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Research Article

DIGITAL PARENTING SELF-EFFICACY AND DIGITAL GAMING ADDICTION IN CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between parents' digital parenting self-efficacy and children's digital game addiction. Employing a quantitative approach, data were collected from 431 parent-child dyads using the Digital Parenting Self-Efficacy Scale, the Digital Game Addiction Scale for Children, and demographic information forms. The findings related to game addiction revealed that 5.1% of the children were in the standard group, 55% in the low-risk group, 31.3% in the at-risk group, 7.2% in the addicted group, and 1.4% in the highly addicted group. Boys exhibited higher digital game addiction scores compared to girls. While parents' scores on digital literacy and communication did not differ significantly by gender, male participants scored higher in digital safety. Parents' education level, number of children, and years of internet use significantly influenced their digital parenting self-efficacy. Parents with elementary and middle school education levels, five or more children, and internet use limited to one year or less had lower levels of digital self-efficacy. Although no statistically significant differences were found between parents' sub-dimension scores in digital parenting and children's levels of game addiction, regression analysis showed that parents' digital literacy and digital safety significantly predicted children's digital game addiction. These findings highlight the complex interaction between parents' digital competencies and children's digital behaviors.

INTRODUCTION

Rapid advancements in technology and their accelerated dissemination have led to a significant integration of digital tools into daily human life. These technological developments, now present across nearly all aspects and stages of everyday living, have evolved into more complex forms, particularly through internet-based applications. The convergence of technological tools with the Internet has produced transformative effects in various domains of life, including the economy, education, healthcare, and family structures (Başlar, 2013; Koçyiğit & Koçyiğit, 2018). As temporal and spatial boundaries have been redefined, individuals have increasingly transitioned toward lifestyles that differ markedly from past practices (Friess, 2016). The pace of 21st-century technological development, surpassing that of previous technological revolutions in human history, has prompted new interpretations of

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what it means to adapt. While many argue that technology and the Internet enhance convenience and efficiency in life, others emphasize that their outcomes are shaped largely by the nature and context of their use, which can at times lead to negative consequences (İnan-Kaya, Mutlu-Bayraktar, & Yılmaz, 2018).

One of the social institutions most significantly impacted by the rapid advancement of technology and frequently at the center of debates regarding its positive and negative consequences is the family (Haddon, 2006). The interconnectedness of the family with other institutions, particularly the educational system, suggests that constructing a new model of family life independently of technological influences may no longer be feasible (Kırık, 2017; Zeybekoğlu-Akbaş & Dursun, 2020).

As a result, parents striving to keep up with technological developments and tools are increasingly confronted with new responsibilities and challenges, particularly in fulfilling their roles as mediators or guides between their children, who are especially susceptible to the effects of technology in the digital age, and the digital environment. Within this context, the notion of the "digital parent" has emerged, encapsulating the evolving parental roles shaped by the pervasive influence of technology and the Internet (Ayas & Horzum, 2013; Manap, 2020; Parmar, 2017; Rode, 2009).

Digital parenting refers to being able to be an example or guide to children about digital technologies that have the potential to affect all areas of children's development (social, emotional, psychological, cognitive, psychomotor and physical) in relation to parental roles, showing the correct use of these tools to their children and having the potential to raise awareness on this issue (Yay, 2019). This state of responsibility refers to the safe and correct use of digital environments by children and parents, being aware of the damage that may be encountered and being a role model for their children, protecting their children against possible dangers, as well as being aware of the areas that can be applied against these risks (Dulkadir-Yaman, 2019).

Many findings show that digitalization has become indispensable for adults and children in today's world. According to studies conducted around the world, the use of screen technologies has been on a serious rise, especially after the 2010s (Nagata, Magid, & Gabriel, 2020; Shah & Phadke, 2023; Konca, 2022; Li, Luo, & He, 2022). In Turkiye, recent data from the Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK, 2024) reveal a continuous upward trend in individuals' engagement with the internet and digital technologies. The proportion of individuals aged 16 to 74 using the internet rose from 87.1% in 2023 to 88.8% in 2024. Complementary to national statistics, international reports suggest that while the global average daily duration of digital

media use stands at approximately 6 hours and 40 minutes, individuals in Turkiye exhibit a slightly higher average of 6 hours and 57 minutes (We Are Social [WAS], 2024).

Although digital parenting is inherently multidimensional, one of the most critical concerns surrounding parental roles arises from the challenges brought about by technological advancements, commonly referred to by concepts such as computer addiction, internet addiction, and game addiction (Ng & Wiemer-Hastings, 2005; Yiğit & Günüç, 2020). The outcomes of digital technology use impact not only parents but also, and perhaps more profoundly, their children. While the frequent use of digital tools may appear to facilitate daily tasks, the implications differ significantly for adults and children. Children who initially engage with digital media under parental supervision gradually become independent and active users. As their autonomy increases, so do the types and frequency of risks they encounter (Aral, 2022). With the rapid acceleration of technological development, parents often struggle to maintain control over their children's digital engagement, leaving them more vulnerable to potential harm. When these technologies are used without adequate parental oversight, especially at an early age, they may expose children, whose cognitive discernment is not yet fully developed, to various forms of risk. Among these risks, prolonged and unsupervised technological use has led to the emergence of several forms of digital addiction. In recent years, internet addiction, gaming addiction, mobile phone dependency, and other technology-related behavioral disorders have been widely reported (Gökçearslan & Durakoğlu, 2014).

