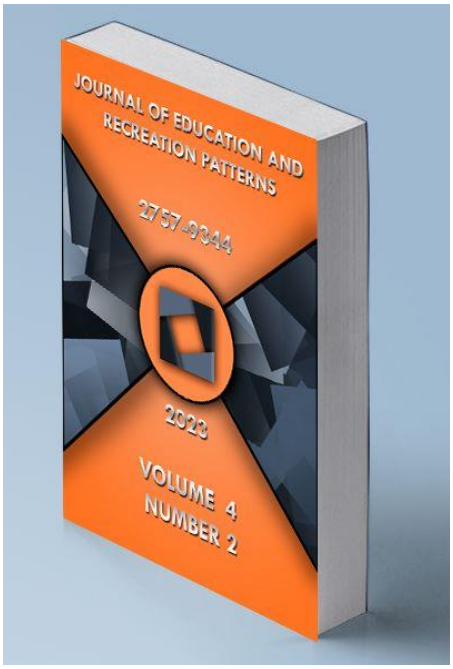

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Examination of Mental Training and Digital Game Playing Habits of Athletes

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ABSTRACT
This research was conducted to examine the mental training and digital game playing behaviors of athletes in terms of various demographic variables. 280 volunteer athletes (174 men and 106 women) from Diyarbakır (140) and Elazığ (140) engaged in individual and team sports branches as members of the research group. The study used the "Personal Information Form" as a data collection instrument, the "Mental Training Inventory in Sports (MTIS)" to assess athletes' mental training levels, and the "Digital Gaming Attitude Scale (DGAS)" to assess their attitudes toward playing digital games. There was a significant difference between the type of sport performed, the status of playing digital games, the digitally playing the sport branch, the income status, the year of doing sports, the sportive degree, the weekly training time and the weekly digital game playing (p0.05). Male athletes outperformed female athletes on the Mental Training Inventory, whereas amateur athletes outperformed professional athletes. Female athletes outnumber male athletes in the research group; team sports athletes outnumber individual athletes; professional athletes outnumber amateur level athletes; athletes who play digital games outnumber those who do not; athletes with a high-income level do not play digital games; and athletes with a sports background of 12 years or more do not play digital games. The total scale score average appeared to be larger. As a consequence, it was discovered that there is a positive and highly significant association between athletes' mental training and digital game playing attitudes.

Keywords: Digital Gaming Habits, Individual Sports, Mental Training, Team Sports

INTRODUCTION

Sport is expressed as an expression that allows individuals to maintain their physical health, promotes social growth, and influences people's mental development. While persons who participate in sports to improve their athletic performance are physiologically influenced, they should also be psychologically prepared for competitions and training (Karaca & Gündüz, 2021). Various coaches and specialists in the field have stated that an athlete's psychological preparation accounts for 50% of winning versus an opponent with the same physical characteristics (Weinberg & Gould, 2015). As a result of this knowledge, the individual's mental and psychological condition in the sporting environment influences his athletic performance. Performance is defined by athletes' "physiological, biomechanical, and psychological" indicators during exercise or training (Altıntaş & Akalan, 2008). All of these aspects have increased the importance of trainings to be used in the development of their motor characteristics and mental studies, which have a favorable impact on their psychological performance as coaches and players.

Mental training applications, in addition to trainings used to build motor abilities, can help athletes improve their athletic performance. In addition to all of these elements, it is necessary to guarantee that the athletes' psychological issues are managed without impairing their performance (Erdogan & Gülşen, 2020). Mental training is a technique that is based on the idea that psychological factors promote physical performance. Athletes' high degree of physiological and psychological effects in contests and training will also have a negative impact on their athletic performance (Hill et al., 2010; Mesagno et al., 2012). Mental training is used to improve athletic performance, provide stronger mental skills by suppressing worry and fear (Anderson & Anshel, 2002; Lane et al., 2011). Athletes use talking to themselves, mental rejuvenation, and other strategies to lessen bad situations, enhance focus, and strengthen relaxation routines as mental training components (Karaca & Gündüz, 2021). According to researchers, mental training is the process of mentally animating athletes' movements with intense attention without a genuine application, recovering information stored with earlier studies, and establishing meaningful integrity with this information. They stated that mental training is a mentally animated simulation in this regard (Öner & Cankurtaran, 2020; Moran, 2002). In this regard, technological innovations, particularly simulations and digital games for the athletic industry, are critical in the performance of mental training athletes.

When technology was not as evolved as it is now; people used to play games in parks, streets, and coffee shops. They now play video games at home, work, even in coffee shops. They began to play virtual games in numerous facets of their lives. Rather than playing on local playgrounds, cultures nowadays choose to play games with digital gadgets in a virtual world and in front of a screen (Kaya, 2013). Today, this condition is increasing public interest in digital gaming. Because "digital and traditional game" are structurally and conceptually similar, the notions of traditional and digital game should be clearly articulated while examining the concept of digital game. The location of the games, game genres, gadgets, and number of players are the most crucial features that distinguish traditional and digital game concepts. A digital game is defined as a system with rules and purposes that is played by interacting with computer programs using devices such as a "mouse, screen, joystick, and keyboard" (Hazar, 2016). According to studies, digital games have both detrimental and good effects on users. They reported that children in the developmental period are more quickly affected in terms of "cognitive, affective, social, and psychomotor" development during these periods, as well as having a direct effect on children's developing areas (Şahin & Tugrul, 2012). According to this understanding, athletes' choice of digital games for the sports in which they actively participate can increase their performance.

