistical significance. Thus,

since the data is not normally distributed, nonparametric Mann-Whitney U tests were employed for comparing the L2 self scores among groups.

Ethical Considerations

The present study participants voluntarily took part in the data gathering process, and their consent was obtained. The present study has been prepared by considering the rules of research and publication ethics, and prior to conducting the study, the Ethics Committee Permission (06.07.2021-121919) was obtained from Akdeniz University Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee.

FINDINGS

The findings of the present study were presented in line with the research question and illustrated in tables with frequencies and percentages. The first research question inquired about the participants' general profile, which is used to interpret the rest of the findings in detail. The data concerning the general profile of the participants were gathered through the demographic questions in the data gathering instrument. The participants' general profile data is investigated under subcategories as, participants' gaming habits, gaming devices, gaming, gamer identity, and game language.

The gaming habits were collected to reveal participants' gaming practices in their daily lives, including the preferred game modes, single-player games and multi-player games, the preferred device used for gaming, gamer identity and game language. The data concerning the gaming habits of the participants were grouped under two game modes like single and multi-player games, and the gaming frequencies of the participants were presented in intervals with hours spent per week. The findings concerning the single-player gaming frequency of the participants were presented in Table 2 in line with their genders.

Table 2. Gender Distribution on the Preference of the Single-Player

Time Spent on Single-player Games	Gender				Total	
	Male		Female			
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Never	5	11.9	26	**53.1**	32	**34**
4 Hours Per Month or Less	3	7.1	6	12.2	10	10.6
1 Hour Per Week	3	7.1	1	2.0	4	4.3
1-3 Hours Per Week	4	9.5	3	6.1	7	7.4
3-5 Hours Per Week	3	7.1	6	12.2	9	9.6
More Than 5 Hours Per Week	24	**57.1**	7	14.3	32	**34**
TOTAL	42	100.0	49	100.0	94[a]	100.0

[a] Total number of participants with the non-specified genders included.

As seen in Table 2, the data analysis revealed that the participants who never played (34%) and played single-player games more than five hours per week (34%) were in the same number. As for the genders, it is found that while more than half of the male participants (*57.1%*) spend more than 5 hours per week in single-player gaming, more than half of the female participants (53.1%) never play single-player games.

Table 3. Gender Distribution on the Preference of the Multi-Player Game Mode

Time Spent on Multi-player Games	Gender				Total	
	Male		Female			
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Never	7	17.1	27	**55.1**	35	**37.2**
4 Hours Per Month or Less	5	9.8	2	4.1	8	8.5
1 Hour Per Week	2	4.9	2	4.1	5	5.3
1-3 Hours Per Week	7	17.1	5	10.2	12	12.8
3-5 Hours Per Week	3	7.3	5	10.2	8	8.5
More Than 5 Hours Per Week	18	**43.9**	8	16.3	26	27.7
TOTAL	42	100.0	49	100.0	94[a]	100.0

[a] Total number of participants with the non-specified genders included.

The findings concerning multi-player gaming preferences were illustrated in Table 3 in line with the genders of the participants.

When it comes to gamers' multi-player game mode preferences, it is found that the number of participants who play more than five hours was lower both between males and females, as shown in Table 3. It was found that most of the male gamers (*56.1 %*) spent less than 5 hours per week for multi-player gaming. On the other hand, it is found that more than half of the female gamers (*55.1%*) preferred not to play multi-player games.

Gamers' preferences of gaming devices were obtained through a demographic question with multiple options in order to reveal their gaming habits in detail. The findings concerning the gaming device preferences of the participants were presented in Table 4 in line with the participants' genders.

