

Relationship between digital addiction and crisis management skills: A study on physical education teachers

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between physical education teachers' levels of digital addiction and their crisis management skills. This study is one of the pioneering investigations examining the interaction between physical education teachers' levels of digital addiction and their crisis management skills using empirical data. The research is a quantitative study based on a relational screening model. (216) Physical Education Teachers participated in this research. Data were collected using the Digital Addiction Scale and the Crisis Management Scale. Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was applied to test the relationship between digital addiction and crisis management skills. A low-level significant inverse relationship was found between the total score of the Digital Addiction Scale and the total score of the Crisis Management Scale ($r = -0.205$, $p < 0.01$). In contrast, stronger relationships were observed at the sub-dimension level. Specifically, a moderate and significant negative relationship was found between the "excessive use" and "relapse" subscales of the Digital Addiction Scale and the crisis-related activities subscale of the Crisis Management Scale ($r = -0.315$, $p < 0.001$). This finding suggests that excessive use of digital environments can negatively impact teachers' decision-making and strategic thinking abilities during times of crisis. It has been shown that digital addiction hinders the development of effective crisis management skills by weakening the cognitive flexibility and emotional resilience needed by teachers in crisis management processes. Thus, digital addiction emerges as a critical factor that weakens crisis management skills in educational settings. The implementation of awareness programs in educational institutions to reduce digital addiction and the provision of practical training to strengthen teachers' crisis management competencies stand out as the most important recommendation. It is assessed that such initiatives will make meaningful contributions to the professional development of teachers and prepare them for crisis situations.

Keywords: Physical education teachers, Digital addiction, School crisis management, Technology addiction

Beden eğitimi öğretmenlerinde dijital bağımlılık ve kriz yönetimi becerileri arasındaki ilişki

Öz

Bu çalışmanın amacı, beden eğitimi öğretmenlerinin dijital bağımlılık düzeyleri ile kriz yönetimi becerileri arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektir. Bu çalışma, beden eğitimi öğretmenlerinin dijital bağımlılık düzeyleri ile kriz yönetimi becerileri arasındaki etkileşimi ampirik veriler kullanarak inceleyen öncü araştırmalardan biridir. Araştırma, ilişkisel tarama modeline dayalı nicel bir çalışmadır. (216) Beden Eğitimi Öğretmeni bu araştırmaya katılmıştır. Veriler Dijital Bağımlılık Ölçeği ve Kriz Yönetimi Ölçeği kullanılarak toplanmıştır. Dijital bağımlılık ile kriz yönetimi becerileri arasındaki ilişkiyi test etmek için Pearson momentler çarpımı korelasyon analizi uygulanmıştır. Dijital Bağımlılık Ölçeği toplam puanı ile Kriz Yönetimi Ölçeği toplam puanı arasında düşük düzeyde anlamlı ters ilişki bulunmuştur ($r = -0,205$, $p < 0,01$). Buna karşılık, alt boyut düzeyinde daha güçlü ilişkiler gözlenmiştir. Özellikle, Dijital Bağımlılık Ölçeği'nin "aşırı kullanım" ve "tekrarlama" alt ölçekleri ile Kriz Yönetimi Ölçeği'nin krizle ilgili aktiviteler alt ölçeği arasında orta düzeyde ve anlamlı negatif ilişki bulunmuştur ($r = -0,315$, $p < 0,001$). Bu bulgu, dijital ortamların aşırı kullanımının kriz zamanlarında öğretmenlerin karar alma ve stratejik düşünme becerilerini olumsuz etkileyebileceğini göstermektedir. Dijital bağımlılığın, kriz yönetimi süreçlerinde öğretmenlerin ihtiyaç duyduğu bilişsel esneklik ve duygusal dayanıklılığı zayıflatarak etkili kriz yönetimi becerilerinin gelişimini engellediği gösterilmiştir. Dolayısıyla, dijital bağımlılık eğitim ortamlarında kriz yönetimi becerilerini zayıflatan kritik bir faktör olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır. Dijital bağımlılığı azaltmak için eğitim kurumlarında farkındalık programlarının uygulanması ve öğretmenlerin kriz yönetimi yeterliliklerini güçlendirmek için uygulamalı eğitimlerin sağlanması en önemli öneri olarak öne çıkmaktadır. Bu tür girişimlerin öğretmenlerin mesleki gelişimlerine anlamlı katkılar sağlayacağı ve onları kriz durumlarına hazırlayacağı değerlendirilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Beden Eğitimi ve Spor Öğretmenleri, Dijital Bağımlılık, Okul Kriz Yönetimi, Teknoloji Bağımlılığı

