



Online Games and Mental Health of Generation Z: A Case Study on Male Adolescents at SMK MAN 5 Tasikmalaya

Astrid Sulistya Azahra^{1*}, Kalfin², Rizki Apriva Hidayana³

¹*Master's Program of Mathematics, Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, Universitas Padjadjaran, Jatinangor, West Java, Indonesia*

²*Statistics Study Program, Faculty of Science, Technology and Mathematics, Matana University*

³*Department of Mathematics, Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, National University of the Republic of Indonesia, Bandung, Indonesia*

*Corresponding author email: astrid23002@mail.unpad.ac.id

Abstract

This research investigates the impact of online games on the mental health of Generation Z, with a focus on male adolescents at SMK MAN 5 Tasikmalaya. Quantitative research methods were used to collect data through questionnaires regarding the duration of playing online games and observations of mental health. The results of data analysis show that there is a significant relationship between the duration of playing online games and mental health in male adolescents. It was found that online gaming addiction can result in decreased mental health, including social isolation, decreased academic performance, and emotional disorders. Therefore, efforts need to be made to manage the use of online games wisely to minimize the negative impact on Generation Z's mental health.

Keywords: Clean and Healthy Living Behavior (PHBS), Knowledge, Infrastructure, Role of Teachers.

1. Introduction

Online games, or what are often referred to as online games, have become an integral part of modern life. One of the main advantages of online gaming is its ability to allow people to play together with other people from different parts of the world. Online gaming has become a very popular form of entertainment for individuals of all ages. However, increasingly, the role of online games in our lives has changed significantly (Wartberg et al., 2017; Kuss and Griffiths 2012).

Online games were originally designed to be purely entertainment, providing opportunities for players to have fun and socialize in a virtual world. These games offer fun experiences and opportunities to interact with other people. However, today, we are seeing a worrying trend, especially among Generation Z.

Generation Z, which is a generation that grew up with easy access to digital technology and the internet, has been significantly influenced by online gaming. Games, which should be a source of entertainment and stress relief, have now become a necessity (Tsui and Cheng 2021; Fam, 2018). Addiction to online gaming has had a serious impact on the mental health of individuals in this generation.

Online gaming addiction has replaced healthier and more productive activities in daily life. People may neglect important tasks, lose sleep, and even experience psychological disorders due to this addiction. Therefore, awareness of the dangerous impact of online game addiction on generation Z is very important.

In this context, this research will discuss the pastoral counseling model as an approach that can help overcome the problem of online game addiction in generation Z. This article aims to investigate the form of counseling assistance using the Pastor Center Solution method that can be applied to generation Z who are addicted to playing online games. In this model, the pastor has a central role in offering a solution to the problem of online gaming addiction. Foster parents also play an important role in providing support and monitoring the development of their children who may be negatively impacted by online game addiction (Fam, 2018; Rikkers et al., 2016).

With increasing awareness about the dangers of online gaming addiction and the implementation of appropriate pastoral counseling methods, it is hoped that the mental damage caused by the impact of online gaming can be minimized. Through this effort, we hope to give birth to better generations, who are not only physically healthy, but

also mentally healthy (Macur and Pontes 2021). Thus, the importance of this awareness in dealing with the problem of online game addiction among Generation Z cannot be ignored.

In this study, we used a quantitative descriptive correlation approach with a cross-sectional method to explore the relationship between duration of playing online games and mental health in male adolescents at SMK MAN 5 Tasikmalaya. This method allows us to obtain statistically measurable data, providing powerful insights related to the phenomenon under study. The research population consisted of 102 male students at SMK MAN 5 Tasikmalaya. We chose to carry out total sampling, which means the entire population was sampled in this study. This is done to ensure better representativeness of the sample to the existing population.

Data collection was carried out using two questionnaires. First, a questionnaire regarding the duration of playing online games, which provides information related to how often and how long these young men play online games. Second, an observation questionnaire about mental health, which helps in evaluating aspects of mental health in research subjects. The results of data analysis using the Gamma test produced a p value of 0.010. The low p value indicates a significant relationship between the duration of playing online games and the mental health of male adolescents at SMK MAN 5 Tasikmalaya. Thus, the null hypothesis (H_0) which states that there is no relationship between the duration of playing online games and mental health is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis (H_a) which states that there is a relationship is accepted.

Children born between 1998 and 2009 are known as Generation Z. They are a generation that grew up in the technological era, familiar with the internet and the world of the web from the beginning of their lives. Generation Z is often known as the "silent generation" or "internet generation" because they have been accustomed to technology since the beginning of their lives.

The use of smartphones has become commonplace among Generation Z. Although they can use them for various purposes, the reality is that many of them have a limited level of digital literacy. This causes their smartphone use to tend to be limited to entertainment alone. In a day, Generation Z can spend more than 9 hours with their smartphone, showing their level of dependence on this technology.