Table 4. Gender Distribution on the Preference of the Devices Used for Gaming

Device Used for Gaming	Gender				Total	
	Male		Female			
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Desktop	15	39.5	1	3.8	16	25.0
Laptop	17	**44.7**	12	**46.2**	29	**45.3**
Smartphone	3	7.9	9	34.6	12	18.8
Game Console	3	7.9	4	15.4	7	10.9
TOTAL	38	100	26	100	64	100

As seen in Table 4, the data analysis revealed that the most popular gaming device was laptop computers for both genders (*45.3%*). It is also found that while desktop computers were in the second rank for male gamers (*39.5%*), the second most popular gaming device among female gamers was smartphones (*34.6%*). The findings also revealed that both genders' least preferred gaming device was the game console, such as PlayStation, Xbox, etc.

The following demographic question asked the participants whether they identified themselves as "gamers" or not. The question was only presented to those who play games, and non-gaming participants did not answer this question. The analysis of the findings concerning identifying themselves as a gamer is presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Gender Distribution on the Participants' Identification Themselves As "Gamer"

Participants' "Gamer" Identifications of Themselves	Gender				Total	
	Male		Female			
	f	%	f	%	f	%
No	6	15.4	7	26.9	13	19.4
Moderately	14	35.9	12	**46.2**	28[a]	**41.8**
Yes	19	**48.7**	7	26.9	26	38.8

[a] Total number of participants with the non-specified genders included.

As seen in Table 5, the participants who play games identify themselves primarily (*80.6%*) as a gamer. While most male gamers (*84.6%*) identify themselves as a gamer, this proportion is slightly lower among the female gamers (*73.1%*). It is also found that almost half of the male gamers (*48.7%*) fully identify themselves as a gamer, while the gamer identification among female gamers is mostly (*46.2%*) answered as "moderate".

Gaming Language, which refers to the default language throughout the gameplay, was obtained through three categories of game language; English gameplay, in which the game audio and text are in full English; English gameplay with Turkish subtitles; and Turkish gameplay. The findings concerning the gaming language preferences of the participants are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Preferred Gaming Language Among Gamers

Gaming Language Preferences	English Content		English Content, Turkish Subtitles		Turkish Content	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Never	2	3.0	20	**30.3**	28	**42.4**
Rarely	5	7.6	15	22.7	22	33.3
Sometimes	9	13.6	18	27.3	6	9.1
Often	24	36.4	13	19.7	8	12.1
Always	26	**39.4**	0	.0	2	3.0

As seen in Table 6, the analysis of the gathered data revealed that Turkish content was the least favoured (*42.4%*) among the gamers, while English content was the most

favourable one (*39.4%*). Additionally, it is found that very low preference (*3%*) was recorded for playing entirely Turkish and Turkish-subtitled games regularly.

The second research question of the present study inquired the general preference and gameplay habits of the participants, overall L2 motivation, and the relationship between motivation and gameplay habits. The findings concerning the overall L2 motivation of the participants are presented in Table 8.

Table 7. Overall Ideal L2 Self and Ought-To L2 Self Levels of the Participants

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Ideal L2 self	94	1.50	5.00	**4.31**	.785
Ought-to L2 self	94	1.00	5.00	**3.83**	.918

As illustrated in Table 7, the analysis of the data concerning the overall L2 motivation of the participants revealed that the ideal L2 self of the participants (*M=4.31*) was comparatively higher than ought-to L2 self-levels (*M=3.83*), which were recorded slightly higher than average.

When the L2 Self-levels of the participants are examined in line with the gender variable, it is found that the ideal and ought-to L2 self-levels of the participants have a general overview regarding motivational differences. The findings concerning the gender and L2 self-levels of the participants are presented in Table 8 in detail.

