The effect of YouTube on traditional game culture of children
by Nihan Çelik and Adem Yilmaz

Abstract
The main purpose of this study is to reveal the effects of YouTube game videos on traditional children game culture, observing changes in play behavior. We predicted that changes would occur due to new media technologies. Semi-structured in-depth interviews occurred with the mothers of 20 three-six-year-old children in Erzurum, a city in Turkey. A total 16 mothers provided their observations on the playing behaviors of children.

Based on these interviews, it was determined that YouTube game videos had an effect on traditional game culture. While games are forms of play in which children behave naturally, enjoy participating and engage in their own distinctive behaviors, children who watch YouTube game videos develop new play habits that lead them to imitate people and events in YouTube videos, diminishing to some degree their creativity. YouTube videos change playing behaviors, transforming games into shows.

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Introduction
The first declaration of children’s rights was included in the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child in 1959. The Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1989 and came into force as part of international law in 1990. There are 191 countries that have ratified the convention (Curtis and O’Hagan, 2003). While the United Nations provided children the right to play in Article 31, it also drew attention to the roles of adults, as it involves certain conditions. It has been understood that play is a valuable part of childhood. In this context, the recognition and support of a game as a right constitutes the first condition. Respecting the right to play with the recognition of a given game as a right constitutes the second condition for adults. Finally, the right to play must be introduced and should be even glorified (Dereli and Uludağ, 2013). The act of playing and participating in games is
Playing games is a valuable part of childhood that has important developmental benefits for children, and gives parents the opportunity to fully engage with their children (Ginsburg, 2007). For this reason, just as an adult is expected to work, a child is expected to play. There is no difference between a child playing and an adult working to earn a living (Üluğ, 2007). Children playing games escape from their real life for a while, and partake in activities in which they are free and only aim to have fun (Huizinga, 2018). Huizinga also argues that playing games began centuries ago, and that the power of games exist in every moment of life, in every part of the social life of a society, because culture in some fashion began with games. Activities such as hunting that were carried out in archaic communities to meet vital needs could be constructed into games. Games are means of expression for communities to give meaning to their lives (Huizinga, 2018). However, the activity of playing games, which is an important action in an individual’s life, becomes a forged phenomenon that cannot fulfill entirely its main benefits and functions with Web 2.0 and new media technologies.

Web 2.0 is known by many names: the information Web, user-based Web, participatory Web and read-write Web. The Web has become a two-way medium, providing innovations to users with a flexible design, creative reuse, updates and collaborative content creation (Aghaei, et al., 2012). These innovations were realized with new media technologies, mediating social interaction, information sharing and offering new opportunities for communication (Campbell, 2010). The most important feature of new media technologies is that they allow two-way communication between the media and users, and allow users to receive responses in real time (Danesi, 2009). A salient example of this feature is social media platforms. Social media, which makes Web-based usage and mobile technologies interactive (Baruah, 2012), represents a collection of Internet-based applications that build on the technological foundations of Web 2.0, allowing an exchange of user-generated content (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010).

YouTube is one of the most frequently used social media platforms in the world as well as the most visited video sharing site in the world (Ricke, 2014). According to the social media statistics, YouTube ranks fourth after Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, as of July 2022 (Statcounter, 2022). As in its slogan, “Broadcast yourself,” YouTube’s purpose is to give people opportunities to create and share videos (Bouillot, 2017). Engagement is an essential part of YouTube. Users like, comment and learn from each other’s videos, creating online communities (Bernhardt, 2016). People who visit YouTube frequently, especially those who produce and appear in videos, are known as YouTubers (Cambridge Dictionary, 2018). Since the “natural” ecosystem of adolescents and young adults of today who grew up in a social media environment (Aran-Ramspott, et al., 2018), it is inevitable that children and young adults who will step into adulthood in this environment will emulate popular YouTubers. It is expected that Generation Alpha (born between 2010–2024; Bologna, 2019) which adapts rapidly to technological developments, will emulate YouTubers. The examination of Internet habits of girls and boys between the ages of 3–4 and 5–7 in Generation Alpha reveals that they become familiarized with technology starting at a very young age. Smartphones and tablets are the tools that allow children to enter online environments, with most of their time watching videos or playing online games. It has been estimated that 51 percent of children aged 3–4 spend eight hours a week on YouTube, with 64 percent spending almost nine hours a week on YouTube (Ofcom, 2019). Kids will devote most of their time to YouTube videos rather than playing traditional games.

