



THE USE OF EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES BY ADMINISTRATORS AND TEACHERS WORKING IN SPECIAL EDUCATION CENTERS IN THE AGE OF DIGITALIZING EDUCATION: EXAMINING THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARD EDUCATIONAL DIGITAL GAMES

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Abstract

The digital transformation experienced in the twenty-first century has profoundly affected education systems and led to the restructuring of instructional processes. While educational technologies make learning environments more flexible, accessible, and personalized, this transformation becomes even more pronounced in the field of special education. In the context of special education where individual differences are intense educational digital games and technology-supported instructional practices stand out as important pedagogical tools that support the learning process. The aim of this study is to examine the attitudes of special education teachers and administrators toward educational digital games within the context of their use of educational technologies in the age of digitalizing education. In the study, teachers' and administrators' attitudes toward technology and digital games were addressed through a holistic approach, encompassing pedagogical and managerial dimensions. The results show that special education teachers and administrators generally have positive attitudes toward educational technologies and educational digital games. However, these attitudes appear to be related to factors such as pedagogical competence, professional experience, and the level of institutional support. It was concluded that educational digital games support the learning processes of individuals with special needs through features that increase motivation and provide repetition and feedback. In this respect, the study contributes to the literature by addressing technology use in special education not only through individual attitudes but also through pedagogical and managerial dimensions.

Keywords: Special education, educational technologies, educational digital games, teacher attitudes, administrator attitudes, digitalization.



INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of this study is to examine the attitudes of special education teachers and administrators toward educational digital games within the context of their use of educational technologies in the age of digitalizing education. Recent studies and policy reports emphasize that technology use in special education should be evaluated together with accessibility, instructional adaptation, and institutional support rather than only technical access (Erdem, 2024; Learning, 2010; UNESCO IITE, 2024). Within the scope of the study, the perceptions of teachers and administrators working in the field of special education regarding technology and digital games were addressed through a holistic approach.

The study aims to reveal how educational digital games are evaluated as a pedagogical tool in special education, how these evaluations differ according to teacher and administrator roles, and how they relate to attitudes toward technology use. In this sense, the study offers a perspective that considers not only individual attitudes but also institutional and managerial dimensions. The scope of the study is limited to teachers and administrators working in special education centers. Within this scope, the ways educational technologies are used in instructional processes, attitudes toward educational digital games, and how these attitudes are reflected in pedagogical practices are examined. Considering the distinctive structure of special education, the contribution of technology use to individualized instructional processes is emphasized. Educational digital games are evaluated in relation to assistive technologies, instructional technologies, and digital learning materials, thereby establishing a broad framework regarding technology use in special education (Çay et al., 2020).

The fact that individual differences are prominent in special education necessitates the adoption of flexible, adaptable, and student-centered approaches in instructional processes. Educational technologies and educational digital games are among the important pedagogical tools that can respond to these needs. The literature indicates that technology integration in special education is shaped by teacher competence, assistive technology readiness, and institutional conditions, and that digital game-based learning may support motivation, participation, and individualized practice when aligned with pedagogical goals (Erdem, 2024; Hostovecky & Tokovska, 2025; UNESCO IITE, 2024). The significance of this study stems from examining teachers' and administrators' attitudes together by addressing educational digital games within the context of special education. Previous studies have mostly discussed educational digital games in general education contexts, whereas applications in special education remain comparatively limited, and administrators' roles in technology integration receive less attention than teacher attitudes (Erdem, 2024; Hostovecky & Tokovska, 2025). By demonstrating that technology use in special education is shaped not only by individual teacher preferences but also by managerial support and institutional vision, this study provides an important contribution to literature.

Problem statement: What are the attitudes of teachers and administrators working in special education centers toward educational digital games within the context of their use of educational technologies in the age of digitalizing education? **Sub-problems:** (1) What are the participants' general attitude levels toward educational technologies? (2) What are their attitude levels toward educational digital games? (3) Do attitudes toward educational digital games differ according to role type? (4) Do attitudes toward educational technologies differ according to professional experience? (5) Is there a significant relationship between attitudes toward educational technologies and educational digital games?