Table 8. Ideal and Ought-to L2 Self Levels in regard to Gender

Gender and L2 Motivation		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	Z	p
Ideal L2 Self	Male	42	39.88	1675	772	-2.075	**.038***
	Female	49	51.24	2511			
Ought-to L2 Self	Male	42	38.14	1602	699	-2.645	**.008****
	Female	49	52.73	2584			

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

As presented in Table 8, the findings revealed that L2 levels significantly differed among the participants with regard to their genders. Especially, ought-to L2 self levels

between genders were varied; that is, male participants' levels (*Mdn=3.75*) were recorded lower, indicating that they have lower obligatory pressure regarding their motivation when compared to female participants (*Mdn=4.00, U=699, z=-2.645 p<.01, r=0,277*). On the contrary, even though less significant (*U=772, z=-2.075 p<.05, r=0,217*), female participants had higher levels of ideal L2 self (*Mdn=4.66*) when compared to males (*Mdn=4.33*), indicating that females have a clearer vision of their ideal self (see Table 8). Gender has found to have a small effect on both L2 motivation (*r=0,277, r=0,217*).

To explore whether playing games have any relationship with L2 motivation, ideal and ought-to L2 self levels of gamer and non-gamer participants were compared. The findings concerning gameplay habits and L2 self levels were presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Ideal And Ought-To L2 Self Levels in regard to Gameplay

Gameplay Habits and L2 Motivation		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	Z	p
Ideal L2 Self	Non-gamer	27	45.54	1229.50	851.5	-.450	**.653**
	Gamer	67	48.29	3235.50			
Ought-to L2 Self	Non-gamer	27	59.28	1600.50	586.5	-2.676	**.007****
	Gamer	67	42.75	2864.50			

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As shown in Table 9, the findings concerning gameplay habits and L2 self levels revealed that there was no significant difference between non-gamers (*Mdn=4.50*) and gamers (*Mdn=4.50, p>0.05*). On the contrary, ought-to self levels of gamers and non-gamers were differed significantly (*p<.01*); that is, gamers' levels of ought-to self (*Mdn=3.75*) were lower than the non-players significantly (*Mdn=4.25, U=586.5, z=-2.676 p<.01, r=0,276*). Though the significance between the two groups is evident statistically, the comparison of L2 self levels regarding gaming could not alone be sufficient to suggest that gaming leads lowered ought-to L2 self levels or vice versa. Gameplay habits resulted in a small effect size concerning ought-to self levels (*r=0,276*).

After analyzing the relationship between gameplay and L2 motivation, the game mode preference of participants was also investigated whether playing the game as a single-player or multi-player mode differed with L2 motivation. Participants' answers were gathered into two groups to compare game modes: infrequent gamers and frequent gamers. Infrequent and frequent gamers groups were formed according to the time spent on gaming for each game mode. Those who spent more than 5 hours per week in gaming were named *frequent gamers*, whereas those who spent less were named *infrequent gamers*. The comparison of infrequent and frequent single-player gamers' L2 motivation levels were shown in Table 10.

Table 10. Ideal and Ought-To L2 Self Levels in regard to Single-Player Game Frequency

Single-player Gaming Frequency and L2 Motivation		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	Z	p
Ideal L2 Self	Infrequent gamers	46	49.41	2273.00	1016	-.676	**.499**
	Frequent gamers	48	45.67	2192.00			
Ought-to L2 Self	Infrequent gamers	46	55.07	2533.00	756	-2.650	**.008****
	Frequent gamers	48	40.25	1932.00			

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As illustrated in Table 10, the findings revealed that infrequent gamers of single-player games had higher ideal self levels (*Mdn=4.58*) than the frequent gamers (*Mdn=4.50*); however, no significant difference between the two groups was evident (p>.05) in terms of ideal L2 self levels. On the other hand, ought-to L2 self levels of the infrequent gamers were recorded higher with a strong significance (*U=756, z=-2.650 p<.01, r=0,273*). Indicating that frequent gamers had lower perceived external pressure concerning L2 motivation. Single-player gaming had a small effect size on ought-to self levels (*r=0,273*).

After analyzing the participants' single-player game mode habits with their L2 motivation, the multi-player game mode was also examined. Prior to further analysis, infrequent and frequent gamers were labelled by their frequency of multi-player

gaming. Thus, *infrequent gamers* are defined as players who spent less than 5 hours per week for multi-player gaming, whereas *frequent gamers* are defined as gamers who spent more than 5 hours per week. The comparison of infrequent and frequent multi-player gamers' L2 motivation levels was shown in Table 11.