In YouTube game videos, children and sometimes adults play games with toys or introduce toys in front of a camera. These videos are watched with interest by thousands and perhaps millions of children. In this context, this study has been based on the assumption that playing games, which is a most effective learning environment for a child’s mental and physical development, has turned into a forged phenomenon surrounded by technology. Traditional game culture is an activity that children and their families introduce to a target audience with innovations provided by new media. Displaying traditional games in this fashion will lead children to study the screen with interest, acquiring behaviors through imitation. Thus, a given game will turn into an empty, imitative action that has lost its main function and benefit for a child. The purpose of this study is to uncover the negative effects of game videos on the play behaviors of children.
The effect of YouTube on traditional game culture of children aged 3–6 years old, as well as draw attention to changes in the nature of certain games.

Material and method

In this study, a semi-structured in-depth interview technique was used. These interviews allowed a detailed examination of the research topic with open-ended questions and interactivity (Kümbetoğlu, 2005). In this study, interviews took place with 16 participants, in order to examine the play behaviors of 20 children aged 3–6 years old who live in Erzurum in Turkey and watch game videos on YouTube. The sample was secured using snowball sampling. The findings were analyzed by qualitative data analysis within a framework of predetermined parameters.

Findings

In the analysis, the abbreviation “M” was used to express participating mothers. The answers given by the mothers to the questions have been indicated with M1, M2, M3, M4 ... and M20, without revealing specific names.

Information about the sample

There are two groups in this study. The first group includes girls and boys, aged 3–6 years old, whose play behaviors were examined. The second group represents the mothers of the participating children. Participating mothers were considered observers in the study, and their observations of their children’s play behaviors were analyzed.

A total of 20 children, 11 girls and 9 boys, were included in this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (years)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The age range of the group generated by snowball sampling was not predetermined. Thus, when the gender distribution of the sample according to age is examined, most children in the sample were aged five years old, followed by three years old, six years old and four years old.

Time that the children spent on game videos

The participants were asked, “How many minutes/hours a day does your child watch the aforementioned
videos on average?” The answers received are presented in Table 2. Eight out of 20 children spend one hour, five children spend two hours, another five spend 45 minutes or less and two children spend three hours or more watching game and toy videos on YouTube.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Number of viewers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45 minutes or less</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 hour</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 hours</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 hours or more</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2: Time that children spent daily on game and toy videos on YouTube.**

Effectiveness and activity of children watching YouTube game videos

Participating mothers were asked about their observations about the play behaviors of their children watching YouTube game videos.

Game-making skills of children watching game videos

The question “Can your child design a game by themselves?” was asked of participating mothers. The answers are presented in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assertiveness</th>
<th>Number of children</th>
<th>Help requests by children</th>
<th>Number of children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Able to design a game by themselves</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Needs help</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not able to design a game by themselves</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Does not need help</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3: Assertiveness and help requests of children watching YouTube game videos.**

While 15 out of 20 children who watched videos could design a game by themselves, five could not.

The majority of YouTube game videos feature content in which children play games with their families. Children often spend time with their families instead of their friends. Families guide their children, respond
to requests, acquire toys and create surprises. Thus, families make decisions instead of children and can interfere with their games. It was predicted that the aforementioned videos, dominated by families, would affect the playing process of children watching the content. Therefore, there was an effort to see whether there were similarities between play behaviors of children watching game videos and the play behaviors in these videos. Participating mothers were asked “Does your child need help when playing?” The main purpose of this question was to find out whether children watching game videos asked their mothers for help while they were setting up, continuing into the game itself or during the game.

