



## Game Addiction and Its Effects on Teenagers' Mental Health

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**Abstract:** *The aim of this study is to describe the game addiction behavior and its effect on mental health of teenagers. This study used qualitative method. The data collection was carried out in three ways: interview, observation, and documentation. The data were analyzed by using Miles and Huberman's theories. In order to maintain the validity, the researcher did triangulation techniques. The results of the study showed that online game addiction had an effect on several domains, namely a sense of dependency that was marked by disability to withdraw from the desire to play games. Accordingly, the gamers frequently declared that their life without online gaming was empty. They were intolerance to the use of time, as they said that the time needed to play online games was uncertain, and their disability to control their emotions due to defeat during the games.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The development of information technology today has changed the hierarchy of human needs. It cannot be denied, the presence of the internet in the midst of Indonesian society today has become one of the important aspects and even become a mandatory thing that must exist in every second of human life. This is because all the needs of humans can be fulfilled only with one click. Browsing, chatting, getting the latest news, buying and selling, streaming videos, and looking for fun through various games that can be downloaded through one application are concrete examples of fully facilitated activities by the internet (APJII, 2014). The ease and freedom of using the internet in accessing various things give a bad influence if it is not carefully filtered. The ease of accessing a variety of negative contents as well as the number of various games that neglect is the impact of the internet that has a bad influence on millennials as active internet users in Indonesia. Unfortunately,

the various facilities presented by the internet are widely abused by the millennial generation who are currently very active in using the internet.

The results of research conducted by the Internet Service Providers Association Indonesia (APJII), internet use in Indonesia continues to increase, especially when compared with the results of research in the previous years. As many as 24.23% related to the profile of internet user penetration in 2012 which then continued to increase in 2014 by 34.9% or around 88.1 million active internet users in Indonesia (APJII, 2014). Active internet users as described in the results of the research above, do not rule out the possibility that the largest users are millennial generation who are active in surfing in the virtual world with various offered conveniences (Desmita, 2009). In addition, various reasons for using the internet among millennial generations in Indonesia also vary. One of the biggest reasons based on the results of the research conducted by (APJII, 2014) is the activity of

finding entertainment and having fun with special activities when playing online games.

Addiction to online games is the most addictive activity on the internet. Activities that are continuously carried out to damage the order of activities that should be chronic and compulsive behavior to satisfy themselves in games played with internet connections to cause problems in everyday life. Furthermore, due to someone who is addicted to the game (game addiction behavior) is not able to control, reduce, stop the game, ignoring other activities so as to make his or her social relationships and interactions with family, and people around them become less well in academic achievement and have less and worse motivation to learn (Jannah & Nirwana, 2015)

Based on the results of preliminary observations carried out by the writer in an internet cafe that provides online game play facilities and observations made on high school students who have smartphones, it was found that they regularly played online games without binding time limits. They would play as much as possible to the trophies they wanted. As a result, many mandatory tasks that must be done were then neglected simply because of a lack of tolerance for the use of time in playing online games. Other things that were found were that the players of online games were usually very difficult to complete the game. So, so was not is not uncommon for them to be willing to sleep at a free internet provider that provides maximum facilities and services. Another thing that was always done by online game players was the lack of tolerance for the use of time. It was so often found that online game players who were ready to spend the night at internet cafes just to complete their ambitions in the higher trophies. The use of time that can be said to be unlimited then impacts on other health problems due to the delay in filling the nutrition needed by the body. Online game addicts spend more time preparing for game settings and the actual playing (Kuss & Griffiths, 2012)

The above conditions are the highest trophies at the level of meaning addiction. Therefore, this study focuses on addictive game behaviors and their effects on adolescents' mental health. Furthermore, the things that need to be studied more deeply based on the exposure of the problem are the mental health of young users or online game players. Mental health is a condition where individuals are able to actualize all their potentials avoidance of symptoms of mental disorders so that they are able to adjust to themselves, and others, and society to the living environment. In other words, mental health refers to the realization of harmony between functions mental functions and ability to deal with common problems and feel positive about happiness and ability (Marchira, 2007). Mental health is one of the individual indicators related to people's ability to measure their potentials and filter out new things that develop in life, so that the individuals are able to use the results of the filtering as well as possible