As shown in Table 11, the analysis of the data concerning the comparison of infrequent and frequent multi-player gamers' L2 motivation levels revealed that both of the ideal and ought-to self levels of the infrequent gamers were recorded higher; nonetheless, none of these differences was statistically significant (*p>.05*).

Table 11. Ideal and Ought-To L2 Self Levels in regard to Multi-Player Game Frequency

Multi-player Gaming Frequency and L2 Motivation		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	Z	p
Ideal L2 Self	Infrequent gamers	48	48.79	2342.00	1042.0	-.476	**.634**
	Frequent gamers	46	46.15	2123.00			
Ought-to L2 Self	Infrequent gamers	48	52.11	2501.50	882.5	-1.687	**.092**
	Frequent gamers	46	42.68	1963.50			

As for the further analysis of the finding related to game language preferences and L2 Self of gamers, the Likert items were gathered into two groups, namely infrequent players and frequent players. The group was formed through reported frequencies, which are *Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, and Always*. Those who answered *Never, Rarely,* and *Sometimes* were gathered up into the group named as *infrequent players*. The other options, including *Often* and *Always*, were clustered to a group named as *frequent players*. After clustering the five groups into two, the analyses were employed to unveil the possible relationship between gaming language and L2 selves. The findings concerning gamer participants' reported game language preferences were presented in Table 12.

The analysis of the data revealed that gamers who play games with full English content had significantly higher ideal L2 self (*Mdn=4.67*) when compared to infrequent gamers of fully English games (*Mdn=3.92, U=209, z=-2.979 p<.01*) as shown in Table 12, and

the effect size was found to be medium (*r=0,364*). Ought-to L2 self levels of players, however, did not differ significantly, even though the frequent players of fully English games (*Mdn=3.50*) had a lower level of ought-to self when compared to infrequent players of fully English video games (*Mdn=4.00, p>.05*). In line with the results from fully English gameplay, it is also found that players of video games that are entirely in Turkish had significantly lower ideal L2 self (*Mdn=3.92*), compared with the infrequent players in Turkish (*Mdn=4.67, U=151, z=-2.400 p<.05, r=0,29*3).

Table 12. Ideal and Ought-To L2 Self Levels in regard to Gaming Language

Gaming Language and L2 Motivation			N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	Z	p
Playing in English	Ideal L2 Self	Infrequent gamers	16	21.56	345.0	209.0	-2.979	**.003****
		Frequent gamers	51	37.90	1933.0			
	Ought-to L2 Self	Infrequent gamers	16	41.97	671.5	280.5	-1.885	**.059**
		Frequent gamers	51	31.50	1606.5			
Playing in English with Turkish Subtitles	Ideal L2 Self	Infrequent gamers	54	34.94	1887.0	300.0	-.823	**.410**
		Frequent gamers	13	30.08	391.0			
	Ought-to L2 Self	Infrequent gamers	54	34.04	1838.0	349.0	-.032	**.975**
		Frequent gamers	13	33.85	440.0			
Playing in Turkish	Ideal L2 Self	Infrequent gamers	57	36.35	2072.0	151.0	-2.400	**.016***
		Frequent gamers	10	20.60	206.0			
	Ought-to L2 Self	Infrequent gamers	57	32.25	1838.0	185.0	-1.769	**.077**
		Frequent gamers	10	44.00	440.0			

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Thus, playing games in Turkish had a small effect on players' ideal L2 self levels (*r=0,293*). In terms of ought-to self, the findings revealed differed medians between frequent and infrequent players; however, this finding does not indicate any statistical significance, as observed with the results of fully English gameplay and ought-to self levels. As for the data analysis concerning gaming in English with Turkish subtitles, it

is found that although the median differed, no significant correlation was found between infrequent gamers' L2 self level scores and the frequent gamers' L2 self level scores ($p>.05$).