Fifteen out of 20 children watching YouTube game videos needed help with specific games, while five did not ask for help from their mothers. In order to get detailed information from the participating mothers, the mothers were asked for more specific reasons why their children requested assistance. The following answers were received:

- **M3**: “During the game, he sometimes calls me, says let’s do it together, you will be this character” (boy, 5 years old).
- **M4**: “My daughter wants help, she wants to share everything with me. My son can usually find better games on his own, and my daughter also gets to participate in the games he finds” (girl, 5 years old; boy, 4 years old).
- **M6**: “Yes, she says let’s play together very often” (girl, 5 years old).
- **M8**: “They both want us to play together a lot” (girl, 3 years old; girl 6 years old).
- **M12**: “He wants to play games together a lot. Instead of playing games alone, he says, mom, let’s play games together, don’t do housework, come and play with me, actually, we spend all day discussing about this” (boy, 3 years old).
- **M14**: “He always wants me to set up the game, for me to start playing house, then leave. He even makes me line up his toys” (boy, 5 years old).
- **M20**: “Yes, she always insists, but when I don’t answer, she accepts it after a while” (girl, 5 years old).

Children often ask their mothers for help while setting up and maintaining a game.

**The child-power relationship in game leading and role distribution**

The main purpose of creating this category was to reveal which side was more dominant in the process when children watching videos played with their mothers. Two elements were sought. Children will either be the main characters who are organized, set the rules and distribute roles, like YouTubers who produce content on YouTube, or they will ask their mothers to lead a game and take on auxiliary roles. In this context, the participating mothers were asked, “Who does role distribution when your child plays with you?” and “Who takes on which role?”

| Table 4: Distribution of mother and child leading a game. |
|------------------|---------------|
| **Leading**      | **Number**    |
| Child            | 18            |
| Mother           | 2             |
| **Total**        | **20**        |
Children, it appeared, took on the role of a leader more often while playing. Mothers were asked to provide further details. They were asked, “Who takes on which role when playing games with you?” The answers received are categorized as main and auxiliary roles, provided in Table 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role distribution</th>
<th>Number of children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main roles</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auxiliary roles</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table 5, 14 out of 20 children preferred to be in stronger and dominant roles during games, while six elected auxiliary and weaker roles. The mothers were asked to provide more detailed information. The following answers were received:

- **M3**: “He gives me supporting roles, he doesn’t give me the lead role, for example he becomes a policeman, I am a thief, he catches me” (boy, 5 years old).
- **M6**: “She takes on the role of the mother or teacher, I take on the role of the baby or student, my daughter always takes on the role of the leader” (girl, 5 years old).
- **M8**: “They are usually the mother, I am the child, while playing the game, or they are the teacher, I am the student, usually they are the dominant person. If we are going to play doctor, they are the doctors, and I am the patient” (girl, 3 years old; girl, 6 years old).
- **M20**: “She designs the game and chooses herself as the main character, and gives me a role. She has trouble when she has a dominant character in front of her. She wants to do the role distribution herself. Sometimes she even wants to choose what the other party has to say. She is having trouble because of that, but I can’t stop her here” (girl, 5 years old).

As can be seen, it is generally the children who dominate and lead a given game. At the same time, some children have trouble playing games when they play with their friends and when there is someone more dominant than themselves. Just like YouTubers, children want to lead in their games and act according to a plot that they have planned.

Here are some of the comments of the mothers of children who preferred auxiliary roles:

- **M4**: “We usually play house, I take on the role of the cashier, mother, cleaning lady, I hang out the laundry, in other words, I do the things that the mother is supposed to do, they play their games as how they see us in daily life” (girl, 5 years old; boy, 4
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Elements of supernatural power observed in children’s games

In this category, it was assumed that the image and sound effects in YouTube game videos and the superheroes portrayed by YouTubers might affect the play behaviours of their audiences and lead them to act similarly. In this direction, it has been examined whether children who watched YouTube game videos used supernatural elements in the games that they played. The participant mothers were asked: “Does your child see themselves as a supernatural being and engage in any behaviour that shows supernatural elements while playing?”