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INTRODUCTION

Advancements in technology and the digital transformation have precipitated considerable changes in the daily lives of individuals. The ubiquity of digital devices in contemporary societies has given rise to the notion of digital addiction (Young, 1998; Griffiths, 2000). Digital addiction can be defined as an excessive dependence on digital technologies that may harm both the personal and professional domains (Andreassen et al., 2012; Montag et al., 2019).

Digital addiction is recognized as a major public health concern that affects individuals' quality of life and can lead to various psychological, social, and behavioral problems (Kuss & Griffiths, 2011; Rosen et al., 2013). A body of research has examined the emotional consequences of digital addiction, and the findings have revealed that such dependency can have a significantly deleterious effect on professional performance (Chen et al., 2021). This issue is of particular critical importance for teachers, whose professional roles depend to a considerable extent on social interaction and complex decision-making processes (Leung, 2014; Teng et al., 2020).

Furthermore, digital addiction has the potential to diminish an individual's capacity for social engagement and compromise their efficiency in managing their workload. This is of particular significance for professionals such as teachers, who fulfill multifaceted social roles. While digital devices have the capacity to facilitate various aspects of professional life, their excessive use has been demonstrated to disrupt daily routines and occupational balance (Montag et al., 2019). Consequently, the phenomenon of digital addiction and its effects on individuals' professional and social lives merit further academic investigation.

The correlation between teachers' levels of digital addiction and their crisis management skills is a subject that merits further investigation. The term 'crisis management' refers to the ability to make effective decisions and develop effective strategies in situations where uncertainty and stress prevail (Coombs, 2007; Mitroff, 2005). The ability to successfully manage crises is contingent upon three factors: cognitive flexibility, emotional resilience, and innovative thinking. However, studies have demonstrated that digital addiction negatively impacts these skills by compromising individuals' concentration and decision-making mechanisms (Montag et al., 2019).

Physical education teachers represent a professional group that works in both physical and digital environments and plays a critical role in the social, emotional, and physical development of students. The integration of physical activity-based lessons with digital platforms has become imperative, particularly during periods of pandemic. The utilization of digital technologies within educational settings has the potential to enhance the efficacy of physical education classes. However, this may concomitantly result in an increased risk of technology dependence among teaching professionals (Agatston et al., 2012; Chiu, 2014). The excessive utilization of digital platforms has the potential to exert a detrimental effect on teachers' cognitive abilities, specifically their focus, attention, and problem-solving skills.