METHOD

Research Model

This study was designed using the survey model, one of the quantitative research methods, to examine special education teachers' and administrators' use of educational technologies and their attitudes toward educational digital games in the age of digitalizing education. The survey model is a research approach that enables the description of individuals' current situations, attitudes, and perceptions



regarding a particular phenomenon. The main reason for choosing the survey model is to reveal the general tendencies of teachers and administrators working in special education regarding educational technologies and educational digital games and to examine how these attitudes differ in terms of certain variables. In this context, rather than establishing cause–effect relationships, the study aims to describe the current situation in a multidimensional manner. The research model is descriptive in nature in that it addresses technology use in special education together with its pedagogical and managerial dimensions, and it offers a methodological framework consistent with recent survey-based studies examining teachers’ attitudes toward assistive technology in special education settings (Erdem, 2024).

Study Group

The study group consists of special education teachers and administrators working in special education centers. Participants were included in the study on a voluntary basis. A non-probability convenience sampling method was used, and the inclusion criterion was active employment in the field of special education. In determining the study group, the criterion of actively working in the field of special education was taken as the basis.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of participants.

Variables		f	%
Role	Teacher	82	68.3
	Administrator	38	31.7
Gender	Male	66	55.0
	Female	54	45.0
Professional Experience	1–5 years	34	28.3
	6–10 years	47	39.2
Total		120	100

As shown in Table 1, most participants were teachers (68.3%), while 31.7% were administrators. The gender distribution was relatively balanced, and participants with 6–10 years of experience constituted the largest professional experience group. These characteristics indicate that the study group included participants with varied institutional roles and experience levels.

Data Collection Process

Research data were obtained through structured data collection instruments aimed at determining the attitudes of special education teachers and administrators toward educational technologies and educational digital games. The data collection process was carried out on a voluntary basis, and participants were provided with the necessary information about the purpose of the study. Data was collected from teachers and administrators working in special education centers via the measurement tools prepared within the scope of the study. For content validity, the draft data collection tool was reviewed by three experts in special education, educational technologies, and measurement and evaluation, and the items were revised in line with their feedback. In addition, a two-week pilot application was conducted before the main implementation to evaluate the clarity, comprehensibility, and applicability of the items. During data collection, attention was paid to the principles of confidentiality and anonymity so that participants could express their views freely and sincerely. Participants’ personal information was protected, and the collected data was used solely for scientific purposes. The fact that the data collection process was limited to a specific time period was considered consistent with the descriptive nature of the study, as it reflects participants’ current attitudes and perceptions.

Data Analysis

The data obtained within the scope of the study were analyzed using statistical methods appropriate for quantitative data analysis. In the analysis process, first, the data was organized and descriptive statistics were calculated. Accordingly, frequency and percentage distributions, as well as mean and



standard deviation values, were used. Descriptive statistics were used to determine participants' levels of attitude toward educational technologies and educational digital games. For group comparisons, an independent samples t test was used according to role type, and one-way ANOVA was used according to professional experience. In addition, Pearson correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between attitudes toward educational technologies and attitudes toward educational digital games. The statistically accepted significance level was set at $p < .05$. The findings were presented and interpreted through tables. The analysis results were evaluated in line with the purpose of the study and associated with the literature in the discussion section.

Ethical Principles

Ethical principles were followed throughout the research process. Participants' voluntary participation was ensured, and they were informed about the purpose and scope of the study. Participants' identity information was kept confidential, and the collected data was used only for scientific purposes.

FINDINGS

General Attitudes Toward Educational Technologies

Descriptive statistics regarding participants' general levels of attitude toward educational technologies are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Attitude levels toward educational technologies.

Variable	n	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	Std.Dev.
Attitude Toward Educational Technologies	120	3,92	,54

As seen in Table 2, participants' attitudes toward educational technologies are at a positive level. This finding indicates that the use of technology is generally embraced in special education settings.

Attitudes Toward Educational Digital Games

Findings regarding participants' attitudes toward educational digital games are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Attitudes toward educational digital games.

Variable	n	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	Std.Dev.
Attitude Toward Educational Digital Games	120	4.05	,48

According to Table 3, participants' attitudes toward educational digital games are at a high level. This indicates that digital games are accepted as a pedagogical tool in special education.

Comparison of Attitudes by Role Type

The distribution of teachers' and administrators' attitude scores toward educational digital games by role type is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Attitudes toward educational digital games by role type.

Role	n	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	Std.Dev.
Teacher	82	4.12	,45
Administrator	38	3.89	,52

As seen in Table 4, teachers' attitude scores toward educational digital games are higher than those of administrators. This may be related to teachers' direct use of digital games in the instructional process.