The most important activities of the Internet and digital tools for children are their desire to satisfy their desire to play games, which is specific to their age period and inherent in childhood, through these tools. In this case, individuals especially children and young people overdoing it in these tools, which eliminate the phenomenon of people, space, and time required to satisfy their desire to play games and make it easier for children to reach their desire to play by placing it in a very simple area, can cause problems (Horzum, Ayas, & Çakır, 2008). A person's social environment, family and friend relationships, and school and work relationships, combined with the attractive features of the internet world, are important issues that lead to game addiction (İnal & Çağıltay, 2005; Sherry & Lucas, 2001). The personal characteristics of today's young people, the conveniences provided by the digital world in daily life, the prioritization of pleasure and entertainment, and the tendency to turn to any subject or any field on their own can make it easier for young people to become addicted (Yalçın & Bertiz, 2019).

Digital game addiction, defined as excessive and uncontrolled engagement in games via digital devices, brings about various problems, much like other forms of addiction. Particularly in children, the potential for physical, psychological, and social difficulties has prompted

numerous studies on the topic (Kaçmaz, Cumurcu & Çelik, 2023). Research has shown that children who excessively play digital games are more likely to experience attention deficits, sleep disturbances, aggression, obesity, and other forms of problematic behavior (Otsuka et al., 2021). Furthermore, negative outcomes such as low self-esteem, decreased academic performance, and weakened social relationships have also been documented (Charoenwanit & Sumneangsanor, 2014; Anderson et al., 2010). In addition, studies have reported increased complaints of pain due to musculoskeletal problems, which arise when children use digital devices for prolonged periods in improper positions (Cankurtaran et al., 2022). Another significant impact appears in the social sphere, where excessive gaming may result in disconnection from real life, social isolation, and diminished social skills (Paulus et al., 2021). This condition can be reflected within the family as parent-child conflicts (Stănculescu & Griffiths, 2022) and in school settings as reduced participation in activities (Domoff, Borgen, & Radesky, 2021). The challenges associated with digital game addiction and screen use may lead to parental concern and are increasingly regarded as a significant social issue.

Keeping up with the pace of the constantly updated digital world and preparing their children for this world may make it compulsory for parents to be involved in the digital world and to be equipped with the necessary skills. Likewise, digital parenting is important both for children to benefit from digital media tools and to protect them from the risks that may arise from digital media (İnan-Kaya et al., 2018). However, children's increasing interest in the digital world, which continues to develop day by day, is beginning to pose a risk (Caner & Evgin, 2021; Gentile, 2009; Kuss & Griffiths, 2012). Internet use among children and ease of access to mobile devices facilitate access to gaming tools and increase children's gaming addiction (Budak & Işıkoğlu, 2022; Işıkoğlu & Ergenekon, 2021). For parents to be able to see these risks that threaten children, both their digital competence and their awareness of this issue are of great importance. Prior research conducted by Kay and Sağlam (2025) as well as Gül and Özgür (2023) has explored the association between digital parenting awareness and game addiction within the context of Turkiye. Building upon this foundation, the present study investigates the relationship between parents' self-efficacy in digital parenting and digital game addiction among children, incorporating a range of related variables into the analysis.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

This research was conducted using the relational survey model, one of the quantitative research methods, to reveal the relationships among variables. The relational survey model was

employed to describe the existing level of association between specific variables (Karasar, 2010).

Hypotheses of the Study

The hypotheses determined in line with the purpose of the research are as follows:

- Game addiction in children differs according to socio-demographic variables.
- Digital parenting self-efficacy varies according to socio-demographic variables.
- There is a relationship between parental digital parenting self-efficacy and gaming addiction in children.

Population and Sample of the Study

The study covers students between the ages of 10-14 and their parents in secondary schools affiliated with the Ministry of National Education in the center of Batman Province. The sample was selected from 6 schools with different socio-cultural characteristics in Batman City center. During the data collection process, a total of 490 forms were distributed to schools, and 452 were returned. After excluding incomplete forms, inconsistently filled surveys, and participants (both parents and children) who did not use any digital devices, a total of 431 matched parent-child responses were included in the analysis. The forms completed by the parents regarding digital parenting self-efficacy and the forms completed by the children regarding digital game addiction were distributed and collected as a single package, enabling accurate matching of the responses.

The study was limited to middle school students, specifically those in grades 5 through 8. Only children who were enrolled in middle school and had access to a digital device either personally or through a parent were included in the study. Parent-child pairs without access to any digital device were excluded from participation. Of the participants (parents) involved in the research process, 58.45% were female and 41.55% were male. It was determined that 58.28% of the students included in the research process were female and 41.72% were male.

Descriptive statistics are given in the table below to analyze demographic information about the students.