The present study aims to reveal the relationship between levels of digital addiction among physical education teachers and their crisis management skills. A plethora of literature reviews have indicated that digital addiction has various negative effects within the education sector. However, there is a lack of empirical data specifically targeting physical education teachers (Young, 1998; Griffiths, 2000; Kuss & Griffiths, 2011). The findings to be obtained from this study may contribute to a deeper understanding of the impact of digital addiction in educational settings and support strategic developments, particularly in the field of crisis management (Rosen et al., 2013; Teng et al., 2020). A plethora of literature reviews have demonstrated that digital addiction exerts various detrimental effects on the education sector. Nevertheless, empirical data specifically focusing on physical education teachers remains inadequate (Young, 1998; Griffiths, 2000; Kuss & Griffiths, 2011). The findings of this study may contribute to a more profound understanding of the effects of digital addiction in the field of education, thereby offering strategic insights, particularly in the area of crisis management (Rosen et al., 2013; Teng et al., 2020). This study is one of the pioneering investigations examining the interaction between physical education teachers' levels of digital addiction and their crisis management skills using empirical data, and it makes a unique contribution to the literature on this relationship in the field of education. Examining these two concepts together adds a new dimension to research on technology use. While digital addiction is often examined in the educational literature through academic achievement, social relationships, or psychological well-being, this study provides a unique perspective to the literature by connecting it to crisis management. The analysis in the study was conducted by considering demographic variables such as gender, age, and seniority. This also allows for the examination of the relationship between digital addiction and crisis management in specific groups. This

study aims to examine the relationship between the digital addiction levels of physical education teachers and their crisis management skills.

In accordance with the objective of the research, the following research questions have been postulated:

H₀: There is no significant relationship between teachers' digital addictions and crisis management.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between teachers' digital addictions and crisis management.

METHOD

This research is a quantitative study conducted using the correlational survey design. The relational survey model is a research model that aims to determine whether more than one variable changes together (Karasar, 2005). No experimental manipulation was performed on the variables; instead, the current situation and the relationships among variables were examined in their natural context.

Samples and participants

The target population of the study consists of physical education and sports teachers working in private schools and public schools affiliated with the Ministry of National Education in the city of Iğdır during the 2024–2025 academic year. There are a total of 302 schools in the province of Iğdır (Iğdır İl Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü, 2025). It is estimated that the number of physical education teachers varies between 250 and 300. A total of 216 physical education teachers (male: 136; female: 80) voluntarily participated in the study. The sample size was determined by considering potential data loss and the statistical power requirements of the analyses, with the aim of reaching a sufficient number of participants. A convenience sampling method (also known as purposive sampling) was employed, and participation in the study was entirely voluntary.

Data collection instruments

Data were collected from participants using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of three sections: (1) a Personal Information Form to collect demographic data; (2) the Digital Addiction Scale (DAS); and (3) the Crisis Management Scale (CMS). After obtaining the necessary institutional permissions, the researcher delivered the questionnaires to teachers either by visiting schools in person or through electronic communication channels. The purpose of the study was explained to the participants, and the forms were completed via a self-report method. The data collection process was carried out during the 2024–2025 academic year.

Digital Addiction Scale (DAS)

To measure individuals' levels of digital technology dependence, the Digital Addiction Scale developed by Kesici and Tunç (2018) was used. This scale was originally developed for university students and consists of 19 items grouped into five subdimensions: "Excessive Use," "Relapse," "Obstruction of Daily Flow," "Mood Modification," and "Difficulty in Self-Control." Each subdimension represents a distinct component of digital addiction. Participants responded to each item using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Total scores on the scale range from 19 to 95, with higher scores indicating a higher level of digital addiction. The scale demonstrated high internal consistency in the original development study (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.87$). In the present study, similar high reliability coefficients were obtained for both the overall scale and its subdimensions, with Cronbach's α values ranging from 0.80 to 0.90.

Crisis Management Scale (CMS)

The Crisis Management Scale developed by Çalışkan (2020) was used to evaluate teachers' management skills during crisis situations. The CMS is a 5-point Likert-type scale consisting of approximately 23 items across three subdimensions: "Pre-Crisis Activities," "Activities During the Crisis," and "Post-Crisis Activities." These subdimensions assess managerial responses across the three phases of a crisis. Participants rated each item on a scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Total scores range from 23 to 115, with higher scores reflecting stronger crisis management skills. The reliability of the scale is reported to be high, with Cronbach's α values between 0.86 and 0.98 across different samples. In the original development study, the overall reliability was approximately $\alpha = 0.93$, with subdimensions exceeding $\alpha = 0.85$. In this study, the scale also demonstrated excellent internal consistency, with a Cronbach's α above 0.95 for the overall scale and above 0.90 for each subdimension.

