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## ESPORTS AND SCHOOL SPORTS IN TURKEY: FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

### ABSTRACT

The study aimed to identify the opinions of physical education and sports teachers about the evaluation of esports among school sports and the inclusion of esports courses in the curriculum. A total of 20 physical education and sports teachers from Turkey participated in the study. The study was designed as qualitative research. In order to collect the needed data, the personal information form designed by the researchers was used. As a result of the data analysis, it was found that the awareness of physical education and sports teachers about esports differ according to their years of teaching experience and gender. On the basis of the findings, it can be suggested that in the evaluation of esports among school sports, in-service training should be given to teachers by providing the necessary tools and equipment.

**Keywords:** Esports, Digital Games, School Sports, Physical Education, Teacher.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Play is a natural human need (Petrovska, Sivevska & Cackov, 2013), and it has a necessary, important and useful place in human life (Özenç & Yörük, 2021; Yazıcıoğlu-Çalışan, Pekel, Yarayan & İlhan, 2021). Huizinga (2018), who was the first researcher to take the concept of the game seriously, suggested that game is an older concept than cultures. He stated that it is not a phenomenon that emerged by being influenced by various cultures or by chance, but on the contrary, it is the main factor in the formation and shaping of various cultures. At this point, he emphasized that animals that existed on earth before human beings played games without being exposed to any human-based teachings. Therefore, he stated that the game is older than cultures. Juul (2003) defined the game as a formal rule-based system with a variable and measurable outcome, where different values are assigned to different outcomes and where the player makes an effort. The game has transformed over time by keeping up with the age of technology. This situation has led to the emergence of different concepts.

As in every field, games have undergone changes and transformations in terms of both content and structure over time, depending on scientific and technological developments. In this process, different kinds of games have become playable by means of developed technological tools (computer, mobile, console, etc.). This situation led to the emergence of the concept of the digital game. Green and McNeese (2008) explained the digital game as a means of pleasure and entertainment played through a game console, computer, or mobile device. Frasca (2001), on the other hand, defined a digital game as a free-time activity software where individuals or multiple participants can participate individually or mutually over an online network installed on game devices through digital software. Digital games draw attention because they are built on ever-changing technologies (Bryce & Rutter, 2006). In this sense, a large number of digital games have been produced with more connection and processing power produced by the widespread use of the console, online, and mobile technologies (Cheah, Shimul & Phau, 2022; Yarımkaaya, İlhan & Gencer, 2015). In this process, the production of different types of competitive digital games and the love of these games by the players led to the emergence of a different concept. This concept is esports.

When the literature is reviewed, it is seen that there are different types of definitions and meanings related to esports. This can be regarded as quite normal because esports has a multidisciplinary structure and it is not easy to define (Jin, 2010). However, the most obvious and accepted definitions of esports can be as follows; Wagner (2006) defined esports as a sports activity in which people develop or train their mental

and physical abilities with the use of information and communication technologies. The International Esports Federation (IeSF) (2022) defined esports as a sport in which players compete using their physical and mental abilities in a virtual or electronic environment. Finally, Hamari and Sjöblom (2017) defined esports as a form of sport in which the basic aspects of the sport are facilitated by electronic systems, mediating the output of the esports system through human-computer interfaces as well as the inputs of players and teams.

There is a debate in society and academia about whether esports is a sport or not, but this situation, which is the subject of discussion, was discussed less now than in the early periods when esports was accepted as a sport. It is thought that people get used to this structured day by day and adapt to it. As a matter of fact, García and Murillo (2020) highlighted that before esports can be accepted as official or definitional, researchers should explain whether esports is a sporting activity or not. At this point, the main reason for the disagreement might be that esports players need less physical activity compared to traditional sports players (Hilvoorde & Pot, 2016; Öztürk, Fakazlı & İlhan, 2020). It can be stated that different cognitive and physical characteristics are exhibited according to the type of esports games. While cognitive skills such as strategy and concentration are at the forefront of some games, physical skills such as reaction time and hand-eye coordination are at the forefront of some games. When Gutmann's (2004) modern sports model is examined, it is seen that competitive games are separated as physical or mental competitions in the process from game to sport. In other words, sports competitions can take place within the framework of competition based on physical or mental skills. In this sense, considering that players playing competitive digital games within the scope of esports exhibit both cognitive and physical skills at a certain level, esports should be considered a sport. Kane and Spradley (2017) also explained that esports players have started to exhibit similar athletic characteristics to traditional sports players, especially with the recent technological developments.