DISCUSSION

Based on the data analysis, like other studies in the literature, the present study also revealed that most participants are playing games in their leisure time. However, contrary to the findings of similar studies (Sundqvist, 2019; Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012; Ural, 2009; Yağbasan & Şener; 2019) on COTS and language learning, the present study concluded that the single-player game mode was favoured more among the gamers. As for the gameplay habits, it is found that genders varied in line with the literature, in which male participants spent more time compared to female participants in both game modes. This finding of the present study shows similarities with several other studies conducted in different contexts such as Ağaoğlu and Şad (2020), Jensen (2019), Sundqvist (2009), Sylvén and Sundqvist. In terms of gaming device preferences, it is found that the majority of participants preferred laptops for gaming regardless of their gender; though, the second most preferred gaming device differed between male and female gamers. While males chose the desktop after the laptop, female gamers preferred smartphones for gaming. This difference might be interpreted as the male gamers needing more powerful gaming devices to play high-end digital games and different game genres such as Role Play, Action, and Adventure games, whereas smartphones were sufficient to carry on casual gaming for the female gamers. Similar results were also obtained regarding gamer identity and gender relationships. It is recognised that most males define themselves as a gamer while females identify themselves as a gamer less frequently. Nevertheless, regardless of gender, gaming participants essentially identify themselves as a gamer. When it comes to the gaming language, yet Ural (2009) suggested that Turkish gamers favour the digital games in Turkish, the findings of the present study revealed that gamers primarily preferred

English gaming, in line with the Ağaoğlu and Şad's (2020) study, followed by English gaming with Turkish subtitles.

As for the second research question, the present study's findings revealed that the L2 self levels of the participants differed in terms of gender; that is, the ideal L2 self of the females was significantly higher than males. However, concerning the gender variable in terms of ought-to L2 self, it is found that males have lower ought-to L2 self when compared to females. Similar results were also found in the relationship between gameplay habits and ought-to L2 self levels. It can be claimed that the grounds for this difference could be stem from males' engagement with digital games more. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the gaming habit itself would not be sufficient to explain the differences between genders regarding L2 self levels definitely.

On the other hand, the findings of the present study evidenced a significant difference in terms of ought-to L2 self levels of gamers and non-gamers, and it is found that the gamers' ought-to L2 self levels were significantly lower than the non-gamers. This could be explained by the engaging nature of the games, where gamers must comprehend and interact in English to further progress in the game, as stated in the reports of Turkish gamers in the study of Turgut and İrgin (2009). Because they play games, their external motivation may be lowered and change into an internal one through in-game interaction or role-play. This finding of the present study shows similarities with Sundqvist and Sylvén (2014), who reported that non-gamers inclined a lower interest in English. The findings of the present study also show similarities with Thorne (2008b) and Peterson (2012). In Thorne's (2008b) study, the participants indicated increased motivation and enjoyment, and in Peterson (2012) study, it was found that participants demonstrated a desire to be a part of the group in the game; furthermore, they mentioned that their interaction to be motivating and enjoyable throughout the game, and emerging interest in playing the in the future. The present study also revealed that the players who play single-player mode more had lower ought-to L2 self levels. This finding might indicate that playing single-player games, in particular, may lower the external pressures to learn the target language and internalise

the reason to learn it. Thus, it can be claimed that a player whose mother tongue is not English is highly motivated to carry out tasks in English since it helps to advance them in gaming, as suggested by Gee (2003, 2012), Knight et al. (2019), Reinders (2012), and Sykes (2018).

Furthermore, the findings revealed that playing games in fully English were revealed to have a strong relationship with a considerably higher ideal L2 self of gamer participants. As evidenced in previous studies, a player's ideal L2 self may appear as a desire and willingness to assume the part of a gaming character, imagining himself or herself fulfilling it ideally Harteveld and Bekebrede (2011). Thus, the higher ideal L2 self of gamers playing in English in the present study could stem from the fact that interactions with in-game characters and the contextual nature of the digital games are similar to the experience of the total immersion in a foreign culture, especially in multi-player games (Waters, 2007).