Table 6: Supernatural elements observed in children’s games who had watched YouTube game videos.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use of supernatural power</th>
<th>Number of children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table was created according to information provided by mothers who examined the play behaviors of children who had watched YouTube game videos. Detailed information was obtained from the mothers of those 13 children who had used supernatural elements. The behaviors of the children were similar to behaviors observed in YouTube game videos. For example:

*M18:* “Yes, I came across it a few times. She was saying ‘I’m a cat girl’, she was making gestures. Or she was saying ‘I used magic on you and turned you into a witch’” (girl, 5 years old).

*M20:* “She often fantasizes that she is a fairy, but when the play is over she leaves this idea. She imagines that she’s a fairy and does things like magic with her magic wand. She was watching something called Maleficent, she was watching a mother-daughter video and I saw that she was impressed” (girl, 5 years old).

*M13:* “Yes, there is. She refers to herself as ice-less and says ‘I am fire’” (girl, 4 years old).

*M17:* “Recently, my son frequently says he is fire. He breathes fire, other than that, I don’t remember these behaviors in my other child, but my youngest son constantly says ‘I am fire’ and burns things, then he says ‘I became water and put it out’” (boy, 3 years old).

*M8:* “Actually, there was a cat girl or something in the PJ Masks cartoon, and I observed that my elder daughter was doing a thing or two by emulating them” (girl, 6 years old).
As can be seen, the characters in YouTube game videos were also seen in children’s games. PJ masks, cartoon characters, fairy, princess and magic were supernatural elements included in games in the videos.

The content of the video titled “Azra, who wears a Niloya costume, and the Incredible Selim eat Danone Hüpper Yogurt and turn into Elsa and Spiderman” from the channel named Toys and Fun is exactly the same as play behavior of a child observed by a participant mother. The mother noted:

M14: “Yes, I observe during games, for example, he says ‘Mom, I became an owl child’, he sets up the game that way, or once I bought the yogurt he insistently asked for from the store, I don’t know where he saw it from, he asked for it so I bought it. He came home that day, and during the game, he ate that yoghurt and said, ‘I became the spider man.’ He started to spin around. When I looked at the yoghurt pack, there was a picture of spider man, so I thought that’s why he said that” (boy, 5 years old).

Communication with imaginary audiences in games

YouTubers have millions of followers and whose videos are watched, loved and followed with interest by millions, especially by children. Will children act exactly like a YouTuber, interacting with an imaginary audience, introducing a given game? To give an example of the communication style that Youtubers use with audiences: “Hello friends, welcome to our channel, today we will play with you by opening the toys we just bought. Don’t forget to subscribe to my channel and hit the like button.” Will children communicate with an imaginary audience in a similar way?

Under the theme of communication with an imaginary audience during the games played, participant mothers were asked, “Does your child act as if there is an invisible camera and call out to an imaginary audience while playing games?” Their answers are given in Table 7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication with an imaginary audience</th>
<th>Number of children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participating mothers were asked to provide details on these sorts of communications created by children during games. Some mothers answered:

M3: “Yes. He says ‘Hello friends, welcome to my channel, I’m Fatih’, then wishes them a good day. He plays by saying ‘Friends, this is the living room, my brother is doing this, mom, you talk too, what are you doing now?’” (boy, 5 years old).
M8: “I have witnessed many times, even at the end of the game, she says ‘Please click here to subscribe to my channel’.
She says ‘Friends, this is how I do it, I prepared such a game in my room’, and she tells about it. At the end of the game, she says ‘Please click the text below to subscribe to my channel.’” (girl, 6 years old).

*M18:* “Yes, my son does that. He imitates YouTubers. He recorded it on my phone too, he says ‘Hello guys, now I’m going to teach you how to do a tumble’, he did it on the bed, I saw that he talks just like the guys on YouTube” (boy, 6 years old).

*M19:* “In particular, they have games as if they are shooting videos. She says ‘Hello friends’ and plays as if she is shooting a video. ‘Hello friends, today I will show this to you, my mother bought me this’, then she asks, ‘Do you do this in your home too?’ ‘What is your favorite toy?’ and such” (girl, 5 years old).