Not every digital game is considered within the scope of esports. Only digital games that have a competitive structure are considered within the scope of esports. Games developed by game companies are divided into categories according to their structure and features. Turkish Esports Federation (TESFED) (2022) has divided game types into seven under the title of branches. These are Multiplayer Online Battle Arena (MOBA), First Person Shooter (FPS), Real Time Strategy (RTS), Battle Royale, Sports and Fighter. Esports games are limited to time and place where players compete individually or as a team. Competitions are held over the internet or via local area networks (LAN). The most prestigious competitions, on the other hand, are held by computers connected by LAN, where the players are in the same venue (Griffiths, Davies & Chappell, 2003; Jonasson & Thiborg, 2010).

Today, esports includes many stakeholders similar to traditional sports. In this sense, it gathers many people and institutions under one roof, especially players, coaches, clubs, audiences, organizations, media, game companies and sponsors. This rapidly developing sport has reached an important economic volume. A significant amount of income is generated from different areas such as sponsorships, media rights, publisher fees, products and tickets, digital content and publications. At this point, it can be suggested that the area where the largest-scale income flow is achieved is sponsorships. According to the data of the Newzoo (2022) research company, it is predicted that 837.3 million dollars will be obtained from sponsorships in 2022. However, with the diversification of esports revenue streams, the growth is estimated to be more in the future (Tristao, 2022). In this sense, esports teams, gaming companies and organizers have been trying to increase the areas they generate income in the last period. Especially recently, many teams have turned to Blockchain technology and NFTs to achieve these goals.

Esports games are played by all segments of society today. However, the Z generation can be identified as quite willing to play esports games and watch competitions. Both the society and the country administrations are not indifferent to these developments. Organizations and tournaments increase interest in esports. In line with these developments, esports has started to be evaluated under the umbrella of school sports, as in other traditional sports.

### **1.1. Esports and School Sports**

Esports is growing rapidly in terms of both participants and spectators. In this process, large-scale organizations and tournaments have been organized in different parts of the world. As a matter of fact, this situation has started to be evaluated under the roof of the school in terms of both education and competition and organization. It is known that serious steps have been taken, especially in the United States (USA), South Korea and China. Rothwell and Shaffer (2019) stated that the establishment of esports teams in schools has been used to teach and develop skills such as STEM, Career Technical Education (CTE) and

foreign language education. In addition, they stated that it is effective in gaining social skills expected from an individual who has graduated from high school. Finally, they emphasized that the popularity of esports will increase and this situation will be reflected in schools. In addition to these, it is known that esports games, which represent traditional sports and are evaluated within the sports category, are used in the teaching of game rules. Hennick (2019) stated that high schools have recently created an esports program to create a school culture, create a future career opportunity for students, and support their university readiness. In addition, he emphasized that this is of significance for the players to come together and socialize and understand how to act as a team to achieve success.

Generally, esports leagues and organizations work similarly to traditional sports. Recently, many universities have started to evaluate esports by including them in sports categories (Holden, Kaburakis & Rodenberg, 2017). Considering this popularity, universities support esports players by providing substantial scholarships (Schaeperkoetter, et al., 2017). The structure of the curricula of the courses, which include information such as the general structure of esports, its ecosystem and career opportunities (Scott, et al., 2021), or the structure of the esports departments which are planned to be established directly to train esportsmen, has become controversial. However, it can be said that esports should be evaluated in high schools before universities because esports have become very popular in high schools. It is expected that esports will reach the number of participants at the high school level similar to traditional sports in the future. Organizational structures at the high school level vary from country to country. Apart from the United States and Canada, high school competitions in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, and China are often run independently of college tournaments (K-12 Blueprint, 2019).