As for the single-player games, it is found in the present study that taking part in a story where the role-play is carried out may shape learner L2 identity positively, bonding the players to the game characters and immersing them in an engaging virtual environment. Furthermore, as English is the default language of most games (Waters, 2007), it can be claimed that taking on a role and immersing gamers into a virtual world in a fully English narrated story may be beneficial for developing an ideal L2 self.

On the contrary, the present study's findings uncovered that the multi-player game mode and L2 selves did not differ significantly. While previous studies (Peterson, 2012; Reinders & Wattana, 2015a, 2015b; Thorne, 2008b; Ural, 2009; Vosburg, 2017; Zheng, Young, Wagner, et al., 2009) underlined the fact that multi-player game interactions and socialisation might lead to the higher motivation to continue playing and learning L2, the present study could not suggest any advantage of multi-player games when compared to the single-player games. Nevertheless, the multi-player gaming and L2 selves are in need of further investigation to reveal the factors underlying the motivation aspect previous studies focused on and multi-player game elements.

Another significant pattern also emerged concerning gaming language and L2 selves: gamers who play mostly in English had significantly higher ideal L2 self levels when compared to the gamers who rarely play in English. Therefore, it can be argued that the relationship between developing an ideal L2 self and gaming in English in an informal context strengthens the language learning motivation of the learners.

A further significant difference in terms of the ideal and ought-to L2 self levels appeared among the players of the games fully in Turkish. The ideal L2 self of those players who play in Turkish was significantly lower, and their ought-to self levels were higher when compared to players who prefer gaming in English. Concerning this finding, it can be claimed that the relationship between developing an ideal L2 self and gaming in English in an informal context strengthens the language learning motivation of the learners. In line with this finding, it is observed that gamers who preferred playing in Turkish had much lower ideal L2 self levels, while gamers who do not or rarely play in Turkish had a clearer vision of themselves as English-speaking individuals. As Waters (2007) suggested, playing games in a fully English world is similar to the immersion experience in a foreign culture. Gaming in English may provide benefits for creating or strengthening players' ideal L2 self through practising with different identities by interacting with other players or non-player characters or taking a role in a virtual world and risk-free environment (Gee, 2007; Harteveld & Bekebrede, 2011; Reinders, 2012; Thorne et al., 2009). Although her study is focused on literary practices, Black (2006) suggested that the participant's fanfiction writing habit allowed her to express various facets of her identity in various ways over time. The findings of the present study also show similarities with Lee and Hoadley (2007), who found that digital games encourage learning by directly using identity enactment and role-play to motivate and engage students; that is, they thoroughly recruit an individual's identity while taking on the identity of a gaming character. Though their study did not focus on L2 selves or language learning, the affordances that appeared in the study are in line with the present study.

CONCLUSION

Given the empirically observed prevalence of digital gaming as a leisure activity among language learners and the assumed potential for L2 motivation, this study may have implications. There are several potentials for developing foreign language learning motivation on language learners through games in the emerging context where English appears to be used outside the EFL classroom. Thus, such informal gaming practices, in which gamers engage in their natural environments, homes, should be encouraged among foreign language learners. The findings of the present study suggested that game language also has a significant role, as learners must understand and interact using English to progress in the game. Further, providing opportunities to practice with different identities through taking a role and interacting with other players. These findings indicated that informal gaming practices might shape learners' L2 identity positively, which in turn affects their foreign language learning motivation.

Future research in the field could investigate game habits in detail, including game genres, game-player interactions in regard to the foreign language learning motivation, and L2 motivational selves. Nevertheless, the present study comes with some limitations, as the number of participants was not large enough to generalize to the population. Moreover, the study gathered its data only through a survey; questioning the variables in detail through qualitative methods is another limitation. Hence, further studies should be conducted with large-scale participants, and qualitative aspects might be included to gain deeper insight.