Attitudes Toward Educational Technologies by Professional Experience

Participants' attitudes toward educational technologies according to professional experience are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Attitudes toward educational technologies by professional experience.

Professional Experience	n	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	Std.Dev.
1–5 years	34	4.08	.49
6–10 years	47	3.95	.52
11 years and above	39	3.74	.58

According to Table 5, participants with less professional experience have higher attitudes toward educational technologies. This finding suggests that teachers who grew up with digital technologies may be more inclined to use technology.

Relationship Between Attitudes Toward Educational Technologies and Educational Digital Games

The relationship between participants' attitudes toward educational technologies and their attitudes toward educational digital games is presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Relationship between attitudes.

Variables	R
Educational Technologies – Educational Digital Games	.61

As seen in Table 6, there is a moderate positive relationship between attitudes toward educational technologies and attitudes toward educational digital games. This finding indicates that positive attitudes toward technology support the use of educational digital games.

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, and RECOMMENDATIONS

In this study, special education teachers' and administrators' use of educational technologies and their attitudes toward educational digital games in the age of digitalizing education were addressed within a multidimensional structure. The findings reveal that technology use in special education is not merely a matter of technical competence; rather, it is a holistic process that should be evaluated together with pedagogical practices, managerial support, and individual attitudes. In this respect, the findings largely overlap with the literature that addresses technology integration in special education in a multidimensional manner (Erdem, 2024; UNESCO, 2024; UNESCO IITE, 2024).

Discussion of general attitudes toward technology

The findings indicate that special education teachers and administrators have positive general attitudes toward educational technologies. The high average attitude levels regarding educational technologies suggest that technology has become an instructional tool embraced in special education settings. This finding is consistent with previous studies showing that teachers' attitudes toward technology facilitate the use of technology in instructional processes (Birkollu et al., 2017; Erdem, 2024). In special education, where individual differences are evident, the supportive role of technology becomes more visible. However, the findings also show that positive attitudes toward technology do not always guarantee the implementation of high-quality and effective practices. As emphasized in the literature, even when teachers have a positive view of technology, they may reflect technology in classroom practices to a limited extent due to insufficient pedagogical knowledge or inadequate technical support. In this study, it is notable that positive attitudes toward technology yield more meaningful outcomes especially when integrated with institutional support and managerial vision. The findings show that administrators' attitudes toward technology are an important variable that indirectly influences teachers' technology use.

The role of assistive and instructional technologies in special education

The findings reveal that assistive and instructional technologies play an important role in special education. Participants evaluate technology as a tool that supports learning and enables individualized instruction. This is also supported by the high attitude towards averages toward educational



technologies. This finding aligns with the literature emphasizing the role of technology in creating accessible learning environments in studies conducted with individuals who experience learning difficulties (Degirmenci et al., 2020; UNESCO IITE, 2024; Saygıner & Laçın, 2024). Assistive technologies increase students' active participation in the learning process and support independent learning skills.

However, the findings suggest that the effective use of instructional technologies is directly related to teachers' pedagogical technology knowledge. Using technological tools only for presentation purposes may not provide the expected contribution to the learning process. Therefore, the findings indicate that technology is positioned as a pedagogical tool in special education, but that this positioning should be strengthened through teacher education and institutional support.

Discussion of visualization and animation-based digital materials

The findings show that visualization, infographics, and animation-based digital materials have an important place in special education. Participants evaluate such materials as tools that help concrete abstract concepts and reduce cognitive load. This result is consistent with studies demonstrating the facilitating effect of visual-based digital materials on learning (Baglama et al., 2017; Baglama et al., 2018). At the same time, the literature emphasizes that excessive use of visual materials or use independent of pedagogical objectives can be distracting. In this context, the findings show that when animation- and visualization-based materials are used consciously and purposefully, they make meaningful contributions to the learning process. There have been extensive studies regarding the use and efficacy of multimedia learning in education. With the advent of ubiquitous technologies like smartphones and tablet pc, people start spending more time watching videos and engaging in other media contents. Meanwhile, the use of educational videos that are prepared using interactive e-learning techniques has been trending upwards in commercial and educational institutions. There are varied and extensive contributions of multimedia based educational materials to learning and teaching processes (Türköz, 2019). Teachers' evaluation of these materials in line with pedagogical goals indicates that technology in special education is used not superficially but functionally.