It is apparent that athletes' mental training and digital game playing habits are crucial to achieving competitive success in this regard. This research was conducted to examine the mental training and digital game playing behaviors of athletes in terms of various demographic variables.

METHOD

Research Design

The purpose of this study was: gender, province variance, sports, type variance, sportive degree, digital gaming status, status of playing the sports, branch of the athletes in digital, age, income, doing sports year, training duration, Since it was desired to determine whether digital gaming duration differs according to variables, a descriptive survey model, one of the quantitative research designs, was used in the research.

Population and Sample of the Research

The research group consisted of 280 (174 men, 106 women) volunteer athletes who are actively participating in individual and team sports in Diyarbakır (140) and Elazığ (140). The research data collection instrument is divided into two sections: a "Personal Information Form" in the first section and scales to determine "Attitudes towards Mental Training and Playing Digital Games" in the second section. The Bitlis Eren University Non-Interventional Ethics Committee (21/14-12-13-14) approved the ethics committee.

Data Collection Tools

Mental Training Inventory in Sports (MTIS): Questionnaire form grading, score limits; Grading: Totally Disagree: 1.00–1.79; Disagree: 1.80–2.59; Undecided: 2.60–3.39; Agree: 3.40–4.19; Totally Agree: 4.20–5.00**,** Score limits: 0–29 Very inadequate; 30–49 Inadequate**;** 50–69 Medium**;** 70–89-Good**;** It was rated as “90–100 Very Good”.

The validity and reliability study of the Mental Training Inventory in Sports was carried out by the researchers, and the KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy) value was determined as .899, Bartlett Test 3247.940 and (Cronbach Alpha) α= 0.91 (Yarayan & İlhan, 2018).

Digital Gaming Attitude Scale (DGAS): Questionnaire form grading, score limits; Grading: Strongly Disagree: 1.00–1.79; Disagree: 1.80–2.59; Undecided: 2.60–3.39; Agree: 3.40–4.19; Strongly Agree: 4.20–5.00, Score limits: 0–29 Very inadequate; 30–49 Inadequate; 50–69 Medium; 70–89-Good; It was rated as “90–100 Very Good”.

The researchers conducted a validity and reliability assessment of the Digital Gaming Attitude Scale, and the KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy) value was determined to be ,894, Bartlett Test 2101.908, and (Cronbach Alpha) α= 0.82 (Demir & Bozkurt, 2019).

Analysis of the Data

The data was analyzed using the SPSS statistical software. Athletes' demographic information, mental training level, and attitudes toward playing digital games were all described using descriptive statistics. The independent t and one-way ANOVA tests were performed to compare groups after confirming that the data had a normal distribution. Correlation analysis was used to identify the direction of the link between the variables, and regression analysis was used to determine the influence of mental training on digital game playing attitude. The significance level was set at $p < 0.05$.

Table 1. Skewness and Kurtosis Values for the Scales

Scales	Mean±sd	Skewness	Kurtosis
Mental Basic Skills	15,54±3,81	-,557	-,751
Mental Performance Skills	23,34±5,19	-,317	-,846
Interpersonal Skills	16,69±3,23	-,227	-,1500
Monologue (Internal)	11,17±2,77	,237	-,1548
Mental Impersonation	11,60±2,98	-,415	-,851
Mental Training Total	78,23±15,93	-,186	-,821
Cognitive	17,44±4,42	,098	-1,044
Affective	16,69±4,66	,287	-,964
Behavioral	26,62±8,73	-,263	-,475
Digital Gaming Total	60,59±14,51	,103	-,532

It was determined that the skewness and kurtosis values of both scales were in the range of -2>….<+2, and it was concluded that the data was suitable for normal distribution (George & Mallery, 2010).

FINDINGS

The data collected on the questions to be addressed in accordance with the overall goal of the research, the findings gained, and the conclusions drawn based on these findings are reported in this section.

Table 2. Demographic Information of Athletes

Variables		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	174	62,1
	Female	106	37,9
Age	18-21 years	166	59,3
	22-27 years	67	23,9
	28 years and over	47	16,8
Perceived Economical Status	Low	65	23,2
	Average	133	47,5
	Good	82	29,3
Sport Type	Team Sports	119	42,5
	Individual Sports	161	57,5
Doing Sports Year	1-5 years	53	18,9
	6-11 years	168	60
	12 years and over	59	21,1
Sportive Grade	Professional	94	33,6
	Amateur	186	66,4
Weekly Training Hour	1-5 hours	63	22,5
	6-11 hours	55	19,6
	12-17 hours	129	46,1
	18 hours and over	33	11,8
Do you play digital game?	Yes	165	58,9
	No	115	41,1
Weekly Digital Gaming Period	1-4 hours	163	58,2
	5-9 hours	68	24,3
	10 hours and over	49	17,5
Do you play the sports branch you have done in the digital environment?	Yes	161	57,5
	No	119	42,5

When Table 2 is reviewed, it is seen that 62.1% of the athletes are male, 37.9% are female, 59.3% are 18-21 years old, 23.9% are 22-27 years old, 16.8% are They were 28 years old and over, 47.5% had a medium income, 29.3% had a good income level, 23.2% had a low income level, 57.5% were involved in individual team sports, and 66%, It was observed that 4 of them continued their sportive branch at the amateur level. 60% of the athletes do sports for 6-11 years, 18.9% for 1-5 years, 21.1% for 12 years or more, 46.1% for 12-17 hours, 22.5% It was determined that 1-5 hours of trainees, 19.6% of them did 6-11 hours of training, and 11.8% of them trained for 18 hours or more weekly. 58.9% of the research group played digital games, 58.2% played 1-4 hours, 24.3% played 5-9 hours, 17.5% played 10 hours or more weekly, and It has been observed that 57.5% of them play their sports branch in digital environment.