*M20:* “When she does an experiment in her game, like the ones YouTubers do, she acts like she is presenting it to someone, when she is playing with her doll, I sometimes see that she talks to an audience like saying, see friends, now we are doing this. But it doesn’t happen all the time” (girl, 5 years old).

The act of play is a natural process that happens spontaneously. During a game, children are separated from reality, concentrating only on a game. However, based on information provided by participating mothers regarding play behaviors, it is seen that a game has become a showy phenomenon shared with others.

**Children’s planned or improvised play preferences**

Are there similarities in gaming behaviors by children in imitation of YouTubers? Participating mothers were asked: “Does your child act as if there is an invisible camera and call out to an imaginary audience while playing games?” Results are presented in Table 8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Game process</th>
<th>Number of children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planned</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvised</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mothers were consulted in order to obtain detailed information about the play behaviors of their children. Children promoted their games as if they were creating YouTube game videos, informing their imaginary audiences within a framework that they had designed earlier. For instance:

*M18:* “She says ‘Yes, hello friends, I will play this today, it starts in this way, don’t forget to like my video when you finish the game, subscribe to my channel.’” (girl, 5 years old).

*M8:* “Yes, they do that. They explain things saying ‘Now I will do this, now I will do that’.” (girl, 3 years old; girl, 6 years old).
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M14: “He says ‘Yes, hello friends, today I will talk about this, we will play that’ and at the end he says ‘Subscribe, keep watching me’.” (boy, 5 years old).

Some participating mothers stated that when their children played alone, they explained a given game aloud; if they played by themselves or with their friends, they set rules regarding the game beforehand and reminded participants that the rules should not be violated. For example:

M7: “Yes. He makes plenty of warnings. He has rules, when it does not go the way he planned, he gets angry. Sometimes, he follows the stereotypes. He doesn’t want his friends to go out of these stereotypes either.” (boy, 5 years old).

M13: “Yes first she says who is who and informs me beforehand” (girl, 4 years old).

**Game material preferences of children under the influence of game videos**

Toys used in YouTube game videos are many and varied, with some names and images of certain types of toys constantly highlighted in videos. At the same time, there is frequent gender discrimination in the videos with a distinction made between toys for girls and boys’ toys. In this context, considering that YouTube game videos may affect children’s game material preferences, mothers of children who watched YouTube game videos were asked, “Is there a toy that your child had seen in game videos and wanted you to buy it?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 9: Effect of YouTube game videos on toy preferences.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influenced toy choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not influence toy choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In our small sample, 17 of 20 children were influenced by toys in videos. Some participating mothers remarked:

M3: “Sure, he says, could you buy me that car set? There is this set I want. If it’s something he will play with, we buy it, but if he has something similar, I don’t buy it” (boy, 5 years old).

M8: “Yes, they want LOL dolls, Cicciobello, and expensive toys” (girl, 3 years old; girl, 6 years old).

M12: “Yes, he even asks for irrelevant stuff he sees on ads. He asked for toys Fatih Selim plays with, then he asked for a big surprise egg, he said ‘He went to Migros with his mother and got it, you should buy it for me too’” (boy, 3 years old).

M13: “She asks for almost all the toys she sees on these children’s channels. She saw the LOL dolls from her friend, she asked for them too, now she has 11. She is obsessed, when we buy a doll, we buy the rest of the set as well” (girl, 4 years old).
M17: “Yes, he asks for all the toys he sees, he says ‘Let’s buy this’ but since he is so young, he doesn’t remember later, so I say okay, if I say no, he asks for it insistently” (boy, 3 years old).

M18: “All the time, in any case, she chooses all the toys she asks for from the videos, she says ‘Mom, I saw this on the video, will you buy it for me?’ and such” (girl, 5 years old).

These remarks indicate that YouTube game videos affect toy preferences. Participating mothers expressed that their children wanted every toy featured or emphasized in videos.

Conclusion

In this study, we examined the effects of YouTube game videos on a small sample of children, examining how these videos altered traditional game and other behaviors. Interviews with mothers of the small sample of children provided insights into the effects of YouTube videos over time.