Table 1. Examination of Demographic Information About the Students

Variables	Categories	n	%
School	K. Secondary School	53	12.3
	F. Secondary School	50	11.6
	T. K. K. Secondary School	64	14.8
	B. I. P. Secondary School	94	21.8
	B. I. Secondary School	88	20.4
	K. Secondary School	82	19

	Total	431	100
Classroom	Grade 5	111	25.8
	Grade 6	155	36
	Grade 7	92	21.3
	Grade 8	73	16.9
	Total	431	100
Gender	Female	250	58.28
	Male	179	41.72
	Total	429	100
Which digital gaming tools he/she has	Computer	65	13.10
	Tablet	103	20.77
	Cell phone	83	16.73
	Console	10	2.02
	None of them	235	47.38
How many hours a day on average he/she plays digital games	1 hour or less	284	65.9
	2-3 hours	115	26.7
	4-5 hours	25	5.8
	6-7 hours	1	0.2
	More than 7 hours	6	1.4
	Total	431	100

Of the students participating in the study, 12.3% were from K. Secondary School, 11.6% from F. Secondary School, 14.8% from T. K. Secondary School, 21.8% from B. I. P. Secondary School, 20.4% from B. I. Secondary School, and 19% from K. Secondary School. When the grade levels are analyzed, it is seen that 25.8% of the students are in the 5th grade, 36% in the 6th grade, 21.3% in the 7th grade, and 16.9% in the 8th grade. It was found that 58.28% of the students were female and 41.72% were male. When it was examined which of the digital game tools the students had, 13.10% had a computer, 20.77% had a tablet, 16.73% had a cell phone, 2.02% had a console, and 47.38% had none; when the average number of hours a day was analyzed, it was found that 65.9% played digital games for 1 hour or less, 26.7% for 2-3 hours, 5.8% for 4-5 hours, 0.2% for 6-7 hours, and 1.4% for more than 7 hours.

Table 2. Examination of Demographic Information About Parents

Variables	**Categories**	**n**	**%**
Gender	Female	249	58.45
	Male	177	41.55
	Total	426	100
Parental age	20-25	2	0.47
	26-34	72	16.98
	35-44	249	58.73
	45-54	92	21.70
	55 and above	9	2.12
	Total	424	100
Education status	Literate	67	15.80
	Primary School	140	33.02
	Secondary School	81	19.10
	High School	70	16.51
	Associate degree	13	3.07
	Bachelor	39	9.20
	Postgraduate	14	3.31
	Total	424	100

Number of children	1 or 2 children	45	10.79
	3 children	91	21.36
	4 children	104	24.41
	5 children and above	185	43.43
	Total	425	100
How many years of internet use	0-1 year	94	22.12
	2-3 years	110	25.88
	4-5 years	82	19.29
	6-7 years	42	9.88
	8 years and above	97	22.82
	Total	425	100

Descriptive statistics regarding the demographic information of the parents who participated in the study are given in the table above. When the gender of the parents is analyzed, it is seen that 58.45% are female, 41.55% are male, 0.47% of the parents are between 20-25, 16.98% between 26-34, 58.73% between 35-44, 21.70% between 45-54, 2.12% between 55 and over. When the educational status of the participants was examined, it was determined that 15.80% were literate, 33.02% had primary school degrees, 19.10% had secondary school degrees, 16.51% had high school degrees, 3.07% had associate degrees, 9.20% had bachelor's degree, and 3.31% had a postgraduate degree. When the number of children the parents had was analyzed, 10.79% had 1 or 2 children, 21.36% had 3 children, 24.41% had 4 children, and 43.43% had 5 or more children.

Data Collection Tools

The sociodemographic form prepared by the researcher, the Digital Parenting Self-Efficacy Scale (DPSES) developed by Yaman et al. (2019), and the Digital Gaming Addiction Scale for Children (DGADAS) developed by Hazar and Hazar (2017) were used as data collection tools.

Socio-demographic information form: In the content of the socio-demographic form prepared for the parents participating in the study, questions such as gender, age, education level, number of children, income level, and internet usage time were sought. In the content of the socio-demographic form prepared for children, answers were sought for questions such as class, age, gender, which digital game tools they own, number of siblings, and how many hours a day they play digital games on the internet.

Digital Parenting Self-Efficacy Scale (DPSES): The scale developed by Yaman (2018) was used to examine parents' digital self-efficacy. The scale consists of 38 items and 3 subfactors. It makes a 5-point Likert-type measurement (1 I am not at all competent - I am very competent) and is applied to parents with children between the ages of 10-14 and 14-18. The factor structure of the developed scale was examined through exploratory (n = 520) and

confirmatory factor analyses (n = 556) conducted with different parent samples. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis indicated that the fit indices were within acceptable ranges. Following construct validity analyses, the scale was found to consist of three factors: digital literacy, digital safety, and digital communication. The digital literacy dimension is defined as the ability to use technology by knowing when and how to use it; digital security is defined as taking necessary precautions against dangers in the digital environment; and digital communication is defined as communicating with their children in digital environments by liking posts made in digital environments (such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) or writing comments on their posts in digital environments (Yaman at al., 2019).

Digital Game Addiction Scale for Children: The scale developed by Hazar and Hazar in 2017 was used to examine digital game addiction in children. The scale consists of a 5-point Likert type (1 strongly disagree - 5 strongly agree) and 24 items. It can be analyzed according to the scores obtained because of the scale, and it can also be clustered as a normal group, low-risk group, risky group, dependent group, or highly dependent group according to the scale score. In the scale development study, the test-retest correlation coefficient was calculated as .81 for the total scale, .82 for the first sub-factor, .88 for the second sub-factor, .73 for the third sub-factor, and .70 for the fourth sub-factor. To test the validity of the factor structure obtained through exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted. According to the CFA results presented in Table 4, the fit indices for the Digital Parenting Self-Efficacy Scale (DPSES) were found to be as follows: $\chi^2/df = 1.48$, RMSEA = .05, PGFI = .68, PNFI = .77, GFI = .85, AGFI = .87, IFI = .95, NFI = .91, and CFI = .95. These values indicate that the model fits the data well and fall within the acceptable and good fit ranges (Hazar & Hazar, 2017).