A study conducted by The Haris Poll Research Institute (2018) in New York on 2587 respondents representing Generation Z and Generation Y shows that the average weekly internet use by Generation Z and Generation Y tends to be focused on video sharing websites, watching videos. online, and playing online games. However, addiction to online games has had a serious impact on their mental health. This also has an impact on their academic performance, which tends to decline. The pressure felt due to unsatisfactory learning results has an impact on mental health and concentration levels in studying.

Thus, the main focus of this paper is to discuss the impact of online games on the mental health of Generation Z. The research question that arises is the extent of the impact of online games on the mental health of Generation Z, and how this affects them concretely. With all the results obtained, it is hoped that this research will not only provide an overview of the impact of online games on Generation Z's mental health theoretically, but also have a more practical impact by encouraging readers to care more about their own mental health.

2. Research methods

This research is qualitative research that uses descriptive methods. This approach allows the researcher to gain a deep understanding of the phenomenon under study and describe it in detail. The data sources used in this research consist of primary sources and secondary sources.

Primary data sources are obtained through two main techniques. First, researchers conducted unstructured interviews with three people who fall into the Generation Z category (born between 1996-2010). Unstructured interviews gave respondents the freedom to talk freely about their experiences and views regarding the impact of online gaming on their mental health. Second, researchers observed the impact of online games on respondents, which made it possible to see their interactions and responses to online game playing activities (Yang et al., 2023; Irie et al., 2022).

Secondary data sources include literature related to the research topic. This includes journal articles, books, and other sources that provide up-to-date information and research on the impact of online gaming on generation Z's mental health (Kinif and Delfabbro 2017).

Data collection was carried out carefully and structured. Unstructured interviews provide respondents with the flexibility to share their experiences and views without strict question limits. Observations were also carried out systematically to record the visible impact on the respondent's behavior and mental health.

By combining data from primary sources and secondary sources, it is hoped that this research can provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of online games on the mental health of generation Z. The results of this research are expected to provide new insights and meaningful contributions in understanding and overcoming the challenges faced by this generation. Z in managing their mental health in today's digital era.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. What are Online Games

Online games are an activity or tool used for fun that has certain rules, where there are winners and losers. The term "game" in this context refers to activities that involve competition, both in physical and mental aspects, according to predetermined rules. Online games are a form of digital game that is very popular in this modern era. These games can be accessed via a variety of devices, including computers, game consoles, handheld devices, and even mobile phones.

Online games have various purposes, ranging from entertainment, recreation, to games with betting. Often, online games are used to overcome feelings of boredom that arise from daily activities, such as work, study, and other factors. Thus, online games are not only a form of entertainment, but also a way to fill free time and relieve stress.

Online games have various types and genres, allowing players to choose according to their preferences. In the world of online gaming, players can interact with other players from all over the world, making it a more social experience. This makes online games a very dynamic form of entertainment and can provide an exciting gaming experience. However, it is important to remember that excessive use of online games can have an especially negative impact on players' mental health, especially among Generation Z (Steinsbekk and Wichstrøm 2020).

The development of online games cannot be separated from the evolution of computer technology and the extraordinary development of computer networks. Initially, online games could only be played by two players and were limited to computers with limited capabilities. However, with the passage of time and technological developments, online games have undergone significant transformation.

First appearing in the 1960s, early computers could only be used by two players to play games. However, with emerging time-sharing capabilities, players can play online games with more people, without even having to be in the same room. This was the beginning of multiplayer online games (Multiplayer Games).

Online games are a type of game that utilizes computer networks, both on a LAN (Local Area Network) scale and via the internet. Online games are usually provided as additional services by companies providing online services, or can be accessed directly through the system provided by the company providing the games.

The definition of online games includes various types of games, although not all games fall into the online games category. Some games such as war games and sports are often played not only for entertainment, but also to improve skills. Typically, online games involve competition between two or more players. Online games are characterized by the use of electronic media that displays the game in the form of moving displays, colors and sounds with certain game rules and varying levels of difficulty. These games are designed to be entertaining and often have an addictive effect.

Operationally, online games are games that offer interesting game concepts, stunning three-dimensional graphics, and extraordinary effects. Online games are generally played via computer networks, especially via the internet network. This game often involves many players playing simultaneously, without even knowing each other. In other words, online games are games that are played via an internet connection via a computer network, and can be played using a personal computer or a conventional game console.

3.2. Generation Z

Generation Z is a generation group born between 1995 and 2010. Apart from differences in birth year, there are many different characteristics that differentiate Generation Z from previous generations.