Table 3. t Test Analyses Based on Athletes' Gender Variance

	Gender	$\overline{X}$	**Sd.**	**t**	**p**
Mental Basic Skills	Male	15,35	3,90	-,117	0,90
	Female	15,40	3,68		
Mental Performance Skills	Male	23,12	5,28	-,127	0,89
	Female	23,20	5,05		
Interpersonal Skills	Male	16,69	3,23	,773	0,44
	Female	16,38	3,23		
Monologue (Internal)	Male	11,18	2,81	-,135	0,89
	Female	11,23	2,73		
Mental Impersonation	Male	11,47	3,02	-,155	0,87
	Female	11,52	2,92		
Mental Training Total	Male	77,83	16,24	,035	0,97
	Female	77,76	15,47		
Cognitive	Male	17,17	4,42	-1,582	0,11
	Female	18,03	4,39		
Affective	Male	16,81	4,81	,162	0,87
	Female	16,71	4,43		
Behavioural	Male	26,54	8,76	,440	0,66
	Female	26,06	8,70		
Digital Gaming total	Male	60,52	14,23	-,163	0,87
	Female	60,82	15,02		

When Table 3 was assessed, it was determined that there was no statistical difference between the gender variable and Mental Training Scale Total, Digital Game Playing Attitude Scale Total, scale sub-dimension mean scores ($p>0.05$).

Table 4. t Test Analyses Based on Athletes' Province Variance

	Province	$\overline{X}$	**Sd.**	**t**	**p**
Mental Basic Skills	Diyarbakır	15,43	3,78	,282	0,77
	Elazığ	15,30	3,84		
Mental Performance Skills	Diyarbakır	23,16	5,16	,023	0,98
	Elazığ	23,15	5,23		
Interpersonal Skills	Diyarbakır	16,63	3,21	,295	0,76
	Elazığ	16,52	3,26		
Monologue (Internal)	Diyarbakır	11,25	2,78	,301	0,76
	Elazığ	11,15	2,78		

Mental Impersonation	Diyarbakır	11,55	2,98	,320	0,74
	Elazığ	11,43	2,98		
Mental Training Total	Diyarbakır	78,04	15,86	,247	0,80
	Elazığ	77,57	16,04		
Cognitive	Diyarbakır	17,63	4,41	,499	0,61
	Elazığ	17,37	4,44		
Affective	Diyarbakır	16,73	4,67	-,141	0,88
	Elazığ	16,81	4,67		
Behavioural	Diyarbakır	26,26	8,82	-,184	0,85
	Elazığ	26,45	8,66		
Digital Gaming total	Diyarbakır	60,63	14,50	-,004	0,99
	Elazığ	60,64	14,57		

When Table 4 was examined, it was determined that there was no statistical difference between the province variable and Mental Training Scale Total, Digital Game Playing Attitude Scale Total, scale sub-dimension mean scores ($p>0.05$).

Table 5. t Test Analyses Based on Athletes' Sports Type Variance

	Sports Type	$\overline{X}$	**Sd.**	**t**	**p**
Mental Basic Skills	Individual Sports	13,20	3,69	-9,376	0,00*
	Team Sports	16,97	3,03		
Mental Performance Skills	Individual Sports	21,11	5,18	-5,995	0,00*
	Team Sports	24,66	4,66		
Interpersonal Skills	Individual Sports	14,89	3,13	-8,330	0,00*
	Team Sports	17,81	2,71		
Monologue (Internal)	Individual Sports	10,40	2,48	-4,289	0,00*
	Team Sports	11,80	2,84		
Mental Impersonification	Individual Sports	9,88	2,94	-8,754	0,00*
	Team Sports	12,68	2,40		
Mental Training Total	Individual Sports	69,50	15,28	-8,375	0,00*
	Team Sports	83,94	13,45		
Cognitive	Individual Sports	15,88	4,15	-5,548	0,00*
	Team Sports	18,70	4,23		
Affective	Individual Sports	15,76	4,32	-3,164	0,00*
	Team Sports	17,52	4,78		
Behavioural	Individual Sports	25,72	8,29	-1,051	0,29
	Team Sports	26,83	9,03		
Digital Gaming Total	Individual Sports	57,36	15,23	-3,297	0,00*
	Team Sports	63,05	13,50		

p<0,05

According to Table 5, it was specified that there was a significant difference between the sport type variable of the participants and the mean scores of the Mental Training Scale Total and scale sub-dimensions ($p<0.05$). While it was determined that there was a statistical difference between the sport type variable of the research group and the total score of the Digital Game Attitude Scale, the cognitive and affective mean scores of the scale sub-dimensions ($p<0.05$), there was no statistically significant difference between the behavioral sub-dimension mean scores ($p>0.05$). It was determined that the average score of the athletes participating in team sports was higher on the mental training and digital game playing scale than individual athletes.