There are thousands of high school esports clubs and teams in the US. Today, many states have teacher-run organizations and non-profit competitions. Apart from these, there are national organizations such as the High School Esports League (HSEL), the North America Scholastic Esports Federation (NASEF), and the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS). Schools are free to choose the league that best fits their program goals (K-12 Blueprint, 2022). HSEL advertises itself as 'the largest and longest running competitive gaming organization' for after-school events. In addition to supporting schools in team building and development, HSEL organizes more than 1,500 intramural fall and winter leagues. HSE aims to promote the academic benefits of esports in high schools and to offer in-school curricula (HSEL, 2022). NASEF, on the other hand, is a non-profit organization focused on career skills in esports. It provides opportunities for all students to use esports as a platform they participate to acquire critical communication, collaboration and problem solving skills needed in their business and private lives. NASEF offers an English Language Arts (ELA) and CTE curriculum free of charge to its participants (NASEF, 2022). Finally, the NFHS, the organization that sets the official rules for many high school sports, has announced that it officially recognizes esports as a high school sport. In this process, he stated that esports organizations will be held by establishing a partnership with PlayVS (NFHS, 2018). In general terms, it can be asserted that holding esports organizations, especially in the high school period, is very important in terms of increasing awareness about esports and conducting these activities in a controlled manner.

The South Korean administration supports esports education in both esports organizations and schools. Many high schools in South Korea use textbooks published by the government to promote esports. Additionally, some schools in the country have esports departments. This sums up South Korea's level of esports (Moghe, 2021). It is seen that the rise of esports in terms of participants in high school and other lower age schools has increased obviously all over the world. It is thought that it is important to provide education for this student group under the roof of the school and to organize esports activities in a controlled manner.

## **1.2. Esports and School Sports in Turkey**

This section, it is aimed to explain the structure at the middle and high school level, taking the research topic into account. School sports in Turkey are officially carried out in partnership with the Ministry of National Education (MEB) and the Ministry of Youth and Sports (GSB), as determined by the GSB's organizational structure. In this context, organizations are held at the national level in 55 sports branches (GSB, 2022). Esports is not included in these sports branches. Thus, esports leagues and tournaments at the school sports level are limited to organizations organized by private institutions. However, today, especially in high school and middle school, the participation in esports in terms of both players and spectators has increased significantly. This situation prepares the environment for esports to be officially evaluated as a sports branch within school sports. In addition, esports education is becoming very

important in schools. As a matter of fact, a cooperation protocol was signed between TEFED and MEB recently. This protocol includes the following items;

- Our students' socialization through esports activities, keeping away from substance addiction, acquiring social, cognitive, and emotional skills, building a team, taking part in the team and assigning tasks, intra-team communication, constructive competition, stress management, strategic thinking, and planning,
- Evaluation of the data to be obtained as a result of esports activities in the development processes of students,
- Carrying out various promotional and informative activities to create an esports culture,
- Ensuring that students take an active role in publishing and presenting activities of the esports ecosystem and in studies such as local and national game design and development,
- Esports culture assists students in their career planning by associating esports with future professions such as software and hardware development, innovation, simulation, design, defense industry technologies, digital publishing, project management, entrepreneurship, public relations, and brand management.

In general, it can be said that the steps taken between TEFED and MEB are rather significant for esports. In addition to this cooperation, within the scope of the project developed by the Turkish Automobile Sports Federation (TOSFED), many students were trained on a mobile sim racing cockpit in order to introduce automobile sports and discover new talents. (TOSFED, 2022). Therefore, many students have been introduced to sim racing and their awareness of esports has developed. It can be said that the development of esports in terms of school sports in Turkey and the steps taken in this field is limited. However, considering the development, popularity, and students' demands of esports, it is thought that important steps will be taken in the future.