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GENİŞ ÖZET

Araştırmanın Amacı

Eğlence yönününün ötesinde, dijital oyunlar çeşitli yaş grupları arasında popülerlik kazandıkça, dil eğitimcilerinin dikkatini çekmiştir. Çoğu dijital oyunun İngilizce olması, oyuncuların oyun oynarken genellikle İngilizceye maruz kalmaları gibi durumlar, informal ortamlarda yürütülen dijital oyun pratiklerinin dil öğrenimine katkısının araştırılmasına olan ilgiyi artırmıştır. Ancak mevcut literatürdeki çalışmaların çoğunun dil öğrenenlerden dijital oyunlar oynamalarının istendiği formal bir ortamda yürütüldüğü görülmektedir. Bu nedenle, informal bir oyun ortamında oyuncuların dil öğrenme motivasyonunu keşfetmek, bu alana artan ilgiye katkıda bulunabilir. Dijital oyun yoluyla dil öğrenimi için bu tür informal fırsatların araştırılması biraz ilgi görmüş olsa da, öğrenen tarafından yönlendirilen informal dijital oyunun öğrencilerin yabancı dil öğrenme motivasyonu üzerindeki rolü yeterince araştırılmamıştır. Bu nedenle, bu çalışma, yabancı dil öğrenenlerin dijital oyun alışkanlıklarını incelemeye ve öğrenci odaklı informal dijital oyunların olası motivasyonel etkilerini ortaya çıkarmaya çalışmaktadır.

Araştırmanın Yöntemi

Bu çalışmanın tasarımı, kesitsel bir tarama çalışması olan nicel niteliktedir. Veriler, araştırmacılar tarafından geliştirilen bir anket yoluyla toplanmıştır. Katılımcıların oyun alışkanlıkları, oyunlarda geçirilen süre, oyun modu ve oyun dili gibi değişkenlere ilişkin demografik sorular aracılığıyla betimsel olarak incelenmiştir. Bu çalışma kesitsel bir tasarım kullanarak, dijital oyunla ilgili birden fazla değişkeni araştırmayı ve dijital oyun ile katılımcıların dil öğrenme motivasyonu arasındaki olası ilişkiler hakkında çıkarımlarda bulunmak için örneklemden çeşitli nitelikler hakkında veri toplamayı amaçlamıştır. Ek olarak, katılımcıların Ideal L2 ve Ought-to L2 benliklerine ilişkin algıları incelenmiştir.

Araştırmanın Bulguları

Sonuçlar, literatürün aksine, tek oyunculu oyun modunun oyuncular arasında daha fazla tercih edildiği sonucuna varmıştır. Oynanış alışkanlıklarına gelince, her iki oyun modunda da erkek katılımcıların kadın katılımcılara göre anlamlı olarak daha fazla zaman geçirdiği; literatüre paralel olarak, cinsiyetlerin farklılaştığı tespit edilmiştir. Oyun cihazı tercihlerine göre katılımcıların büyük çoğunluğunun cinsiyet ayrımı gözetmeksizin oyun oynamak için dizüstü bilgisayarı tercih etmiş, fakat en çok tercih edilen ikinci oyun cihazı, erkek ve kadın oyuncular arasında farklılık göstermiştir. Erkekler laptoptan sonra masaüstünü tercih ederken, kadın oyuncular oyun oynamak için akıllı telefonları tercih etmiştir. Oyuncu kimliği ve cinsiyet ilişkileri konusunda da benzer sonuçlar elde edilmiştir. Çoğu erkek katılımcı kendilerini bir oyuncu olarak tanımlarken, bu oran kadın katılımcılar arasında daha az bulunmuştur. Bununla birlikte, cinsiyetten bağımsız olarak, oyuncuların kendilerini genellikle oyuncu kimliği ile tanımladıkları bulunmuştur.