Table 6. t Test Analyses Based on Athletes' Sportive Degree

	Sportive Degree	$\overline{X}$	Sd.	t	p
Mental Basic Skills	Professional	15,23	3,95	-,428	0,66
	Amateur	15,44	3,74		
Mental Performance Skills	Professional	20,91	5,52	-5,390	0,00*
	Amateur	24,29	4,63		
Interpersonal Skills	Professional	15,60	3,53	-3,652	0,00*
	Amateur	17,06	2,96		
Monologue (Internal)	Professional	11,60	2,84	-1,715	0,08
	Amateur	11,00	2,73		
Mental Impersonification	Professional	10,85	3,47	-2,585	0,01*
	Amateur	11,81	2,65		
Mental Training Total	Professional	74,21	18,30	-2,714	0,00*
	Amateur	79,62	14,29		
Cognitive	Professional	19,31	5,00	-5,098	0,00*
	Amateur	16,58	3,79		
Affective	Professional	17,15	4,94	,980	0,32
	Amateur	16,58	4,52		
Behavioral	Professional	24,56	11,73	-2,470	0,01*
	Amateur	27,26	6,58		
Digital Gaming Total	Professional	61,04	19,43	,330	0,74
	Amateur	60,43	11,29		

p<0,05

When Table 6 is examined, a statistical difference was determined between the sportive degree of the research group and the Mental Training Scale Total, sub-dimensions, mental performance skills and interpersonal skills mean scores ($p<0.05$), while there was a statistical difference between the mental basic skills and the self-talk sub-dimension mean score It was determined that there was no difference in terms of ($p>0.05$). It was determined that there was a significant difference between the sportive degree of the research group and the cognitive and behavioral mean scores of the scale sub-dimensions ($p<0.05$), there was no significant difference between the Digital Game Playing Attitude Scale total and the scale sub-dimension's affective mean scores ($p>0.05$). It has been observed that amateur athletes have higher mental training scale score averages than professional athletes, and at the digital game playing level, professional athletes have higher score averages than amateur athletes.

Table 7. t Test Analyses Based on Athletes' Digital Gaming Status

	Digital Gaming Status	$\overline{X}$	Sd.	t	p
Mental Basic Skills	Yes	16,78	3,19	8,304	0,00*
	No	13,33	3,72		
Mental Performance Skills	Yes	24,96	4,97	7,693	0,00*
	No	20,55	4,33		
Interpersonal Skills	Yes	17,41	2,93	5,418	0,00*
	No	15,38	3,28		
Monologue (İnternal)	Yes	12,03	2,87	6,342	0,00*
	No	10,02	2,14		
Mental Impersonification	Yes	12,51	2,50	7,520	0,00*
	No	10,02	3,01		
Mental Training Total	Yes	83,71	14,47		

	No	69,33	14,03	8,285	0,00*
Cognitive	Yes	18,04	4,73		
	No	16,72	3,82	2,493	0,01*
Affective	Yes	18,36	4,80		
	No	14,49	3,33	7,461	0,00*
Behavioral	Yes	29,31	8,32		
	No	22,12	7,49	7,407	0,00*
Digital Gaming Total	Yes	65,72	14,37		
	No	53,33	11,27	7,731	0,00*

p<0,05

When Table 7 is examined, it is seen that there is a statistical difference between the digital game playing status and Mental Training Scale Total, Digital Game Playing Attitude Scale total and all sub-dimensions mean scores (p<0.05). It was determined that the average mental training and digital game playing scores of the athletes who played digital games in the research group were higher.

Table 8. t-Test Analyzes According to the Status of Playing the Sports Branch of the Athletes in Digital

	Status of Playing the Sports Branch of the Athletes in Digital	$\overline{X}$	**Sd.**	**t**	**p**
Mental Basic Skills	Yes	16,39	3,38		
	No	13,99	3,93	5,470	0,00*
Mental Performance Skills	Yes	24,31	5,17		
	No	21,58	4,81	4,495	0,00*
Interpersonal Skills	Yes	16,96	2,93		
	No	16,05	3,54	2,367	0,01*
Monologue (Internal)	Yes	11,61	2,69		
	No	10,65	2,80	2,894	0,00*
Mental Impersonification	Yes	12,22	2,47		
	No	10,50	3,32	4,965	0,00*
Mental Training Total	Yes	81,51	14,50		
	No	72,78	16,45	4,699	0,00*
Cognitive	Yes	19,21	3,88		
	No	15,19	4,05	8,401	0,00*
Affective	Yes	17,23	4,55		
	No	16,15	4,75	1,932	0,05
Behavioral	Yes	28,29	6,64		
	No	23,74	10,41	4,447	0,00*
Digital Gaming Total	Yes	64,73	13,77		
	No	55,09	13,67	5,812	0,00*

p<0,05

When Table 8 was evaluated, it was determined that there was a statistically significant difference between the status of playing the sport branch of the research group in digital and the Mental Training Scale Total and all sub-dimension score averages (p<0.05). While it was seen that there was a statistical difference between the status of playing the sport branch of the research group in digital and the Digital Game Playing Attitude Scale Total, cognitive and behavioral score averages from the scale sub-dimensions (p<0.05), there was no statistical

difference between the affective sub-dimension mean scores. (p>0.05). It was observed that the mental training and digital game playing scores of the athletes who played their sports branch digitally were higher.