### **1.3. Purpose of the Study**

Physical education and sports teachers play an active role in the school sports system in Turkey (Esentürk, Tekkurşun-Demir, Yılmaz & İlhan, 2016). If the esports branch is included in school sports in the future, they may have to form a team, train and participate in competitions in a sport that they did not receive training in. Or, if esports is included in the curriculum, they may have to teach lessons related to the field. In this regard, it is thought that examining the current awareness of physical education and sports teachers about esports and their views on the implementation of esports lessons in the curriculum is very important in terms of the quality of education. In this context, the main purpose of the study is to examine the awareness levels of physical education and sports teachers in different age categories working in schools within the scope of the Ministry of National Education in Turkey and their views on the implementation of esports lessons in the curriculum.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1. Design of the Study**

More specifically, the present study aimed to determine the awareness of physical education and sports teachers working in Turkey about esports and identify their views on the applicability and future of esports in school sports, and better explain the current situation. To this end, the study was conducted as qualitative research in a phenomenology design. The phenomenology in which many phenomena that are not fully understood are investigated in depth (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016) is chosen for the current research. Karagöz (2017) defines phenomenology as a method that focuses on describing events and situations in a multi-faceted framework and revealing their meanings.

### **2.2. Participants**

In order to identify the research group, the criterion sampling method, which is one of the purposeful sampling method types, was used in order to investigate the phenomena in-depth. Purposeful sampling is a concept used in qualitative research. It means choosing the individuals and places in accordance with the purpose of the study because these people are thought to provide in-depth information in understanding the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). In criterion sampling, research observation units can be formed from people, events, objects, or situations with certain qualities. Also, units that meet the criteria determined for the sample are taken into the sample (Büyüköztürk et al., 2009). A total of 20 (10 female, 10 male) physical education and sports teachers participated in the study. They were educated in Turkey, have an

undergraduate degree in physical education and sports teaching, and are working in schools of the Ministry of National Education. They had varying years of teaching experience; 5 of them have 1 to 5 years of teaching experience, 5 of them have 6 to 10 years of teaching experience, 5 of them have 11 to 15 years of teaching experience, 5 of them have more than 15 years of teaching experience.

In phenomenological research, it is worthy to select the appropriate people to better examine the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). Written consent was obtained from the participants and it was stated that they could withdraw from the study at any time, and the data and personal information obtained would not be shared without their permission. The participants were coded from K1 to K20 according to their years of service. Demographic information about the participants is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Demographic Information of the Participants

Participants	Gender	Year of Teaching	School Type
K1	Female	2	Middle school
K2	Male	3	Middle school
K3	Male	4	Middle school
K4	Male	4	Middle school
K5	Female	5	High school
K6	Female	6	Middle school
K7	Male	6	High school
K8	Male	7	High school
K9	Male	8	Middle school
K10	Female	9	Middle school
K11	Female	11	High school
K12	Female	12	Middle school
K13	Male	12	High school
K14	Female	13	Middle school
K15	Male	14	Middle school
K16	Female	16	High school
K17	Female	17	High school
K18	Male	20	High school
K19	Female	20	Middle school
K20	Male	22	High school

### 2.3. Data Collection Tools

A semi-structured interview form developed by the researchers was used as a data collection tool because semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to find answers to pre-prepared questions (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008) and facilitate asking in-depth questions about the subject (Büyüköztürk et al., 2009).

In the preparation of the interview questions developed by the researchers; attention was paid to principles such as a clear understanding of the questions, not being multidimensional, and not guiding the respondent (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). In order to check the general structure of the interview form, whether the questions are suitable for the research topic and whether they serve the purpose or not, two expert opinions, one in the field of physical education and sports teaching and one in the field of Turkish education, were consulted. In line with the feedback of the experts, the interview form was finalized, and a pilot study was conducted with 2 physical education and sports teachers apart from the participants.