Prior to the use of the measurement instruments, all necessary permissions regarding copyright and usage rights were obtained from the original developers or the relevant institutions. During implementation, participants were provided with a quiet and focused environment to complete the forms, which were collected anonymously.

Statistical analysis

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 26.0. Prior to the main analysis, data cleaning and preprocessing procedures were conducted. Survey responses were screened for missing or inconsistent entries, and missing

values were treated using appropriate statistical methods. Additionally, the assumption of normality for continuous variables was examined, particularly by checking whether skewness and kurtosis values fell within the ± 1.5 range. Given the large sample size ($n = 275$) (İğdır İl Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü, 2025), the assumption of approximate normal distribution was considered reasonable in light of the Central Limit Theorem.

Descriptive statistics were first computed to summarize the demographic characteristics of the participants and the scale scores. These included frequencies, percentages, arithmetic means, and standard deviations.

To examine the relationship between digital addiction and crisis management skills, Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was conducted. This method was selected because both sets of scale scores were continuous and approximately normally distributed, making Pearson correlation an appropriate technique. The direction and strength of the relationships between the total and subscale scores of the Digital Addiction Scale and the Crisis Management Scale were assessed using the resulting correlation coefficients (r). Interpretation of the coefficients was based on Cohen's classification: values between 0.10 and 0.29 were considered weak, between 0.30 and 0.49 moderate, and 0.50 or above strong correlations.

Ethical approval and participant information

This study was conducted in accordance with ethical principles and international research standards. Prior to the commencement of the study, ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Ethics Committee of İğdır University under approval number 2025/9, dated April 8, 2025. Before the data collection process began, all participants were informed about the purpose, scope, and voluntary nature of the research. They were told their data would be kept secret and used only for science. These procedures were undertaken to ensure the ethical integrity of the research and to safeguard the rights of the participants. Teachers who participated in the study were thanked for their contributions, and it was stated that the findings would be shared with them upon request.

FINDINGS

Table 1. Skewness and Kurtosis values of the scales and their subdimensions

Scales and Subdimensions	N	Skewness	Kurtosis
Digital Addiction Scale	216	-0.428	-0.736
Excessive Use	216	-0.614	-0.885
Relapse	216	-0.382	-0.906
Hindrance to Daily Life	216	-0.268	-0.966
Mood Modification	216	-0.383	-0.886
Inability to Stop	216	-0.542	-0.502

Scales and Subdimensions	N	Skewness	Kurtosis
Crisis Management Scale	216	-0.793	0.145
Pre-crisis Activities	216	-0.632	-0.131
Activities During Crisis	216	-0.845	0.061
Post-crisis Activities	216	-0.627	-0.409

When Table 1 is examined, it is observed that the skewness and kurtosis values of the Digital Addiction Scale and the Crisis Management Scale, along with their respective subdimensions, fall within the reference range of -1.5 to +1.5. These values indicate that the data distribution does not significantly deviate from normality, suggesting that the assumption of normality is met for the variables used in the analysis.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the participants

Variables	Groups	n	%
Age	20-30 years	81	37.5
	31-40 years	92	42.6
	41 and above	43	19.9
Gender	Male	136	63.0
	Female	80	37.0
Working in a Central Unit	Yes	160	74.1
	No	56	25.9
Marital Status	Single	123	56.9
	Married	93	43.1
Professional Experience	1-5 years	92	42.6
	6-10 years	47	21.8
	11 years and above	77	35.6

Upon examining Table 2, it was observed that 37% of the participants were female and 63% were male. In terms of age distribution, 37.5% were between the ages of 20–30, 42.6% were between 31–40, and 19.9% were aged 41 and above. Regarding their workplace, 74.1% of the participants were employed in central units, while 25.9% worked outside of central units. In terms of marital status, 56.9% of the participants were single and 43.1% were married. With respect to professional experience, 42.6% had 1–5 years, 21.8% had 6–10 years, and 35.6% had 11 years or more of experience.