Reciprocal discussion of attitudes toward educational digital games

When attitudes toward educational digital games are examined, it is seen that teachers and administrators approach these games positively in general. The findings reveal that attitude levels toward educational digital games are high and that teachers consider these games a functional tool in the instructional process. The fact that educational digital games provide repetition, feedback, and motivation supports the active participation of individuals with special needs in learning processes. Recent literature reviews also underline that digital game-based learning can strengthen engagement and individualized support for learners with intellectual disabilities when pedagogically structured (Ağırçöl, 2020; Hostovecky & Tokovska, 2025).

The implicit learning effect emphasized by Ağırçöl (2020) is consistent with the findings obtained in this study. However, the literature states that if digital games are used independently of pedagogical objectives, their contribution to the learning process may remain limited. The findings of this study show that teachers evaluate educational digital games not only as an element of entertainment but as pedagogical tools that structure learning. This can be considered an important indicator for the conscious use of digital games in special education.

Discussion of the managerial dimension and technological leadership

One of the important findings is that administrators' attitudes toward technology indirectly influence teachers' technology use. Comparisons by role type show that teachers' attitudes toward educational digital games are higher than administrators', while managerial support plays a decisive role in technology integration. This finding indicates that technology integration in special education is an institutional process beyond individual efforts. Administrators' technological leadership roles are critical in terms of support provided to teachers, infrastructure opportunities, and establishing a shared institutional vision. The literature also emphasizes that when managerial support is inadequate,



teachers' motivation to use technology decreases and inclusive technology practices become harder to sustain (UNESCO, 2024; UNESCO IITE, 2024).

Conclusions and recommendations

In this study, special education teachers' and administrators' use of educational technologies and their attitudes toward educational digital games in the age of digitalizing education were addressed within a holistic framework. The findings discussed in detail in the discussion section reveal that technology use in special education is not merely a matter of technical competence or individual preference; rather, it is a multidimensional process that should be evaluated together with pedagogical practices, managerial support, and institutional structure. In this respect, the study presents results that support and extend the literature on technology integration in special education.

General conclusions based on the research findings

The results show that special education teachers and administrators generally have positive attitudes toward educational technologies and educational digital games. As emphasized in the discussion section, participants' positive attitudes toward technology can be regarded as an important factor that facilitates the acceptance and dissemination of technology-supported instructional practices in special education settings. Especially in the context of special education, where individual differences are pronounced, it is understood that the supportive role of technology in the instructional process becomes more visible. However, the findings also show that positive attitudes toward technology alone do not guarantee effective and high-quality practices. As stated in the discussion section, for technology use to make a meaningful contribution to instructional processes, it needs to be integrated with pedagogical competence, instructional design knowledge, and institutional support. This result indicates that technology integration is a planned and systematic process beyond individual efforts.

Pedagogical implications regarding technology use in special education

The findings show that assistive and instructional technologies support individualized learning processes in special education. As discussed, teachers' evaluation of technology as a tool that structures learning and adapts to students' learning pace reveals a strong basis for pedagogical technology use in special education. It was concluded that visualization, infographic, and animation-based digital materials make significant contributions in terms of concretizing abstract concepts, reducing cognitive load, and increasing learning motivation. As emphasized in the discussion section, this finding shows that technology in special education is not only supportive but has become a central element of the instructional process. It was also determined that educational digital games make meaningful contributions to the learning processes of individuals with special needs by providing repetition, feedback, and motivation. As discussed, using game-based digital applications in alignment with pedagogical goals increases the permanence and effectiveness of learning. In this context, it was concluded that educational digital games should be evaluated as a pedagogical tool in special education.

Conclusions regarding the managerial and institutional dimension

The results reveal that administrators' attitudes toward technology in special education institutions indirectly but strongly influence teachers' technology use. As stated in the discussion section, administrators' technological leadership roles have a decisive function in providing infrastructure opportunities, supporting teachers, and establishing a shared institutional vision.

This finding indicates that technology integration in special education cannot be limited to individual teacher efforts; it needs to be strengthened through managerial support and institutional policies. Therefore, to develop sustainable practices for technological use in special education institutions, administrators should assume active and guiding roles.