Table 9. Variance Analyses Based on Athletes' Age Variance

	Age	$\overline{X}$	Sd.	F	p	Significant Difference
Mental Basic Skills	18-21 years (1)	15,59	3,58	,754	0,47	-
	22-27 years (2)	15,13	4,21			
	28 years and over (3)	14,91	4,02			
Mental Performance Skills	18-21 years (1)	23,26	4,91	,540	0,58	-
	22-27 years (2)	23,38	5,53			
	28 years and over (3)	22,44	5,68			
Interpersonal Skills	18-21 years (1)	16,72	3,19	,407	0,66	-
	22-27 years (2)	16,38	3,33			
	28 years and over (3)	16,34	3,27			
Monologue (Internal)	18-21 years (1)	11,14	2,78	,781	0,45	-
	22-27 years (2)	11,55	2,78			
	28 years and over (3)	10,93	2,76			
Mental Impersonification	18-21 years (1)	11,62	2,91	,701	0,49	-
	22-27 years (2)	11,47	3,13			
	28 years and over (3)	11,04	3,04			
Mental Training Total	18-21 years (1)	78,35	15,30	,517	0,59	-
	22-27 years (2)	77,94	16,94			
	28 years and over (3)	75,68	16,76			
Cognitive	18-21 years (1)	17,82	4,42	1,121	0,32	-
	22-27 years (2)	17,13	4,52			
	28 years and over (3)	16,89	4,25			
Affective	18-21 years (1)	16,53	4,67	1,321	0,26	-
	22-27 years (2)	17,58	4,63			
	28 years and over (3)	16,48	4,64			
Behavioral	18-21 years (1)	25,83	8,98	,754	0,47	-
	22-27 years (2)	27,26	8,92			
	28 years and over (3)	26,91	7,49			
Digital Gaming Total	18-21 years (1)	60,19	15,02	,378	0,68	-
	22-27 years (2)	61,98	14,03			
	28 years and over (3)	60,63	13,50			

When Table 9 is examined, it is seen that there is no statistical difference between the age variable and Mental Training Scale Total, Digital Game Playing Attitude Scale Total, sub-dimension means scores (p>0.05).

Table 10. Variance Analyses Based on Athletes' Income

	Income	$\overline{X}$	Sd	F	p	Significant Difference
Mental Basic Skills	Low (1)	15,63	3,57	,586	0,55	-
	Average (2)	15,47	3,52			
	Good (3)	15,00	4,41			
Mental Performance Skills	Low (1)	23,12	5,14	3,378	0,03*	3>2
	Average (2)	22,45	5,06			
	Good (3)	24,32	5,28			
Interpersonal Skills	Low (1)	17,06	3,26	4,374	0,01*	1>2,3
	Average (2)	16,87	3,37			
	Good (3)	15,70	2,83			
Monologue (Internal)	Low (1)	10,92	2,97	1,059	0,34	-
	Average (2)	11,12	2,97			
	Good (3)	11,56	2,24			
Mental Impersonification	Low (1)	11,61	3,00	1,110	0,33	-
	Average (2)	11,22	3,18			
	Good (3)	11,82	2,60			
Mental Training Total	Low (1)	78,35	16,09	,210	0,81	-
	Average (2)	77,15	16,13			
	Good (3)	78,42	15,61			
Cognitive	Low (1)	17,56	4,64	5,457	0,00*	3>2
	Average (2)	16,71	4,56			
	Good (3)	18,73	3,71			
Affective	Low (1)	15,75	4,67	21,254	0,00*	3>1,2
	Average (2)	15,64	4,58			
	Good (3)	19,41	3,68			
Behavioral	Low (1)	24,2	8,73	19,267	0,00*	3>1,2
	Average (2)	24,24	8,86			
	Good (3)	31,08	6,50			
Digital Gaming Total	Low (1)	58,04	15,29	23,905	0,00*	3>1,2
	Average (2)	56,60	13,21			
	Good (3)	60,63	12,22			

***p<0.05**

When Table 10 is evaluated, a statistical difference was determined between the income level of the athletes and the mean scores of mental performance skills and interpersonal skills from the sub-dimensions of the scale ($p<0.05$), while the mean scores of Mental Training Scale Total, mental basic skills, speaking with oneself and mental animation from the scale sub-dimensions It was determined that there was no statistical difference between them ($p>0.05$). It was observed that there was a statistical difference between the income level of the participants and the mean scores of the total and all scale sub-dimensions of the Digital Game Playing Attitude Scale ($p<0.05$). It was determined that the highest score in the mental basic skills, cognitive, affective, behavioral and digital game playing scale total scores was in the group with a high-income level, and in the interpersonal skills sub-dimension, it was found in the group with a low-income level.