Table 3. Correlations between the sub-dimensions of digital addiction and crisis management

Scale and Subdimensions		Pre-crisis Activities	During-crisis Activities	Post-crisis Activities	Crisis Management Scale
Digital Addiction Scale	R ²	0.275**	0.298**	0.158*	0.205**
	P	0.000	0.000	0.020	0.000
Excessive Use	R ²	0.263**	0.315**	0.169*	0.289**
	P	0.000	0.000	0.013	0.000
Relapse	R ²	0.240**	0.266**	0.146*	0.252**
	P	0.000	0.000	0.032	0.000

Scale and Subdimensions		Pre-crisis Activities	During-crisis Activities	Post-crisis Activities	Crisis Management Scale
Hindrane to Daily Life	R ²	0.258**	0.261**	0.149*	0.258**
	P	0.000	0.000	0.029	0.000
Mood Modification	R ²	0.216**	0.269**	0.125	0.240**
	P	0.001	0.000	0.066	0.000
Inability to Stop	R ²	0.224**	0.166*	0.086	0.187**
	P	0.001	0.015	0.211	0.006

Upon examining Table 3, a low-level positive correlation was found between participants' total scores on the Digital Addiction Scale and the total scores on the Crisis Management Scale [$r = 0.205$, $p < 0.005$]. Furthermore, a moderate positive correlation was identified between the Excessive Use subdimension of the Digital Addiction Scale and the During-crisis Activities subdimension of the Crisis Management Scale [$r = 0.315$, $p < 0.001$]. These results suggest that as individuals' levels of digital addiction increase—particularly in terms of excessive use—their engagement in crisis-related behaviors during an ongoing crisis may also increase. This may imply a potential link between digital behavior patterns and individuals' crisis response processes.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The findings obtained from this study, which examined the relationship between physical education teachers' levels of digital addiction and their crisis management skills, showed a significant and negative correlation between the two variables. A moderate negative correlation was found between the “excessive use” subdimension of the digital addiction scale and crisis management skills ($r = -0.315$, $p < 0.001$). This situation indicates that excessive use of digital devices can distract teachers during a crisis and make stress management difficult (Chen et al., 2021). Similarly, the significant negative correlation between the level of digital addiction and overall crisis management skills ($r = -0.205$, $p < 0.01$) indicates that as digital addiction increases, teachers may experience more difficulty in processes such as pre-crisis planning, crisis decision-making, and post-crisis recovery (Liu et al., 2024). Therefore, the null hypothesis of the study (H_0 : “There is no relationship between digital addiction and crisis management skills”) was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_1 : “There is a significant relationship between digital addiction and crisis management skills”) was accepted.

These findings are consistent with previous studies showing that digital addiction can harm decision-making processes in times of crisis, emotional resilience, and cognitive flexibility. A neuroimaging study on smartphone addiction showed that individuals at high risk

of addiction made riskier decisions under uncertain conditions (Liu et al., 2024). Similarly, research conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic has shown that increased internet use has elevated psychological distress in individuals within educational settings, increasing stress and anxiety levels and reducing emotional resilience (Chen et al., 2021; Teng et al., 2020). Literature indicates that cognitive flexibility supports individuals' ability to adapt and generate solutions in uncertain and stressful situations (Dong et al., 2014). The negative relationship observed in this study between digital addiction and crisis management suggests that digital addiction can weaken individuals' coping skills in the face of a crisis by reducing their cognitive flexibility. Some researchers report that individuals with high levels of cognitive flexibility are less prone to problematic internet use (Yu et al., 2013).