Data Analysis

The analysis of the data obtained from 431 participants was evaluated with appropriate statistical methods in the IBM SPSS Statistics 22 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL) program. Cronbach Alpha coefficients were calculated for the reliability analysis of the scales (Digital literacy: 0.865, Digital communication: 0.725, Digital security: 0.911, Digital Game Addiction scale: 0.913), and these scales were found to be reliable. Skewness and kurtosis values were examined to check the normality assumption of the scale scores. It was observed that the skewness and kurtosis values of all scale scores and sub-dimension scores were between +1.5 and -1.5. Thus, it was determined that the scale scores were normally distributed. The Independent Sample T Test was applied for the comparison of two group averages, and the One-Way ANOVA test

was applied for the comparison of more than two group averages. Before the regression analysis, assumptions were checked and Durbin Watson, tolerance and VIF values were examined, and it was determined that there were no autocorrelation and multicollinearity problems. One-way ANOVA and t-tests are commonly used to test hypotheses and to verify the reliability of results. They are considered reliable tools for determining whether the differences between group means are statistically significant (Field, 2013). The significance value was based on $p<0.05$.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the university's Ethics Committee (Approval No: 2023-05-88). Following this approval, permission was granted by the Provincial Directorate of National Education to conduct the study in selected schools. Prior to the administration of the questionnaire's, informed consent was obtained from each participating parent, and a voluntary participation form was read and signed accordingly.

During the implementation phase in schools, the selection of participating classes was carried out in consultation with school counselors and finalized in collaboration with the school administration, ensuring that the process was aligned with institutional and ethical guidelines.

RESULTS

Findings on Digital Game Addiction in Children

The table below shows the categories corresponding to the score ranges of the digital game addiction scale in children.

Table 3. Categories of Digital Game Addiction in Children According to Score

Categories	n	%
Normal group	22	5.1
Low-risk group	237	55
Risk group	135	31.3
Dependent group	31	7.2
Highly dependent group	5	1.4
Total	430	100

It can be said that 5.1% of the children participating in the study were in the normal group, 55% in the low-risk group, 31.3% in the risk group, 7.2% in the dependent group and 1.4% in the highly dependent group.

Table 4. Comparison of Demographic Variables in Terms of the Digital Game Addiction Scale Score for Children

Variables	Categories	n	Average∓ SS	F value	P	Difference
Schools	K. Secondary School	53	53.18∓14.47	13.245	0.001	5,4<1,2,3
	F. Secondary School	50	53.46∓15.55			
	T. K. K. Secondary School	64	52.06∓15.43			
	B. I. P. Secondary School	94	40.03∓12.10			
	B. I. Secondary School	88	50.67∓21.14			
	K. Secondary School	82	39.44∓12.72			
Gender	Female	250	2.36∓0.69	-2.567	0.011	1<2
	Male	178	2.55∓0.80			
Age	10	17	37.70∓9.89	3.070	0.016	1<2,3,4
	11	138	46.25∓16.16			
	12	130	47.47∓15.23			
	13	106	50.48∓19.40			
	14	39	43.43∓15.57			
Hours of play per day	Less than 1 hour	283	42.21∓14.10	34.903	0.001	1<2,3,4
	2-3 hours	115	53.67∓16.15			
	4-5 hours	25	66.52∓17.69			
	More than 6 hours	7	65.57∓20.17			

P<0.005

In the table above, One Way ANOVA test was conducted to compare demographic variables in terms of the digital game addiction scale score for children. When there was a significant difference between the groups, post hoc analysis was performed to determine which group the difference originated from. Scheffe's test was applied when homogeneity of variances was achieved, and Tamhane's T2 test was applied when homogeneity was not achieved.

A significant difference was found between the schools where the children were educated in terms of the digital game addiction scale score ($p<0.001$). According to the post hoc analysis conducted to determine which schools were different, it was determined that the digital game addiction of students studying at K. (mean=39.44) and B. I. P. Secondary School (mean=40.03) was lower than the scores of students at K. Secondary School (mean=53.18), F. Secondary School (mean=53.46), T. K. K. Secondary School (mean=52.06) and B. I. Secondary School (mean=50.67).

A significant difference was found between male and female students in terms of their digital game addiction scores ($p=0.011<0.05$). Accordingly, it was determined that male students' digital game addiction (mean=2.55) was higher than female students' digital game addiction (mean=2.36).

It was determined that there was a significant difference between the ages of the students in terms of digital game addiction scale scores ($p<0.05$). When the addiction between which age groups was examined, it was determined that the digital game addiction of 10-year-olds

(mean=37.70) was lower than 11-year-olds (mean=46.25), 12-year-olds (mean=47.47), and 13-year-olds (mean=50.48).