### 2.4. Data Collection Procedure

In order to achieve the purpose of the study, physical education, and sports teachers were reached through various communication channels, primarily social media. In the preliminary interviews, information was given to the participants about the purpose of the study, and it was stated that participation was on a voluntary basis. The date and time of the meeting with the physical education and sports teachers were determined. Interviews were carried out via telephone due to the pandemic period as result of the Covid-19 virus. The telephone interview is accepted as a data collection tool that provides the best source for the researcher when he cannot reach the individuals directly (Creswell, 2013). All interviews took place on the specified date and time. The interviews lasted between 15-20 minutes. The interviews were recorded through a voice recorder with the permission of the participants. At the end of the interview, the participants were asked if there was anything they wanted to add and they were appreciated for their participation in the research. The data obtained were transcribed on the computer. In addition, the important points during the interview were noted by the researcher, and this was also taken into account in the analysis.

## 2.5. Data Analysis

The content analysis method, which is based on the interpretation of similar themes by comparing and contrasting (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016), was used to analyze the collected data. In this context, firstly the data was prepared, then codes, sub-themes, and main themes were identified respectively. The level of representation of the data set was confirmed by ensuring that the codes were also coded by different participants. The themes identified are presented in tables in the findings section with the distribution of the answers given by the participants according to the codes, frequency information, and direct quotations.

The credibility of the results is considered one of the important criteria in the study. In this respect, the concepts of "validity" and "reliability" are considered to be the two most important criteria here. It is very significant for the validity of the research to include direct quotations from the participants and to explain the results accordingly (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). In this study, quotations for each code are included in the findings in order to ensure validity. Data were also analyzed by two other raters who were experienced in qualitative data analysis in order to ensure reliability and avoid researchers' subjectivity. After they reached a consensus on identifying, sorting, and grouping the codes, inter-rater reliability was calculated by using the formula "[agreement / (agreement + disagreement)] X 100" (Miles & Huberman, 1994) and found .86, which showed a high level of reliability.

## 3. FINDINGS and DISCUSSION

The data analyzed are presented in tables and discussed in line with direct quotations.

**Table 2.** Awareness of Physical Education and Sports Teachers on Esports

Main Themes	Sub-Themes	Codes	f
Awareness of Physical Education and Sports Teachers on Esports	Knowledge of Esports	I have knowledge	20
		I don't have knowledge	0
	Status of Following News and Developments About Esports	I'm following closely	1
		I am following	3
		I don't follow	16
	Monitoring of Competitions	I watch regularly	1
		I'm watching	3
		I don't watch	16
		Differentiation by game type	2
		Sports games	8
		FPS	4
		Battle Royale	6
		MOBA	1
	Playing Games and Preferred Platforms	Mobile devices	7
		Computer	5
		Consoles	8
		I can't play	6

There are 4 sub-themes and 17 codes in the main theme of awareness of physical education and sports teachers about esports presented in Table 2. Below are direct quotes for each sub-theme and some codes.

Direct quotations related to the sub-theme of having knowledge about esports;

*I have a certain level of knowledge about esports. I don't know all the games exactly, but I know the system in general. I also play PUBG Mobile and FIFA. I often talk about games with my students. (K4)*

*I have knowledge. I often play esports games like FIFA and League of Legends (LoL). I watch Twitch and follow those who play these games. I am trying to improve myself. I have friends who are in esports. (K3)*

When direct quotations are examined and other answers are evaluated, it can be said that self-education and sports teachers, especially those who are new in the profession and thus at a young age, have a certain level of knowledge about esports. It can be said that individuals who have grown up in the age of information and technology and have children in this period have a high interest in digital games. It is thought that it is quite natural for physical education and sports teachers, whose childhood period coincides with this period, to have a high level of knowledge about the field.

*I only have general knowledge. In other words, I know esports as competitions made through digital games. Other than that, I don't know what games are, and how to play them. It doesn't interest me too much. (K17)*

*I know esports because of my son. He spends most of his time at home playing these games. They communicate with their friends and play games online. I watch him play from time to time in order to follow how he spends his time and what he is doing. (K20)*

When the answers of physical education and sports teachers with high years of service are evaluated, it can be said that their knowledge level about esports is limited. It is seen that their sources of information related to sports are indirect, especially come from environmental factors. In addition, esports in general does not seem to attract their attention. In general terms, all physical education and sports teachers who participated in the research stated that they had knowledge about esports. However, it is seen that there are significant differences among teachers in terms of their levels of knowledge.