Videos in this study lasted between two and 20 minutes. Fifteen of 20 children in the sample spent one hour or more with game videos, watching at least 10 videos during this period. Mothers were asked if they imposed a time limit on their children. Some mothers remarked that their children became irritable if video watching was terminated. One of the participating mothers noted: “There are videos made for children. They promote toys and children watch such videos. They watch these videos, when I ask for the phone back after half an hour, all hell breaks loose and the house turns into a battlefield.”

Parents generally guide their children; the attitudes of families in the videos towards their children was not always the same as the attitudes of families towards children whose play behaviors had been examined. However, it had been noted that children watching game videos were very dominant and strict in their games. Acting as a video content producers while playing games with their mothers or peers, they distributed roles themselves and tried to dominate the games. This situation led some children to disrupt games, not communicating with their friends in the course of playing with their peers. Fourteen children preferred main roles, while six elected auxiliary roles. As a result, girls and boys three to six years old had a more oppressive and prescriptive attitude in games that they played under the influence of YouTube game videos.

However, play contributes to cognitive development, problem solving and creative thinking, leads to innovation and improves problem solving and adaptation skills (Stagnitti, 2004). Therefore, in order for games to have these benefits, the games must be designed in accordance with their own creativity and interests. If it is designed externally, the game will remain solely as a leisure activity. By acting as leaders in games, children were not dedicating themselves solely to a given game but acting in imitation of YouTubers. In other words, they moved away from traditional game culture.

Fifteen of 20 children frequently asked their mothers for help. In video content, some children were open to being manipulated by remaining more passive. Accordingly, children, under the influence of the videos, requested help in making decisions, setting up and continuing a given game. In this respect, YouTube game videos led three- to six-year-old girls and boys to be dependent on their families during games, not acting alone at the point of setting up and continuing a game.

Thirteen of 20 children watching YouTube game videos engaged in behaviors that included supernatural elements. These elements altered play behaviors. Some children might continue to believe that they have supernatural powers in other activities and even as they mature.
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Thirteen of 20 children communicated with an imaginary audience during games. Nine of these 13 children filmed themselves during a game. Children introduced their games in detail by talking to an audience as if there is a camera recording them. This acting caused the natural process of a game to be disrupted. Parents might consider some ways to disrupt this introductory processing so children would immediately play rather than act in imitation of YouTube scenes.

Thirteen children played in a planned manner while seven improvised. Children set rules at the start of a game and then played. At the same time, children communicated with imaginary audiences, talking about a given game as it progressed. Playing games, often spontaneous and natural, became structured in imitation of YouTube videos.

YouTube videos certainly influenced game selection and preferences, for 17 of 20 children. Toys in the videos may not be the most beneficial objects for certain children. Children acquire the tools of their culture and the meanings of these tools during play, as toys are important elements of social and cultural environments (Verenikina, et al., 2003). Children, through their toys, learn about their culture. At the same time, children add new meanings to their toys with their own creativity, developing abstract thinking. For some children, toys in YouTube game videos were presented in such a way to diminish creativity, to give a given toy a new meaning.

Traditional games lose some of their cognitive and emotional effects become under the influence of YouTube game videos. New media technologies are perhaps changing the phenomena of childhood and act of playing games. Given the uses of new technologies by children, there should be some consideration of the effects of even simple activities like game playing on YouTube have on both young people, parents, and friends. There is certainly a need to expand this preliminary work to larger samples in different cultures to test the findings of this research on a larger scale.

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Acknowledgements

This paper was produced from the Master’s thesis entitled “The effects of YouTube game videos on the play behaviors of boys and girls between the ages of 3–6 (Erzurum Province sample)”.

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Editorial history

Received 2 February 2022; revised 18 April 2022; accepted 21 June 2022.

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The effect of YouTube on traditional game culture of children
by Nihan Çelik and Adem Yilmaz.
First Monday, volume 27, number 9 (September 2022).
doi: https://dx.doi.org/10.5210/fm.v27i9.12396