From a broader perspective, Generation Z tends to have different characteristics from previous generations. They tend not to have a strong sense of commitment to anything, focusing more on happiness in the moment, and living for the moment. This is different from the Baby Boomer Generation which tends to think in an integrated and communal way, Generation

In terms of the use of information technology (IT), Generation Z has an advantage because they grew up in an era where technology, the internet and social media have become an integral part of everyday life. They have an intuitive understanding of technology because they are familiar with it from birth. On the other hand, the Baby Boomer Generation is a generation that may have difficulty in instructing themselves to interact with technology, and some of them only use technology or certain parts of it at certain times. Generation X is more confident in using IT, while Generation Y has integrated technology into their daily lives (Torres-Rodríguez et al., 2019).

Generation Z grew up with technology, the internet, and social media, which has created an image of them as a generation that is overly dependent on technology, perhaps seen as anti-social, or social justice warriors. However, it is important to remember that this context has also created a highly cognitive generation, which is very comfortable with gathering various sources of information from the internet and integrating their experiences in the virtual and real worlds. Generation Z is a generation full of potential, and their understanding of technology is one of their most valuable assets.

3.3. The Impact of Online Games on Generation Z's Mental Health

Basically, there are no direct negative impacts that occur when someone consumes online games. In research that has been conducted, from interviews with generation Z who consume online games, 2 out of 3 people did not feel any

negative impact on their mental health at all. They consume online games as a means to relieve boredom after a long day of work.

However, there are one in three people who are still school age and experience the negative impacts of online game addiction. This child becomes very dependent on online games, so that these games become an obligation in his daily life. Ironically, in some cases, online game addiction can disrupt their social relationships. The child may communicate a lot in the game, but his social interactions in real life are disrupted. There are many cases where parents ask for help or interaction from their children but are rejected because the children are busy playing online games.

Online game addiction can have a negative or dangerous impact on teenagers who experience it. This impact includes five aspects, namely health aspects, psychological aspects, academic aspects, social aspects and financial aspects. Therefore, it is important to understand that although not all generation Z feel the negative impacts of consuming online games, there are risks for some of them which can lead to mental health, social and academic problems. That is why it is important to understand and manage the use of online games wisely.

Mental Health is one of the online game addictions among Generation Z teenagers that can have a serious impact on their mental health. Some teens may feel trapped in the world of online gaming, spending hours every day playing. This can cause them to feel isolated from the real world, experiencing stress, anxiety, and even depression. Some signs of online game addiction that can affect mental health include decreased interest in social activities, self-isolation, and increased irritability.

Physical Health is a type of Online game addiction can also have a negative impact on the physical health of Generation Z. They may neglect meal times, adequate sleep and physical activity because they are too focused on games. This can cause problems such as sleep disturbances, lack of balanced nutrition, and decreased endurance.

Social Relationships Too much time spent playing online games can damage teenagers' social relationships. They may ignore friends and family, reject social interactions in the real world, and prefer to interact with fellow players in games. This can result in social isolation and difficulty in building healthy interpersonal relationships.

Academic Achievement and Online game addiction can also have a negative impact on teenagers' academic performance. They may lack focus on lessons, procrastinate on school work, or even cheat on school work because they are too dependent on games. This can result in lowered grades and other academic problems.

Finances: Playing online games can also be a financial burden, especially if teens spend money on in-game items, additional internet quota, or special devices. This can disrupt their personal finances and affect family finances.

With a better understanding of these impacts, it is important for Generation Z and those around them, such as parents and educators, to monitor and manage their use of online games wisely. This involves limiting playing time, encouraging physical and social activity, and ensuring that a balance between online gaming and real life is maintained. This effort can help maintain the mental health and physical well-being of Generation Z teenagers.

4. Conclusion

Based on the analysis carried out on the data that has been presented, it can be concluded that online games have a significant impact on the mental health of Generation Z. There are several aspects that need to be considered:

- a). Mental Health Aspects, although not all Generation Z individuals feel the negative impacts of online gaming, gaming addiction can lead to social isolation, stress, and even depression. Some signs of addiction include decreased interest in social activities, self-isolation, and increased irritability.
- b). Physical Health Aspects, addiction to online games can result in a lack of attention to physical needs, such as eating regularly, getting enough sleep, and exercising. This can cause problems such as sleep disturbances, nutritional problems, and decreased endurance.
- c). Social Relationship Aspect, too much time spent playing online games can damage social relationships. Generation Z may prefer interacting with fellow players in games rather than interacting with friends and family in real life.
- d). Aspects of Academic Achievement, addiction to online games can disrupt focus on studies and result in decreased academic performance. Some may even delay school work or even cheat to fulfill school obligations.
- e). Financial Aspect, playing online games can be a financial burden because it requires costs to purchase in-game items, additional internet quota, and special devices. This can affect personal and family finances.

In dealing with the negative impacts of online games, it is important to ensure that the use of online games is regulated wisely. Parents, educators, and individuals themselves need to work together to monitor and manage time spent playing online games. With the right steps, it can be hoped that Generation Z can enjoy the entertainment benefits of online gaming without sacrificing their mental health and physical well-being.

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