A significant difference was found between students' daily playing hours in terms of digital game addiction scores ($p<0.001$). According to the post hoc analysis conducted to determine which groups differed, it was found that the game addiction of those who played less than 1 hour daily (mean=42.21) was lower than those who played 2-3 hours (mean=53.67), 4-5 hours (mean=66.52) and more than 6 hours (mean=65.57). In general, the level of addiction increases as children spend more time.

Findings Related to Digital Parenting Self-Efficacy

In this section, the relationship between parents' characteristics and their digital self-efficacy was examined. In Table 5, it aims to compare the digital parenting scores according to the gender of the parents.

Table 5. Comparison of Digital Parenting Scores According to the Gender of Parents

Scale	Categories	n	Average ∓ SS	t value	P
Digital literacy	Female	244	3.54∓0.74	1.794	0.074
	Male	177	3.40∓0.84		
Digital security	Female	244	3.91∓0.78	2.464	0.014
	Male	177	3.70∓0.91		
Digital communication	Female	244	3.43∓0.92	1.031	0.303
	Male	177	3.34∓0.93		

P<0.005

No significant difference was found in terms of digital literacy and digital communication scores of women and men ($p>0.05$). However, a significant difference was found in terms of digital security scores ($p<0.05$). Accordingly, it was determined that the digital security for women (mean = 3.91) was higher than that for men (mean = 3.70).

Table 6. Comparison of Digital Parenting Scores According to the Number of Children Parents Have

Scale	Categories	n	Average ± SS	F value	P	Difference
Digital literacy	1 or 2 children	45	3.75±0.61	5.101	0.001	4<1,2,3
	3 children	90	3.70±0.66			
	4 children	104	3.45±0.81			
	5 children and above	184	3.31±0.83			
Digital security	1 or 2 children	45	4.01±0.70	4.647	0.001	4<2
	3 children	90	4.09±0.67			
	4 children	104	3.80±0.88			
	5 children and above	184	3.66±0.88			
Digital communication	1 or 2 children	45	3.71±0.84	5.072	0.001	4<1,2,3
	3 children	90	3.61±0.83			
	4 children	104	3.40±0.91			
	5 children and above	184	3.20±0.96			

P<0.005

In the table above, One Way ANOVA test was conducted to compare digital parenting scores according to the number of children the parents have. When a significant difference was found between the groups, post hoc analysis was performed to determine which group the difference originated from. Scheffe's test was applied when homogeneity of variances was achieved, and Tamhane's T2 test was applied when homogeneity was not achieved.

A significant difference was found between the number of children the parents had in terms of digital literacy scores ($p<0.001$). According to the post hoc analysis conducted to determine which groups differed, it was determined that the digital literacy of parents with 5 or more children (mean=3.31) was lower than those with one or two children (mean=3.75), 3 children (mean=3.70) and 4 children (mean=345).

It was observed that there was a significant difference between the number of children the parents had in terms of digital security scores ($p<0.001$). According to the post hoc analysis conducted to determine which groups differed, it was determined that the digital security score of parents with 5 or more children (mean=3.66) was lower than those with three children (mean=4.09).

A significant difference was found between the number of children the parents had in terms of digital communication scores ($p<0.001$). According to the post hoc analysis conducted to determine which groups differed, it was determined that the digital literacy of parents with 5 or more children (mean=3.20) was lower than those with one or two children (mean=3.71), those with 3 children (mean=3.61) and those with 4 children (mean=3.40). In general, the average digital self-efficacy score decreased as the number of children increased.

Table 7. Comparison of Digital Parenting Scores According to Parents' Education Level

Scale	Categories	n	Mean ∓ SS	F value	P	Difference
Digital literacy	Literate	67	3.24∓0.73	6.067	0.001	1,2<4
	Primary School	140	3.29∓0.80			
	Secondary School	80	3.57∓0.78			
	High School	69	3.75∓0.74			
	Associate degree	13	3.80∓0.58			
	Bachelor	38	3.72∓0.71			
	Postgraduate	14	3.94∓0.60			
Digital security	Literate	67	3.63∓0.85	3.760	0.001	1,2<4
	Primary School	140	3.64∓0.88			
	Primary School	80	3.93∓0.73			
	High School	69	4.05∓0.84			
	Associate degree	13	4.15∓0.55			
	Bachelor	38	4.01∓0.71			
	Postgraduate	14	4.10∓0.55			
Digital communication	Literate	67	3.10∓0.92	5.778	0.001	1,2<4
	Primary School	140	3.20∓0.89			
	Primary School	80	3.41∓0.95			

	High School	69	3.74∓0.89
	Associate degree	13	3.66∓0.86
	Bachelor	38	3.66∓0.82
	Postgraduate	14	4∓0.56

P<0.005

A significant difference was found between the educational status of the parents in terms of digital literacy score (p<0.001). According to the post hoc analysis conducted to determine which groups differed, it was found that the digital literacy of those with high school education (mean=3.75) was higher than those with literacy (mean=3.24) and primary school (mean=3.29).

Again, according to the post hoc analysis in terms of digital security score between the educational status of the parents, the digital security score of those with high school education (mean=4.05) was found to be higher than those with literacy (mean=3.63) and primary school (mean=3.64).

When evaluated in terms of the digital communication score between the educational status of the parents, it was found that the digital communication score of those whose educational status was high school (mean=3.74) was higher than those who were literate (mean=3.10) and primary school (mean=3.20).