Direct quotations regarding the sub-theme of following news and developments about esports are presented below;

*I don't follow. Honestly, I don't know where to follow. I come across some sports channels on TV, but I don't watch them. (K8)*

*I don't follow. It pops up every now and then on social media. But I pass by without looking too much. (K14)*

*I'm trying to follow. If there are new games that are released, I try to play them. I guess this is due to my interest in digital games in general. (K2)*

When the answers of the physical education and sports teachers are examined, it is seen that there is one physical education and sports teacher who follows esports closely, 3 of them just follow and sixteen of them do not watch at all. In this sense, it can be said that the physical education and sports teachers who participated in the research in general do not follow the news and developments related to esports.

Direct quotations related to the sub-theme named "the status of watching the competitions" are presented below;

*No, I'm not watching. Honestly, I don't know where to watch it. If I knew, maybe I could follow it because it interests me. (K6)*

*I'm not watching. I watched a few matches related to FIFA for a while. It was also to improve my game. (K11)*

*Actually, I want to watch it, but I can't follow when and which match. As far as I know, there are too many matches going on. (F8)*

*I'm watching PUBG. But I'm not very interested in other games. There are players that I especially follow. (K4)*

When the answers of the physical education and sports teachers are examined, it is seen that they do not watch the competitions in general. At this point, there are teachers who want to watch but do not know where to follow and watch. In addition, there are teachers who stated that their watching situations differ according to the game type. It can be said that these findings are very important in terms of awareness.

Direct quotations regarding the sub-theme of playing games and preferred platforms are presented below;

*I usually play over the phone. But I have a PS4 at home. I usually play FIFA there too. (F7)*

*I have a gaming PC and a PS5. I'm playing LoL on PC. On PC, NBA2K and FIFA. (K3)*

*I have a PS4 at home. I usually play FIFA. I play on the phone from time to time. (K15)*

*No, I am not playing. Frankly, I'm not very interested. (K19)*

When the direct quotes and opinions of physical education and sports teachers are examined, it is understood that they generally prefer sports and battle royale games. In addition, it can be suggested that they usually play games via mobile devices and consoles. It also became clear that some teachers have more than one device to play the games. At this point, it is seen that especially male physical education and sports teachers play the games.

If the awareness of physical education and sports teachers in general terms is evaluated, it can be stated that physical education and sports teachers have general knowledge about esports, but they do not follow the news and competitions about esports. At this point, findings indicated that physical education and sports teachers who are younger in age are more interested in the field. Finally, the study found that male physical education and sports teachers are more interested in esports games than female physical education and sports teachers.

**Table 3.** Opinions of Physical Education and Sports Teachers on the Applicability of eSports in School Sports and Esports Lessons

Main Themes	Sub-Themes	Codes	f
Opinions of Physical Education and Sports Teachers on the Applicability of eSports in School Sports and Esports Lesson	School Sports and Organization Dimension	Inter-agency coordination	12
		Creating the necessary infrastructure	9
		Providing the necessary equipment	17
		Coach Support	7
		In-service training requirement	11
	Level of Education in Practice and Preferred Game Types	Applicability at all levels	4
		Middle and High School Level	16
		RTS games	14
		Sports Games	11
		FPS Games	2
	Positive Attitudes to Esports and its Applicability	Student Motivation	17
		Teacher Motivation	8
		Sporting Skills and Knowledge	3
		Planned Playing Time	14
		Social Development	2
	Negative Attitudes to Esports and its Applicability	Negative School Management Attitude	4
		Negative Parent Attitudes	12
		Concern for Health Problems	9
		Orientation to Violence	6
		Academic Achievement Anxiety	15
	Esports Lesson	Digital Gaming Addiction	13
		In-Service Training Requirement	7
		Insufficient Infrastructure and Tools for Implementation	15
		Feeling Ineligible	16

There are five sub-themes and 24 codes in the main theme of opinions of physical education and sports teachers on the applicability of esports in school sports and esports lessons presented in Table 3. Below are direct quotes for each sub-theme and some codes.