Practical recommendations

Based on the research findings and the inferences obtained in the discussion section, the following practical recommendations have been developed: In-service training programs should be planned for special education teachers, focusing on the pedagogical use of educational technologies. Educational digital games, animation and visualization-based digital materials should be systematically integrated into instructional processes by considering the characteristics of individuals with special needs and instructional objectives. Technological infrastructure in special education institutions should be strengthened, and teachers' access to digital materials should be facilitated.

Strategies should be developed to support the technological leadership roles of administrators, and a common and sustainable institutional vision for technology use should be established.

Recommendations for education policies and future research

In line with the results, it is important to develop technology integration strategies specific to the field of special education within the context of education policies. It is recommended that teacher education programs include more content on technology use and digital material design in special education. In future studies, research can be conducted that addresses technology use in special education from the perspectives of different stakeholders (students, families, and counseling services). In addition, comparative studies focusing on different special needs groups may reveal the effects of technology use in more detail.

Overall evaluation of the results

In conclusion, this study shows that technology used in special education displays a multidimensional structure and that educational digital games are an important component of this structure. Consistent with the findings presented in the discussion section, it is understood that positive attitudes toward technology facilitate the integration of educational digital games into instructional processes; however, for this integration to be effective and sustainable, pedagogical competence, managerial support, and institutional vision must be addressed together.

In this respect, the study offers important contributions to the literature on technology use in special education both theoretically and in terms of practice.

Contribution and limitations of the study

The results and recommendations obtained in this study make it possible to evaluate the study's original contributions and limitations in a more meaningful way. The findings presented in the discussion and conclusion sections clearly show the necessity of addressing technology use in special education through its pedagogical, managerial, and institutional dimensions.

This holistic perspective constitutes the basis of the study's original contribution to literature. The original contribution of this study is that it examines the attitudes of special education teachers and administrators toward educational technologies and educational digital games together, investigating technology integration in special education not only through individual attitudes but within a holistic framework in the context of pedagogical practices and managerial support. It can be determined what kind of work has been done on the centers' use of technology. As emphasized in the conclusion and discussion sections, positive attitudes toward technology alone do not guarantee effective practices; these attitudes need to be integrated with pedagogical competence and institutional support (Çay et al., 2020).

The study also makes an original contribution by addressing educational digital games in the context of special education not merely as motivation-enhancing tools but as pedagogical components that structure learning. The findings presented in the conclusion section show that educational digital games make meaningful contributions to learning processes when used in alignment with individualized instructional processes.



In this respect, the study expands the literature on the use of digital games in special education through pedagogical and managerial dimensions. Facilities and monitoring of special education schools in Turkey A general study can be conducted regarding its use. In schools with technical equipment, special Technological uses in education can be examined. Special education and compatibility (Çay et al., 2020). In addition, examining administrators' technological leadership roles in relation to teacher attitudes can be considered an important contribution emphasizing that technology integration in special education is an institutional process. This approach also forms the theoretical basis of the practice- and policy-level recommendations developed in the conclusion section.

The findings and conclusions should be evaluated within certain limitations. First, this study is limited to teachers and administrators working in special education centers. The inferences presented in the conclusion section should be interpreted within this context and should not be directly generalized to different educational levels or different stakeholder groups.

Another limitation is that the data was obtained based on participants' self-reports. The attitudes and perceptions emphasized in the discussion and conclusion sections are based on participants' statements and do not include direct observation of classroom practices. This should be considered when interpreting the results.

In addition, the study was conducted within a specific time, and it should be considered that attitudes toward technology use and educational digital games may change over time. To reveal the long-term effects of the recommendations developed in the conclusion section, future longitudinal studies may make important contributions to the field.

Finally, educational digital games and educational technologies were addressed within a general framework, and the study did not focus on a specific game type or a particular special needs group. While this provides a broad perspective, it can be considered a limitation in terms of more in-depth analyses.

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Ethics and Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that ethical guidelines were followed throughout the research process. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained from participants, confidentiality and anonymity were protected, and the collected data were used only for scientific purposes. The authors also declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding this study.

Author Contribution

Yücehan Yücesoy contributed to the conceptualization of the study, research design, and supervision; Burak Demir contributed to the literature review, data collection process, and initial drafting; S. Sunay Yıldırım Doğru contributed to validation, statistical analysis, and interpretation of the findings; and Selenay Güler contributed to the organization of Tables, discussion-conclusion writing, and final editing. The overall contribution of each author to the article is equal and corresponds to 25%.

Data Availability

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

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