## **METHOD**

The type of research of this study was field research using a qualitative approach. This research was conducted in one of *Korongs* in District X, Padang Pariaman Regency, West Sumatra. The informants in the study were teenagers who were active in playing online games selected by the Snowball Sampling technique, to ensure that the research data used has a level of accuracy of complex information so that the resulting data can be presented in full and in detail. Data collection techniques in this study were three methods, namely field notes, interviews, and documentation. Then, the collected data were analyzed using *Miles and Huberman* technique of data analysis, and data validity was ensured by triangulation.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Results**

Addictive game is a dependency behavior on online games that is currently rampant. This addictive behavior is basically caused by excessive use of the internet, so it

is very difficult for actors to withdraw from the desire not to play games. Some of the data unraveling related to the behavior profile of addictive games among adolescents, clearly illustrates that the striking thing that is most visible is the difficulty in withdrawing from the desire to play online games and lack of tolerance for the use of available time. So, gamers often spend hours just to satisfy the desire to play games in order to reach the highest tropic peak or to the stage of chicken dinner. Some data from the results of field research related to mental health reviews for gamers show that gamers find it difficult to induce the desire to play online games as a result of difficulties in determining sleep schedules even gamers are willing to stay up late to reach the desired tropic peak. This is as stated by one of the high school students with the initials RP, that:

*Because it's cool to play games, sometimes I forget to eat. stomach ache but just hold it, because it hasn't won ... Awkward if you haven't won. Sometimes I didn't eat all day, huh ... it hurts, catches cold, vomits too) ". (W02, March 12, 2019)*

On the same occasion, HN admitted that since becoming an online game enthusiast, basic activities such as eating were very rarely done. HN admitted that her meals were becoming irregular.

*Eat it too, but not regularly. Some are pursued in online game play. Yes ... win it. If you win, just eat, if you don't win, you don't eat until you win. "(W07, March 21, 2019)*

Irregular eating patterns as a statement from the respondents basically show the existence of mental health disorders on aspects of healthy attitudes to their views on selves. This will then be a bad effect on the health of adolescent online game lovers who are very addictive. Other exposure states that lack of appetite and disorder is not the only indication of adolescent mental health disorders. On the other hand, spending a lot of time and energy just to stay up late in fighting for the desired tropic level is a

symptom of mental health that is already intolerable. Willing to spend the night at the online game provider and spend his time making daytime into the night, and night to day is the thing that should be a concern for the mental health conditions of online game lovers. In connection with his willingness to release his night time to search for the desired tropic peak, both in online game play done at internet cafes or via mobile phones, also expressed by the RP, that:

*When I go to school I am often sleepy ... I don't focus on learning because the night before I stayed up late playing. Sometimes the teacher was angry too, asked why he was often sleepy. If I'm mostly silent, (W08, March 21, 2019)*

The results of several opinions clearly indicate that addictive game behaviors and adverse effects on mental health are the things that have the most contribution. The difficulty of withdrawing to spend a lot of time playing online games in reaching certain tropic peaks and the willingness to stay up at night to disrupt the morning learning process is clear evidence of the impact on mental health, as revealed by some of the opinions above. Other forms related to the adverse effects of online games for adolescent mental health are seen in aspects of motive integrase and conflict control and frustration. This aspect is related to feelings of irritation and excessive anger which results in some things being out of control. Dirty words that are easily ejected, slamming HP when they experience defeat are caused by the elimination of sense of ownership which is a contribution to mental stability, as well as making rival opponents a great enemy to fight, and some teenagers are able to fight parents to get the right to play preferred online games. The adverse effects reflected in mental health, as stated by SP in an interview said that:

*If I lose sometimes I get angry, hmmm ... what do you do, bro? upset. I want to feel angry just by default. Several times I threw my cellphone down*