Direct quotations regarding the sub-theme named school sports and organizational dimension are presented below;

*Tools must be provided. Otherwise, it will not be possible for us to train players collectively. In addition, there should be areas where the competitions can be held collectively. (K16)*

*It is necessary to provide tools and equipment with the support of GSB and MEB. As far as I know, they are expensive devices. Otherwise, we will have to prefer children who only have these devices and know the games. This is not very fair. (K18)*

*First of all, I think that training should be given on the use of these devices. I think there are too many physical education and sports teachers who have no knowledge. In addition, the necessary infrastructure needs to be created. We have problems in terms of infrastructure in other sports branches. This is more electronic and it requires a serious infrastructure. (K10)*

*It can be difficult for us to cope alone because there are too many games. In this sense, we can get coach support. This can make our job easier. GSB should support this sense. (K12)*

When the opinions of physical education and sports teachers were examined, teachers stated that coordination between institutions should be ensured and steps should be taken in terms of equipment support. In addition to these, they added that knowledge on the subject should be increased with in-service training and coach support should be provided.

Direct quotations related to the sub-theme named education level and preferred game types in practice are presented below;

*I don't think it is very suitable for primary school. It may be suitable for middle school and high school. Sports games can be preferred as games. It should not be violent games like other weapons. (K14)*

*I think middle school and high school would be appropriate because children will be more conscious. I think that games in the style of strategy and sports can be played. For example, it could be FIFA. (F8)*

*Secondary school and high school levels, which physical education and sports teachers teach, may also be suitable. I think all kinds of games can be played, but sports games can be better. (K12)*



The opinions of physical education and sports teachers indicated that they emphasized the need to hold organizations especially at the secondary and high school levels. In addition, the teachers were found to state that strategy games, especially sports games, can be played.

Direct quotations regarding the sub-theme named positive attitudes towards esports and applicability are presented below;

*I often hear about esports from my students. If esports is considered among school sports, there will be many students who want to participate. (K9)*

*It's a sport I'm interested in. Therefore, I try to create teams in different games. I think my students will be also willing to participate. They may create careers similar to traditional sports in the future. (K3)*

*I think it would be better for students to play in a controlled way. Otherwise, it is not clear how many hours a day they play. This causes addiction. If so, parents will support it. We can specialize in the field over time. (K11)*

*Similar to traditional sports, I think that students will acquire various skills by participating in these organizations. (K1)*

When direct quotations are evaluated, it can be figured that physical education and sports teachers are willing to participate in organizations in both teacher and student dimensions and exhibit positive attitudes. It is thought that negative situations such as digital game addiction will be overcome by organizing esports competitions within the framework of a certain organization and keeping the time spent by the students in the games under control.

Direct quotations regarding the sub-theme of negative attitudes towards esports and applicability are presented below;

*Parents generally do not lead students to school sports activities because they think that they will be adversely affected academically. A similar situation may exist in this area as well. (K16)*

*Parents are suffering from digital game addiction. Therefore, I do not think that they will support their orientation toward this sport. (F7)*

*School administrations do not generally view school sports positively. Considering the need for equipment in esports, I don't think they will give any support. (K14)*

*I think some games lead to violence. Children become more irritable and their eyesight is broken because they are in front of the computer all the time. That's why I don't think it would be correct. (K20)*

When the opinions of physical education and sports teachers are evaluated, it can be suggested that both parents and school administrators think that they will have a negative attitude towards this branch of sports. The factors in this situation might be digital game addiction and problems such as eye disorders due to spending a lot of time in front of the screen. In addition, physical education and sports teachers explained their opinion that school administrations would not support this branch of sports due to the necessity of equipment.