Table 11. Variance Analyses Based on Athletes' Doing Sports Year

	Doing Sports Year	$\overline{X}$	Sd	F	p	Significant Difference
Mental Basic Skills	1-5 years (1)	16,73	1,76	8,841	0,00*	1>2,3
	6-11 years (2)	14,61	3,90			
	12 years and over (3)	16,28	4,35			
Mental Performance Skills	1-5 years (1)	23,62	2,98	6,767	0,00*	3>2
	6-11 years (2)	22,32	5,33			
	12 years and over (3)	25,10	5,78			
Interpersonal Skills	1-5 years (1)	19,60	1,02	39,454	0,00*	1>2,3
	6-11 years (2)	15,59	3,11			
	12 years and over (3)	16,66	3,20			
Monologue (Internal)	1-5 years (1)	9,47	2,34	23,453	0,00*	3>1,2
	6-11 years (2)	11,19	2,71			
	12 years and over (3)	12,81	2,35			
Mental Impersonification	1-5 years (1)	12,03	1,99	4,749	0,00*	3>2
	6-11 years (2)	11,05	3,15			
	12 years and over (3)	12,25	3,02			
Mental Training Total	1-5 years (1)	81,47	8,87	8,095	0,00*	3>1,2
	6-11 years (2)	74,78	16,35			
	12 years and over (3)	83,11	17,68			
Cognitive	1-5 years (1)	18,28	1,62	11,059	0,00*	3>1,2
	6-11 years (2)	16,57	4,54			
	12 years and over (3)	19,45	5,03			
Affective	1-5 years (1)	12,43	2,20	69,389	0,00*	3>1,2
	6-11 years (2)	16,67	4,15			
	12 years and over (3)	20,94	3,98			
Behavioral	1-5 years (1)	20,96	2,82	43,254	0,00*	3>1,2
	6-11 years (2)	25,41	9,05			
	12 years and over (3)	33,91	6,02			
Digital Gaming Total	1-5 years (1)	51,67	3,46	51,620	0,00*	3>1,2
	6-11 years (2)	58,66	13,99			
	12 years and over (3)	74,32	12,77			

p<0,05

According to Table 11, it was determined that there was a statistically significant difference between the years of doing sports and Mental Training Scale Total, Digital Game Playing Attitude Scale Total, all sub-dimensions mean scores ($p<0.05$). The highest score in mental performance skills, self-talk (internal), mental visualization, mental training total, cognitive, affective, behavioral, digital game playing total was 1 in the group with 12 or more years of sports experience, and 1 in the sub-dimensions of mental basic skills and interpersonal skills. It was observed that he was in the group with -5 years of sports experience.

Table 12. Variance Analyses Based on Training Duration

	Training Duration	$\overline{X}$	sd	F	p	Significant Difference
Mental Basic Skills	1-5 hours (1)	13,53	3,71	9,353	0,00*	4>1,2,3
	6-11 hours (2)	15,30	4,22			
	12-17 hours (3)	15,75	3,50			
	18 hours and over (4)	17,45	3,01			
Mental Performance Skills	1-5 hours (1)	18,85	3,02	28,627	0,00*	3>1,2,4
	6-11 hours (2)	25,80	3,31			
	12-17 hours (3)	23,46	5,42			
	18 hours and over (4)	25,75	5,01			
Interpersonal Skills	1-5 hours (1)	16,61	3,70	9,247	0,00*	2>3,4
	6-11 hours (2)	17,92	2,87			
	12-17 hours (3)	15,65	3,00			
	18 hours and over (4)	17,87	2,50			
Monologue (Internal)	1-5 hours (1)	10,80	3,02	4,830	0,00*	4>1,2,3
	6-11 hours (2)	11,10	2,96			
	12-17 hours (3)	11,01	2,50			
	18 hours and over (4)	12,87	2,50			
Mental Impersonification	1-5 hours (1)	10,06	3,32	8,205	0,00*	4>1,2,3
	6-11 hours (2)	12,38	1,91			
	12-17 hours (3)	11,56	2,94			
	18 hours and over (4)	12,45	3,01			
Mental Training Total	1-5 hours (1)	69,88	14,10	11,129	0,00*	4>1,2,3
	6-11 hours (2)	82,52	13,12			
	12-17 hours (3)	77,45	16,12			
	18 hours and over (4)	86,42	16,06			
Cognitive	1-5 hours (1)	16,82	4,08	12,649	0,00*	2>1,3,4
	6-11 hours (2)	19,38	3,48			
	12-17 hours (3)	17,93	4,60			
	18 hours and over (4)	13,96	3,51			
Affective	1-5 hours (1)	15,00	2,72	13,489	0,00*	4>1,2,3
	6-11 hours (2)	17,49	3,06			
	12-17 hours (3)	16,31	5,24			
	18 hours and over (4)	20,75	5,01			
Behavioral	1-5 hours (1)	20,61	8,43	28,836	0,00*	4>1,2,3
	6-11 hours (2)	27,60	5,19			
	12-17 hours (3)	26,23	8,62			
	18 hours and over (4)	35,75	5,01			
Digital Gaming Total	1-5 hours (1)	52,44	7,80	15,002	0,00*	4>1,2,3
	6-11 hours (2)	64,47	10,19			
	12-17 hours (3)	60,48	17,62			
	18 hours and over (4)	70,48	6,52			

***p<0,05**

When Table 12 is examined, it has been determined that there is a significant difference between the study group's training duration variable and Mental Training Scale Total, Digital

Game Playing Attitude Scale Total, all sub-dimensions mean scores ($p<0.05$). The highest score in mental performance skills, self-talk (internal), mental visualization, mental training total, affective, behavioral, digital game playing total was 6-11 hours in the group that trained for 18 hours or more, and the highest score in interpersonal skills and cognitive sub-dimensions was 6-11 hours. In the group that trained, the highest score in the interpersonal skills sub-dimension was determined to be in the group that trained for 12-17 hours.