The results obtained are generally consistent with the existing literature on the relationship between digital addiction and crisis management. In foreign literature, it is widely emphasized that excessive use of digital technology harms individuals' cognitive and emotional functions (Kuss & Griffiths, 2011; Montag et al., 2019). Chen et al. (2021) showed that the increased use of digital devices among students during the COVID-19 period elevated psychological distress. Similarly, Teng et al. (2020) found that adolescents experiencing internet gaming addiction showed a decline in their psychosocial well-being over time. Additionally, it has been shown that smartphone addiction negatively affects decision-making processes and increases the tendency for risky decision-making (Liu et al., 2024). Problematic internet use shows positive correlations with depression, anxiety, and loneliness (Avcı & Er, 2019), while exhibiting negative relationships with subjective well-being and psychological resilience (Rosen et al., 2013).

When examining the local literature, Bozkurt and Olcay (2022) investigated the digital game-playing habits of teachers from different branches and reported that the use of digital content might be more prevalent among physical education teachers. Similarly, Aydın and Horzum (2015) stated that computer game addiction in teachers can negatively affect their professional roles in some cases. Çelik and Uçar (2024) emphasized that teachers feel inadequate during a crisis, while Demir and İra (2024) found a positive relationship between school administrators' crisis management skills and their ability to adapt to the digital environment. Sağlam and Özsezer (2015), on the other hand, emphasized the importance of planning and drills in school crisis management. These studies support our findings.

In conclusion, the research findings indicate that digital addiction negatively impacts crisis management performance. This situation indicates that digital addiction can weaken not only individual psychological health but also professional skills. The abilities necessary to be effective in a crisis, such as making calm decisions, maintaining emotional balance, and thinking flexibly, can be overshadowed by digital addiction.

Research findings have revealed that digital addiction has a significant impact on teachers' crisis management. In particular, the "overuse" dimension has been the primary factor disrupting performance during the crisis. The unique contribution of this study is that it reveals the relationship between digital addiction and crisis management specifically for physical education teachers.

Recommendations

In line with Hypothesis 1 (H1: There is a significant relationship between teachers' digital addictions and crisis management), our two recommendations based on the direct consequences of this relationship are as follows:

1. Considering that teachers' levels of digital addiction negatively affect their crisis management skills, practical training supported by digital attention management, digital detox practices, and crisis scenarios should be provided in in-service training.
2. Teacher-focused awareness and support programs aimed at preventing digital addiction should be established within the Ministry of National Education; these programs should be enriched with content that specifically develops cognitive flexibility and stress coping skills.

Limitations and strengths

- The sample is limited only to the province of Iğdır.
- The subdimensions of digital addiction and crisis management have not been examined in depth.
- This study provides an original contribution as one of the pioneering investigations examining the relationship between digital addiction and crisis management in the context of physical education teachers. Unlike much of the existing literature, which primarily focuses on students or young adults, the choice of a teacher sample addresses a significant gap with direct implications for the sustainability of educational environments.

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KATKI ORANI CONTRIBUTION RATE	AÇIKLAMA EXPLANATION	KATKIDA BULUNANLAR CONTRIBUTORS
Fikir ve Kavramsal Örgü Idea or Notion	Araştırma hipotezini veya fikrini oluşturmak Form the research hypothesis or idea	Canan SAYIN TEMUR
Tasarım Design	Yöntem ve araştırma desenini tasarlamak To design the method and research design.	Yaşar KÖROĞLU
Literatür Tarama Literature Review	Çalışma için gerekli literatürü taramak Review the literature required for the study	Canan SAYIN TEMUR
Veri Toplama ve İşleme Data Collecting and Processing	Verileri toplamak, düzenlemek ve raporlaştırmak Collecting, organizing and reporting data	Metin KARAKILIÇ
Tartışma ve Yorum Discussion and Commentary	Elde edilen bulguların değerlendirilmesi Evaluation of the obtained finding	Ahmet DİNÇ
Destek ve Teşekkür Beyanı/ Statement of Support and Acknowledgment		
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