Direct quotations related to the sub-theme named esports lesson are presented below;

*I don't know much about esports. Frankly, I do not think that I will be very productive in the course without training. (K19)*

*I think that all physical education and sports teachers should be given in-service training. (K5)*

*I do not think that the course can be taught purely theoretically. In this sense, a class should be created for the application, or equipment must be provided. (K3)*

The views of physical education and sports teachers about the esports lesson also revealed that they lack knowledge in the field. In this sense, they emphasized the need to receive support through in-service training.

If the opinions of physical education and sports teachers on the applicability of esports in school sports and esports lessons were evaluated in general, teachers explained that esports can be realized under the roof of school sports by providing equipment and creating the necessary infrastructure through the coordination of institutions. Furthermore, they remarked that in-service training is very important in terms of the quality of education. In general, they think that teachers and students will have a positive attitude toward esports. It is seen that parents and school administrators think that they will show a negative attitude. The study also

found that teachers feel ineligible regarding the esports course and emphasized that in-service training should be given in addition to the support of tools and equipment for the application.

**Table 4.** Opinions of Physical Education and Sports Teachers on the Future of Esports

Main Themes	Sub-Themes	Codes	f
Opinions of Physical Education and Sports Teachers on the Future of Esports	School Sports Dimension	Students Prefer More	13
		Increasing Audience	6
		Improving the Trainer Dimension	3
	Sectoral Dimension	Raising Awareness	15
		Economic Growth	13
		Developing Different Kinds of Games	4
		Increase in Player and Audience	16

There are two sub-themes and seven codes in the main theme named physical education and sports teachers' views on the future of esports. Below are direct quotes for each sub-theme and some codes.

Direct quotations regarding the sub-theme named school sports dimension are presented below;

*I think people's awareness will increase. I think it is developing very fast. In particular, the demand for students will be higher. (K3)*

*I think more and more people are starting to follow it day by day. I'm seeing it more often on social media now. In line with these developments, the demands of the students will increase. (F7)*

*I think, if esports is evaluated in terms of school sports in the future, the educational dimension should be diversified and increased. (K11)*

Direct quotations related to the sub-theme named sectoral dimension are presented below;

*The number of players and viewers will increase because more and more games are released every day, and at the same time, I think, the quality of the games is increasing. (K15)*

*I think there will be significant economic growth and the fact that esports players win serious cash prizes is clear proof of this. (K2)*

If the theme of physical education and sports teachers' views on the future of esports were evaluated in general, it can be suggested that teachers emphasized that students will participate more in esports activities in terms of school sports and that the economic volume will gradually grow in the sectoral dimension.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The main purpose of the study is to identify the opinions of physical education and sports teachers working in Turkey about the evaluation of esports as school sports and the inclusion of esports courses in the curriculum. When the opinions of physical education and sports teachers, which were collected through the interviews, were analyzed, 3 main themes, eleven sub-themes and forty-eight codes were identified in total. Firstly, the awareness of physical education and sports teachers about esports was examined and it was found that physical education and sports teachers have general knowledge about esports, but do not follow the news and competitions about esports. Physical education and sports teachers at a young age are more interested in the field of esports. The study also concluded that male physical education and sports teachers showed more interest in esports games compared to female physical education and sports teachers.

Based on the opinions of physical education and sports teachers on the applicability of esports in school sports and esports lessons, the study yielded the result that esports can be realized under the roof of school sports by providing tools and equipment and creating the necessary infrastructure through the coordination of institutions. In-service training can be also very important in terms of the quality of esports education. Moreover, findings indicated that physical education and sports teachers felt ineligible regarding the esports lesson and underlined that in-service training should be provided in addition to the support of tools and equipment for the application. Finally, it can be suggested that teachers and students will have positive attitudes toward esports while parents and school administrators will have negative attitudes toward esports.

#### 5. SUGGESTIONS

While the data obtained within the scope of the research were analyzed and discussed, some suggestions were provided for future studies. An in-depth examination of students' views on the evaluation of esports in school sports in Turkey may contribute significantly to the literature. In addition, it is thought that examining the views of esports students, trainers and managers who take part in school sports activities

organized in different countries from a relational perspective will bring a significant contribution to the esports field.

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