Table 13. Variance Analyses Based on Athletes' Digital Gaming Duration

	Digital Gaming Duration	$\overline{X}$	Sd	F	p	Significant Difference
Mental Basic Skills	1-4 hours (1)	14,48	3,77			
	5-9 hours (2)	17,10	2,04			
	10 hours and over (3)	15,91	4,83	12,948	0,00*	2>1,3
Mental Performance Skills	1-4 hours (1)	21,78	4,80			
	5-9 hours (2)	26,66	2,45			
	10 hours and over (3)	22,85	6,81	24,915	0,00*	2>1,3
Interpersonal Skills	1-4 hours (1)	16,53	3,55			
	5-9 hours (2)	17,00	2,25			
	10 hours and over (3)	16,12	3,27	1,075	0,34	-
Monologue (Internal)	1-4 hours (1)	10,73	2,78			
	5-9 hours (2)	11,51	2,69			
	10 hours and over (3)	12,34	2,52	7,186	0,00*	3>1
Mental Impersonification	1-4 hours (1)	10,85	3,13			
	5-9 hours (2)	12,98	1,31			
	10 hours and over (3)	11,53	3,41	13,260	0,00*	2>1,3
Mental Training Total	1-4 hours (1)	74,40	15,63			
	5-9 hours (2)	85,26	9,39			
	10 hours and over (3)	78,77	20,21	12,159	0,00*	2>1
Cognitive	1-4 hours (1)	15,93	3,79			
	5-9 hours (2)	18,35	4,20			
	10 hours and over (3)	21,53	3,81	40,858	0,00*	3>1,2
Affective	1-4 hours (1)	15,47	4,62			
	5-9 hours (2)	17,35	3,54			
	10 hours and over (3)	20,30	4,20	24,401	0,00*	3>1,2
Behavioral	1-4 hours (1)	23,82	9,42			
	5-9 hours (2)	28,04	4,67			
	10 hours and over (3)	32,44	7,03	23,215	0,00*	3>1,2
Digital Gaming Total	1-4 hours (1)	55,23	12,35			
	5-9 hours (2)	63,75	12,04	45,507	0,00*	2>1,3
	10 hours and over (3)	60,63	14,26			

p<0,05

When Table 13 is evaluated, it is seen that there is a statistical difference between the digital game playing time variable of the research group and the mental performance skills, mental basic skills, talking to yourself and mental animation score averages from the Mental Training Scale Total and scale sub-dimensions ($p<0.05$). It was determined that there was no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of interpersonal skills ($p>0.05$). It was observed that there was a statistical difference between the duration of digital game playing of the athletes and the total score averages of the Digital Game Playing Attitude Scale and all the sub-dimensions of the scale ($p<0.05$). The highest score in mental basic skills, mental

performance skills, mental visualization, mental training total, digital game playing total was 5-9 hours in the group playing digital games, the highest score in self-talk (internal), cognitive, affective, behavioral sub-dimensions was 10 hours and It was observed that over 100 people were in the group playing digital games.

Table 14. Pearson Correlation Analysis Between Athletes' Attitudes to Mental Training and Playing Digital Games

		Digital Gaming
Mental Training	**r**	,607**
	p	,000
	N	280

p<0,05*

According to Table 14, there is a significant and positive relationship between Mental Training and Digital Game Playing Attitudes (r= .607, p>0.05).

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Currently, swift technological improvements have changed people's life by directing them to digital games rather than traditional games in the field of playing games, and digital games are also being used in the sports sector. The use of digital games, particularly in the field of sports, is crucial in this context. The goal of this study was to identify athletes' mental training and digital game playing activities.

The type of sport performed, the status of playing digital games, playing the sport branch digitally, income status, year of doing sports, sportive degree, weekly training time, weekly digital game playing time, and mental training scale all showed a significant difference in the research group. There was no statistically significant difference between the athletes' gender, province, age variable, mental training scale, and sub-dimension. Male athletes had higher total score averages than female athletes on the mental training scale, and team athletes had higher average score averages than solo athletes. It has been determined that participants, amateur level athletes versus professional athletes, those who play digital games versus those who do not play, athletes who play their sports branch digitally have a higher mental training scale total score average than athletes who do not play. In the research group, athletes in the 18-21 age range were found to have a higher mental training scale mean score than athletes in other groups, athletes with a good income were found to have a higher mental training scale mean score than athletes in other groups, athletes with 12 years or more of sports experience were found to have a higher mental training scale mean score than athletes in other groups. When the research was assessed, Ocakoglu (2020) discovered that physical activity content virtual reality games have no effect on the exercise motivation level of athletes who continue their training together, but age and education status do. According to Arı et al., (2022), there was a substantial difference in the mental training skills of the participants based on gender, age, sports branch, and nationality, with female athletes having stronger mental training skills than male athletes. According to Erdogan and Gülşen's (2020) study, there was a significant difference between the students' mental training skills in terms of gender, year of sport, nationality, and branch variable, and their mental training skills improved as the year of sport increased. In their study, Karaaaç and ahan (2021) found no significant differences in mental training and optimal performance mood levels of athletes based on gender, branch, or weekly exercise status, but there was a significant difference depending on sports year and competitor