İkinci araştırma sorusunun sonuçları, katılımcıların L2 benlik düzeylerinin cinsiyete göre farklılık gösterdiğini; yani kadınların Ideal L2 benliğinin erkeklerden önemli ölçüde daha yüksek olduğunu göstermiştir. Cinsiyet değişkeni ile Ought-to L2 benlik açısından bakıldığında,

erkeklerin kadınlara göre Ought-to L2 benliklerinin daha düşük olduğu bulunmuştur. Oynanış alışkanlıkları ile Ought-to L2 benlik seviyeleri arasındaki ilişkide de benzer sonuçlar bulunmuştur. Oyun oynayan ve oynamayanların Ideal L2 benlik seviyeleri açısından anlamlı bir fark olduğu görülmüş ve oyuncuların Ought-to L2 benlik seviyelerinin, oyun oynamayanlara göre önemli ölçüde daha düşük olduğu bulunmuştur. Oyun dili ile ilgili olarak, oyunları tamamen İngilizce olarak oynayan oyuncuların oldukça yüksek Ideal L2 benlikleri olduğu; oyunları tamamen Türkçe oynayan oyuncuların ise İngilizce oyun oynamayı tercih edenlere oranla Ideal L2 benliklerinin daha düşük, Ought-to L2 benlik seviyelerinin ise anlamlı olarak daha yüksek olduğu ortaya koyulmuştur.

Sonuç ve Öneriler

Bu çalışmanın bulguları, öğrencilerin oyunda ilerlemek için İngilizceyi anlamaları ve İngilizce kullanarak etkileşim kurmaları gerektiğinden, oyun dilinin de önemli bir rolü olduğunu ileri sürmüştür. Ayrıca, dijital oyunların dil öğrenenlere, rol yaparak ve diğer oyuncularla etkileşim kurarak farklı kimliklerle pratik yapma fırsatları sağladığı düşünülmektedir. Bu bulgular, informal dijital oyun uygulamalarının öğrencilerin ikinci dil kimliğini olumlu yönde şekillendirebileceğini göstermiş ve bunun da yabancı dil öğrenme motivasyonlarını etkileyebileceğini öne sürülmüştür.

Appendix 1. Ethics Committee Approval

Evrak Tarih ve Sayısı: 06.07.2021-121919

T.C
AKDENİZ ÜNİVERSİTESİ REKTÖRLÜĞÜ
Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etiği Kurulu
KURUL KARARI

TOPLANTI TARİHİ : 01.07.2021
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Üniversitemiz Eğitim Fakültesi Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Bölümü öğretim üyesi **Doç. Dr. Mustafa CANER** ile **Arş Gör. Seren ÖZGÜR**'ün yürütücülüğünü üstlendiği, *"GAMERS' FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING MOTIVATION (Bilgisayar oyunu oynayanların yabancı dil öğrenme motivasyonları)"* konulu çalışmanın, fikri hukuki ve telif hakları bakımından metot ve ölçeğine ilişkin sorumluluğun başvurucuya ait olmak üzere, proje süresince uygulanmasının etik olarak **uygun olduğuna** oy birliği ile karar verilmiştir.

Prof. Dr. Hilmi DEMİRKAYA
Kurul Başkanı

Başkan **Prof. Dr.** **Hilmi DEMİRKAYA**	**Başkan Yrd.** **Prof. Dr.** **Sibel MEHTER AYKIN**	**Üye** **Prof. Dr.** **Ebru İÇİGEN**
Üye **Prof. Dr.** **Nurşen ADAK**	**Üye** **Prof. Dr.** **Sibel PAŞAOĞLU YÖNDEM** **(katılamadı)**	**Üye** **Prof. Dr.** **Taner KORKUT** **(görevli-izinli)**
Üye **Prof. Dr.** **Gökhan AKYÜZ**		