*because I lost all the time. (W09, March 21, 2019)*

Strengthening the opinion above, a video uploaded by several accounts on YouTube also displays the same thing. Seen teenagers who are playing games suddenly slammed their cellphones many times just because of the defeat of the battle that was played with his friend. Other videos that were also seen by researchers related to addictive games showed a child who was willing to curse his mother because the games on the computer erased, thrashing behavior and threatened to commit suicide were the things that appeared to the child. Strengthening the observations and responses of respondents who have been described above, MA as a high school student sitting on the XI class, said he would be very angry when there was interference from outside parties while playing online games, including parental calls. Some field records related to emotional feelings in adolescents who are playing online games also occur in CL04, CL05, and CL06. The data shows that healthy mentality indicates positive feelings and emotions. However, this is just the opposite. The ease of throwing a cell-phone and making harsh words and threats are indications of an unhealthy mentality. The data that have been collected related to addictive games and their influence on adolescent mental health clearly indicates a negative impact that should be the main focus. The activity of wasting time and energy is in vain, a strong willingness to stay up late in order to reach the highest tropic peak in spreading the desire for instant victory so that it has an impact on the learning process in class, lack of ownership of the goods and ability to answer suggestions and input from adults, is a condition where the sense of dependence blinds the teenagers nowadays.

### **Discussion**

Mental health, we should refer to a condition that is balanced between mindset and taste patterns. Because in essence mental health leads more to a mature psychological condition with all the problems faced. This is in line with the opinion of Darajat quoted by

Bukhori (2006) that mental health is essentially secreted on two factors, namely internal and external, complex factors that lead to psychological and psychological conditions in the face of a balanced life problem.

The results of the study show that some of the adverse effects that occur due to addictive game behavior are the irregularities of time used when playing games which cause other negative effects. This is the results of research that has been described that the visible impact is the habit of making the upside down time of day to night and night to day causing many students or teenagers to fall asleep during class hours. This was also confirmed by the Guidance and Counseling teacher that the effect seen among online game enthusiast students was not having concentration in learning because students often fell asleep in the classroom. Strengthening the above opinion, Kuss & Griffiths, (2012) suggested that some internet game players experience symptoms that have traditionally been associated with substance-related addiction, including mood modification, tolerance to excessive use of time which has caused some other activities disturbed. In some references as Darajat's opinion quoted by Jaelani (2001) explains that mental health refers to the realization of harmony between mental functions. In relation to the negative impact on online games, namely the inconsistencies that occur between mental functions so that teenagers online game enthusiast are very difficult to distinguish which time is suitable for playing and other activities.

Another negative impact related to the game behavior of addictives that occur in adolescents is their inability to process emotions due to defeat while playing a game. This is revealed through interviews and observations, in which most teenagers online game enthusiasts state that they have difficulty in controlling emotions, even the sense of ownership of the goods they have decreased. This can be seen in some data obtained through video observations that a number of teenagers were seen slamming

their cellphones just because they suffered defeat when playing online games. The negative impacts presented are certainly in line with the results of research carried out related to the mental health of gaming enthusiasts that structural characteristics affect the mood of players. That is, negative reinforcement causes frustration, while positive reinforcement produces game persistence, hypothetically allowing it to link positive reinforcement with addiction (Chumbley & Griffiths, 2006). Another thing was also stated by Kuss, D. J., & Griffiths (2012) that the consequences of internet game addiction were found as negative consequences, which allowed behaviors to be classified as pathological based on predetermined clinical standards (Association, 2012). Strengthening related to the negative impact of addictive game behaviors on adolescent mental health was also found based on the results of research conducted by Zamani et al., (2009) that the direct relationship between physical health, anxiety and depression with addicted computer games. However, the relationship of addiction to computer games and social dysfunction is significant and reversed. In the psychological dimension, it appears that online game play has a negative relationship with the mental health of adolescents and has a direct effect on violent behavior, anxiety, depression and isolation from teenagers who play this match. The explanation above means that the indication of the negative impact of addictive game behaviors on adolescent mental health is basically real. This can be seen from the results of several studies obtained as well as several findings made in previous studies.

## CONCLUSION

From the collected data, it can be concluded that there are indications of addictive game behaviors currently presenting a negative impact on adolescent mental health. This is as already explained that the presence of online games that penetrate among the public is a scourge for adolescent health, especially in the indication

of dependence which causes many very negative side effects. Resistance to parents, unstable emotional control, and priority reaching the tropic peak which is considered as an achievement overrides the values that should be carried out. Waiving these values certainly has a negative impact on the person who has a sense of dependence on playing online games. In addition, a number of other negative impacts that are seen in adolescents who have a dependence on online games are turning in the morning and afternoon, so this is a negative thing for adolescent health.

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