variable. In their study examining the relationship between mental training and performance in orienteering athletes, Karaca and Gündüz (2021) discovered that there was a positive and significant relationship between the athletes' mental training inventory and competition performance and the year of sports, there was no difference in terms of gender, and the systematic and purposeful application of mental training in sports. They suggested that it will have a favorable impact on the athletes' performance. In According to Kara and Ustaoglu Hoşver's (2019) study, age, volleyball playing time, and experience playing in play-offs had favorable effects on mental training levels, and the mental training levels of female volleyball players in the study were above the medium level. Çelik and Güngör (2020) investigated the influence of students' anxiety levels on their mental training skills at the faculty of sports sciences; they appeared to be in a relationship. Adeyeye et al. (2013) discovered that three weeks of mental skills training enhanced the mental skills, anxiety levels, and overall performance of table tennis players. Yüksel and Orhan (2021) discovered that the variables of gender, age, nationality, and sport type of athletes had a positive influence on their mental training skills in their study on the mental training levels of athletes interested in various sports disciplines. In a study, Mleziva (2014) discovered that a six-week mental skills training program improved the mental endurance of swimmers. Turan et al. (2020) discovered that four weeks of mental toughness and decision-making training increased athletes' performance, training, mental toughness, and decision-making techniques.

The research group's type of sport, status of playing digital games, playing the sport branch digitally, income status, year of performing sports, sportive degree, weekly digital game playing and training periods, and digital game playing scale varied significantly. Female athletes in the research group versus male athletes, team athletes versus individual athletes, professional athletes versus amateur level athletes, athletes who play digital games versus those who do not play, and athletes who play their sports branch digitally; among athletes with a good income level and those who have been playing sports for 12 years or more. Athletes aged 22-27 had a higher mean score on the total scale of digital game playing than the other categories. When the studies are examined, Delebe and Hazar (2022) stated in their study that age, gender and having a digital game playing tool are important factors in terms of digital game addiction of the participants. In his study, Tel (2021) examined the opinions of the athletes about playing digital games, it was determined that there was a significant difference between the gender, age, occupation, year of doing sports, level in the sportive branch and the attitudes of playing digital games, and that they played digital games at a moderate level. In the study conducted by Bozkurt (2022), it was found that there was a significant difference between students' father's education status, school success, and digital game playing time and digital game addiction, there was no significant difference between gender and mother's education status, and high school students had higher digital game addiction than students at other education levels. After all research it was determined that they had an average score. In their research, Can and Demir (2020) determined that e-sports players have a higher level of digital game addiction than athletes and the awareness level of digital game addiction is higher in e-sports players. Özsarı and Görücü (2023) stated in their study that digital addiction does not have a significant effect on life satisfaction. In the study conducted by Kumartaşlı et al., (2022), they stated that the participants were very active in the digital game environment, that playing digital games provided cognitive and affective development, but the development was not at this level in their psychomotor and physical development. In the study conducted by Barlett et al., (2009), it was reported that there was no change in the cognitive performance of the participants who did not play any games, but there was an increase in the cognitive performances of the participants who played a game with or without violence. In their study examining the thoughts of athlete students on the concept of digital game, Karaç Öcal and Araç Ilgar (2022) stated that playing digital games affects communication within the family, affecting the participants positively in terms of cognitive aspects while negatively affecting them physically and psychologically.

Mutlu Bozkurt and Öztürk stated in their study that there was a positive and significant relationship between athletes' digital game playing and mental training levels. Mateo-Orcajada et al., (2022) explored how professional League of Legends players' psychological characteristics altered during a match. They reported a decrease in all emotional states except depression. Students accepted playing digital games as a behavior, according to Öntürk et al., (2021), with male students playing more digital games than female students and third grade students playing more digital games.

Finally, there is a positive, extremely significant association between athletes' mental training and digital game playing attitudes. Male athletes outperform female athletes on the average mental training scale, participants in team sports outperform individual athletes, and amateur athletes outperform professional athletes. Female athletes outperformed male athletes in the research group; team sports athletes outperformed individual athletes; professional athletes outperformed amateur level athletes; athletes who play digital games outperformed those who do not; athletes with a high income level outperformed those who do not; and athletes who have been playing sports for 12 years or more outperformed those who have not. According to this information, we believe that using digital games for the sports branch, which they have done in conjunction with mental training, inside the programs to be established by the coaches, will improve the players' sporting performance.

Suggestions

1- Suggest conducting longitudinal studies to track changes in athletes' mental training and digital game habits over time. This would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between these variables.
2- Recommend expanding the study's reach to include athletes from various regions, sports, and age groups to ensure a more diverse and representative sample.
3- Suggest incorporating qualitative methods, such as interviews or focus groups, to gain a deeper understanding of athletes' experiences with mental training and digital game playing. Qualitative data can complement quantitative findings.
4- Propose conducting intervention studies to explore the effectiveness of integrating digital games with mental training programs. Assess how such interventions impact athletes' performance and well-being.
5- Recommend using objective measures alongside self-reporting to collect data on digital game habits, such as screen time tracking applications or game logs, to reduce self-reporting bias.
6- Suggest including additional variables, such as personality traits, competitive levels, or psychological well-being, in future research to provide a more comprehensive analysis of the factors influencing athletes' mental training and digital game habits.
7- Advocate for coach education programs that incorporate knowledge of mental training techniques and digital game use in sports. Coaches can play a significant role in guiding athletes in these areas.
8- Recommend awareness campaigns and educational programs for athletes, coaches, and parents on the potential benefits and risks of digital game use in sports settings.
9- Encourage collaboration between sports science, psychology, and game studies experts to further explore the intersection of mental training and digital gaming in sports.
10- Propose the development of guidelines or policies within sports organizations to promote responsible digital game use among athletes and to integrate mental training into sports programs.

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