Table 8. Comparison of Digital Parenting Scores According to the Years Parents Started Using the Internet

Scale	Categories	n	Average∓ SS	F value	P	Difference
Digital literacy	0-1 year	94	3.34∓0.88	4.897	0.001	1<5
	2-3 years	109	3.31∓0.75			
	4-5 years	82	3.58∓0.75			
	6-7 years	42	3.51∓0.63			
	8 years and above	95	3.73∓0.77			
Digital security	0-1 year	94	3.69∓0.92	2.881	0.022	1,2<5
	2-3 years	109	3.68∓0.83			
	4-5 years	82	3.93∓0.81			
	6-7 years	42	3.89∓0.66			
	8 years and above	95	4.01∓0.82			
Digital communication	0-1 year	94	3.27∓1.04	3.210	0.013	2<5
	2-3 years	109	3.23∓0.90			
	4-5 years	82	3.42∓0.94			
	6-7 years	42	3.45∓0.80			
	8 years and above	95	3.66∓0.83			

P<0.005

According to Table 8, a significant difference was found in terms of digital literacy scores according to the years parents started using the internet (p<0.001). According to the post hoc analysis conducted to determine the difference between which years, it was found that the

digital literacy score of those who started using the internet for 8 years or more (mean=3.73) was higher than those who started using the internet between 0-1 years (mean=3.34).

According to the post hoc analysis for digital security scores according to the years of internet use, the digital security scores of those who started using the internet for 8 years or more (mean=4.01) were found to be higher than those who started using the internet for 0-1 year (mean=3.69) and 2-3 years (mean=3.68).

A significant difference was found in terms of digital communication scores according to the years parents started using the internet ($p<0.05$). According to the post hoc analysis conducted to determine the difference between which years, it was found that the digital communication score of those who started using the internet for 8 years or more (mean=3.66) was higher than those who started using the internet between 2-3 years (mean=3.23).

The Relationship Between Digital Parenting Self-Efficacy and Children's Digital Game Addiction Levels

One Way ANOVA test was applied to examine whether there is a difference between children's digital game addiction levels according to parents' digital parenting subscale scores.

Table 9. Examination of Whether There is a Difference Between Children's Digital Game Addiction Levels According to Parents' Digital Parenting Subscale Scores

Scale	Categories	n	Average∓ SS	F value	P	Difference
Digital literacy	Normal group	21	3.41∓1.06	2.262	0.062	
	Low-risk group	234	3.42∓0.84			
	Risk group	132	3.58∓0.67			
	Dependent group	30	3.46∓0.63			
	Highly dependent group	5	4.32∓0.46			
Digital security	Normal group	21	3.89∓0.94	1.106	0.353	
	Low-risk group	234	3.82∓0.89			
	Risk group	132	3.86∓0.75			
	Dependent group	30	3.57∓0.68			
	Highly dependent group	5	4.26∓0.68			
Digital communication	Normal group	21	3.42∓1.20	0.462	0.764	
	Low-risk group	234	3.37∓0.97			
	Risk group	132	3.42∓0.84			
	Dependent group	30	3.35∓0.69			
	Highly dependent group	5	3.92∓1.33			

P<0.005

There was no significant difference between children's digital game addiction levels in terms of parents' digital literacy, digital safety, and digital communication scores ($p>0.05$).

Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and tolerance values were examined to determine whether there is a multicollinearity problem among the independent variables. If there is a multicollinearity problem among the independent variables, these variables will not be

perceived as different variables in the structural model, and it will not be possible to determine their contribution to the model. Among these evaluation criteria, the variant inflation factor (VIF) is expected to be below 10, and the tolerance value is expected to be above 0.2. Durbin Watson analysis was performed to examine whether there is autocorrelation. When the DW value is in the range of 1.5-2.5, it can be said that there is no autocorrelation.

Table 10. Examination of the Effect of Digital Parenting Sub-Dimensions on Child's Digital Game Addiction

Dependent variable	Independent variables	β	t	p
Digital game addiction	Constant term	45 392	11.982	0.001
	Digital literacy	9.605	4.562	0.001
	Digital security	-7.522	-4.090	0.001
	Digital communication	-0.876	-0.583	0.560

R2=0.048, F=8.027, p<0.001

The regression equation in which the dependent variable is digital game addiction in children and the independent variables are digital literacy, digital safety, and digital communication is shown in the table above. In addition to the significance of the regression equation, the table also shows which of the independent variables are statistically significant and the coefficients of these variables. The coefficient of determination (R2) was calculated as 0.048 and the F statistic was significant (p<0.001). Accordingly, it can be said that the rate of independent variables explaining the dependent variable is 0.4%. In addition, it can be said that parents' digital literacy and digital safety contribute to the model at 0.05 significance level on children's digital game addiction. In the model, it can be said that a one-unit increase in digital literacy causes a 9.605-unit increase in the child's digital game addiction while the other variable is fixed, and a one-unit increase in digital safety score causes a 7.522-unit decrease in the child's digital game addiction while all other variables are fixed.

DISCUSSION

Various factors, including parental characteristics, digital self-efficacy, the quality of supervision, communication, and role modeling with children, as well as access to and use of digital devices, play a significant role in shaping both the concept of digital parenting and children's digital game addiction. Indeed, these issues have become central themes in academic discussions concerning the digital age. This study aimed to examine both phenomena by exploring the potential relationships between parental characteristics and digital parenting self-efficacy, as well as between children's characteristics and their levels of digital game addiction.

The first findings within the scope of the study were the risk levels of children's game addiction. Looking at the scores of the digital game addiction scale in the participant group, it

was determined that 5.1% of the children were in the standard group, 55% in the low-risk group, 31.3% in the risky group, 7.2% in the dependent group, and 1.4% in the highly dependent group. These data were very close to the data of the study previously conducted by Delebe and Hazar (2022). In this study, 55.6% of the participant children were found to be normal-less risky, 34.5% were found to be risky, 8.9% were found to be dependent, and 1.0% were found to be highly dependent. In a study conducted by Türen and Bağçeli-Kahraman (2025) with children aged 4 to 6, lower levels of addiction were reported. One of the main reasons for this difference is the relationship between increasing age and higher levels of addiction. As observed in other studies, addiction levels tend to increase at relatively older ages (Kurt, Öner, & Bulut, 2025; Marufoğlu & Kutlutürk, 2021).

The study also investigated the correlation between various individual characteristics of children and their propensity for digital game addiction. It was determined that there was a significant difference between female and male students in terms of their digital game addiction scores ($p=0.011<0.05$) and that boys' digital game addiction (mean=2.55) was higher than girls' (mean=2.36). This data is consistent with previous studies on the relationship between game addiction and gender (Akçayır, 2013; Balıkçı, 2018; Gül & Özgür, 2023; Güldağ, 2018; Gülü et al., 2023; Güvendi, Demir, & Keskin, 2019; Keser & Esgi, 2012) and shows that the mean score of boys is higher than girls. The fact that boys show more addiction leads to the fact that digital tools are also designed for boys and this situation is both a cause and an effect. The fact that boys use more digital tools, enter playgrounds more easily, and the game content is designed to attract boys' attention more may cause them to show more addiction. The greater availability of digital game genres targeting boys and the tendency of male students to socialize through games played in groups appear to be contributing factors (Akbaş & Işleyen, 2024). Again, the fact that girls are disadvantaged compared to boys in terms of access to vehicles, that they spend more physical time with their friends and care about this, and that they are given more responsibility in the family can be seen as an important factor (Aslan, Başcıllar, & Karataş, 2022; Taş & Güneş, 2019; Hazar, Tekkurşun, & Dalkıran, 2017).

It was determined that there was a significant difference between the ages of the students and their digital game addiction scale scores ($p<0.05$). When the addiction between which age groups was examined, it was determined that the digital game addiction of 10-year-olds (mean=37.70) was lower than 11-year-olds (mean=46.25), 12-year-olds (mean=47.47) and 13-year-olds (mean=50.48). The lower gaming addiction score in younger children can be attributed to the fact that older children have more access to digital tools and have more opportunities in this regard due to technological advances. However, it is also seen that some

different data have been obtained in previous studies on this subject. Taş and Güneş (2019) did not obtain any significant data on this issue, while Küçük and Çakır (2020) found that, similar to the findings of the study, 8th-grade and older children had higher game addiction scores than the others. Delebe and Hazar (2022), on the other hand, determined that 11-year-olds had higher game addiction scores than 12- and 13-year-olds in their study with children between the ages of 11 and 14. In the study, it was determined that 14-year-old children had higher mean scores than 12- and 13-year-old children.

Another variable whose effect on game addiction was examined was the time children spent with digital games. A significant difference was found according to the average addiction scores, and it was found that the addiction level of those who played games for less than 1 hour per day (mean=42.21) was lower than those who played games for 2-3 hours (mean=53.67), 4-5 hours (mean=66.52) and more than 6 hours (mean=65.57). In general, the more time children spend, the higher the level of addiction. Savcı and Aysan (2017) determined that addictions are intertwined in general and that internet, social media addiction, and game addiction affect each other. The research findings reveal that the data indicate that more time spent playing digital games increases children's addiction to these games. In this regard, Aslan et al. (2022) and Lemmens, Valkenburg, and Peter (2009) found a significant positive relationship between playing time and digital game addiction.

Another hypothesis of the study is the relationship between parents' sociodemographic characteristics and digital parenting self-efficacy. When the relationship between the gender of the participant parents and their digital parenting self-efficacy is examined, it is noteworthy that there is a significant difference ($p<0.05$) only in the digital safety sub-dimension. Accordingly, it was determined that the digital safety score for women (mean = 3.91) was higher than that for men (mean = 3.70). In the previous study conducted by Yaman (2018), it was observed that women had higher mean scores in all three sub-dimensions (digital literacy, digital security, and digital communication), although the effect rate was small. This situation can be attributed, in part, to mothers' greater engagement in researching healthy internet use for their children (Livingstone, Blum-Ross, Pavlick, & Ólafsson, 2018), their more frequent communication with children on the subject (Anderson, 2016), and the fact that caregiving responsibilities, particularly in the case of non-working women, are predominantly assigned to mothers (Fidan & Olur, 2023). Similar findings have also emerged in studies on digital parenting awareness. In the study conducted by Manap (2020), it was determined that fathers exhibited more negative role model behaviors than mothers, and the average digital neglect of fathers was higher than that of mothers. It was observed that mothers had higher awareness levels than fathers,

especially in the sub-dimensions of efficient use and protection from risks. These data create an opinion that parents in the role of mothers pay more attention to problematic use (İkiz, Asıcı, Kaya, & Sakarya, 2015).

Another demographic piece of information was the number of children the parents had. Considering the number of children, the parents have; it is noteworthy that parents have a lower self-efficacy score as the number of children increases. In Çakır, Kocagöz, and Karakuş's (2021), Gülmüş's (2020), and Oğuz and Kutluca's (2020) studies, which examined the relationship between the number of children and parents' awareness of digital tools or internet use, no significant relationship was found with the number of children. On the other hand, supporting the findings of the study, Yaman (2018) found that self-efficacy scores decreased when the number of children increased. The same data was found only in the digital security sub-dimension in Coşkunalp's (2022) study. In Akkaya, Tan, Kapıdere, and Şahin's (2021) study, it was determined that digital parenting awareness levels differed significantly according to the number of children, only in the sub-dimension of protection from risk, and parents with four or more children were lower in terms of protection from risks than parents with one child and two children.

When the relationship between parents' education level and digital parenting self-efficacy was evaluated, it was found that parents with a high school education had more self-efficacy than parents with lower education levels (literate, primary school, secondary school). These data are similar to those reported in a previous study by Yaman (2018). In his study, it was observed that parents with high school education had higher self-efficacy scores than parents with both lower and higher levels of education. As with some other data, it is possible to say that there are different studies on this subject. Türen and Bağçeli-Kahraman (2025) found that parental education level has an impact on digital neglect, which in turn may contribute to the development of game addiction in children. Coşkunalp (2022) and Manap (2020) found no significant difference between education level and digital parenting.

One of the hypotheses of the study, the question of whether there is a relationship between children's digital game addiction and digital parenting scores, was evaluated in two ways. First, the relationship between children's risk levels of game addiction and parents' digital parenting self-efficacy was revealed, and it was determined that there was no statistically significant difference ($p>0.05$). Another form of evaluation is the relationship between students' digital addiction scores and digital parenting self-efficacy. In this data, it was determined that there was a significant difference between children's addiction level, digital parenting literacy, and digital safety. There was a positive correlation between game addiction and the digital literacy

sub-dimension and a negative correlation between digital game addiction and the digital safety sub-dimension. No relationship was found in the digital communication sub-dimension. In other words, according to the data, the digital literacy self-efficacy dimension of parents, who can use technology by knowing when and how to use it, and game addiction in children showed a positive correlation in a different way than expected. On the other hand, digital safety self-efficacy, which is taking necessary precautions against the dangers in the digital environment, can be said to reduce game addiction in children. In this regard, it is often said that parents are not successful in informing, guiding, and supervising their children, especially due to their lack of knowledge and practice about digital tools (Tokel, Başer, & İşler, 2013; Günaydın, 2021). Studies on digital parenting awareness show that there is a negative correlation between digital parenting awareness and digital game addiction (Ayas & Horzum, 2013; Kay & Sağlam, 2025; Manap & Durmuş, 2021). In the findings obtained in the study, the positive correlation between digital literacy and digital game addiction does not support the information in the literature in general. However, the negative correlation between digital security and digital game addiction was an expected finding that supported the literature. As a matter of fact, Fidan and Seferoğlu (2021) found that in case of certain risks, parents can take some actions such as limiting their children's use of digital media, setting various prohibitions and rules, raising awareness of their children about online risks, and guiding their children. This may indicate that parents can act especially in case of safety concerns. In addition to digital parenting, Çalhan and Göksu (2024) found in their study that parents' media mediation roles may have an influence on children's digital game addiction.

CONCLUSION

The rapid advancement of digital technologies and their distinct impacts on both children and parents indicate that this issue will remain a central focus of scholarly and societal discussion for years to come. One of the critical dimensions of this debate lies in parents' relatively recent exposure to digital tools and their ongoing concerns about how to integrate these tools effectively into their parenting roles. The growing perception of digital technologies as indispensable components of daily life raises important questions regarding parents' attitudes and behaviors in digital contexts.

The lack of a standardized approach to parenting in the digital age mirrors the diversity seen in traditional parenting practices. In line with this, the present study revealed significant differences in digital parenting self-efficacy based on various parental characteristics.

Similarly, the findings related to children's digital game addiction demonstrated that factors such as gender, age, and patterns of digital device use play a significant role in addiction levels.

However, the relationship between digital parenting self-efficacy and children's digital addiction remains complex and, in some cases, inconclusive. To better understand this relationship, future research should be conducted with diverse samples representing different demographic, geographic, and cultural backgrounds. Such studies could contribute to more generalizable and comprehensive conclusions.

When considering the role of educational institutions in this context, schools emerge as key environments capable of engaging both students and parents. Especially in periods when families are seeking greater guidance, it is essential for schools to support the development of healthy digital habits. This can be achieved by implementing school-based training programs, organizing workshops for parents and children, and conducting awareness-raising activities focused on the responsible and balanced use of digital technologies.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declared no conflicts of interest.

Notes

This paper is based on data used for the Master dissertation titled, "Investigation of the relationship between parent's digital parenting self-efficacy and children's digital game addiction in terms of various variables" approved by the Institute of Graduate Studies, Istanbul Gelişim University.

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