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Overview of Aggressiveness in Early Adolescents Who Play Online Games

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study is to present a clear picture of aggressiveness among early adolescent online gamers. The research method used is qualitative research with a descriptive approach. The data for this study came from interviews, observations, and literature review. The findings show that violent online games can increase aggression in early adolescents. Physical aggression, verbal aggression, and behavior that damages other people's property are examples of aggressive behavior.

Keywords

Aggressiveness, Early Adolescence, Online Gaming

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INTRODUCTION

The emergence of technological products is a form of the development of science and technology. These technological products are of various types and uses. The introduction of video games and internet games is one of the advances in science and technology. Based on We Are Social statistics, Indonesia has the third highest number of video game players in the world, only behind the Philippines and Thailand. At least 94.5% of internet users in Indonesia play video games. 68.1% of them use smartphones to play video games and the rest use other devices. (Dihini, 2022). The data shows that online games are most accessed using smartphones compared to PC games. This happens because smartphones are the easiest to use and access. In addition, through smartphones, online games can be downloaded for free, can be used by anyone, and can be carried anywhere by users.

According to a survey conducted by APJI, 42.23% of people spend more than 4 hours per day playing online games. 27.46% play online games for 3-4 hours per day, 11.94% play online games for 2-3 hours per day and the remaining 11.10% spend 1-2 hours per day playing online games. (Muhamad, 2023). Online

games are defined as digital games that are used by utilizing the internet network in order to connect between one player and another at the same time. (Setiawati & Gunado, 2019)..

When viewed from age, the average online game user is a teenager who is in the

age range of 12-16 years. This happens because adolescents at the age of 12-16 years prefer to do activities that give them pleasure, so it is said that adolescents at that age are still in a vulnerable period. (Mais, Rompas, & Gannika, 2020). Therefore, online gaming has become one of the most popular types of entertainment in today's rapidly developing technological society, especially among early adolescents. However, the phenomenon of online gaming among adolescents can have positive impacts and negative impacts.

According to Griffiths and Hussain in Anggraeni, Agustiani, Novianti, & Ninin (2021) revealed the positive impact of online games, among others, which can reduce loneliness, frustration, and even stress. In addition, online games can allow users to practice planning and strategy. However, online games can also have a negative impact on their users if played excessively. One of the negative impacts is that users experience addiction to playing online games.

According to Gurusunga in Fembi, Nelista, & Vianitati (2022) states that adolescents in Indonesia who experience online game addiction are in the age range of 15-18 years. The data showed that 77.5% occurred in male teenagers and the remaining 22.5% were experienced by female teenagers. According to Weinstein, online game addiction is found with individuals playing games excessively has a detrimental impact on the game players themselves. (Febriandari, Nauli, & HD, 2016).. Online games not only provide an intermezzo experience, but also create a virtual environment that can influence players' behavior and emotions, especially in the context of aggressiveness. Aggressive behavior in adolescents is caused by addiction to online games. Aggressive behavior is defined as a behavior that causes physical or psychological harm to others and causes damage to objects (Putri, 2019). (Putri, 2019). Examples of aggressive behavior itself such as fighting, unstable, restless, and other negative behaviors. Aggressiveness often occurs in early adolescents because in terms of emotional maturity they still tend to be difficult to control and are still unstable. In addition, early adolescents still have difficulty understanding and being understood

by others.

As happened in Ngagel Rego Village, Wonokromo Subdistrict, Surabaya, because of online games, teenagers commit physical aggressive behavior and

verbal aggressive behavior. Physical aggressive behavior that occurs such as hitting and kicking, while verbal aggression that occurs in the form of the release of dirty words such as fuck, cok, and other harsh words. (Saputri, Widiastuti, & Pratama, 2019).. A case in 2010 occurred in one of the regions in the United States, Alabama. Where a teenager killed three people as a result of the teenager playing the game First Person Shooter too often (Pitakasari, Pambudi, & Pratama, 2019). (Pitakasari, Pambudi, & Kandar, 2019). First Person Shooter game itself is a game in the genre of gun fighting or other weapon-based combat.

Reporting from Suara.com, a 14-year-old teenage boy killed his parents because he took part in an online gaming challenge. The tragic incident occurred in 2021 in Lefkoniko City, North Cyprus. The teenage boy did so because he took the Blue Whale Challenge. The game reportedly entices young people with various challenges (Gunadha, 2021). A similar incident also occurred in the United States. Where a teenager shot 13 people at Tops Friendly Markets. The incident is thought to be

motivated by online games that are often seen (Sukardi, 2022). (Sukardi, 2022).

Tanjung in Trimawati & Wakhid (2020) It is explained that online games have elements that may have an impact on aggression. Online games often include themes that involve violence and conflict. For example, games in the *First Person Shooter* (FPS) genre can lead to aggressive behavior for its users, especially in early adolescents. This can happen because the violent scenes shown can be modeled, as a result, the model who commits the violence undergoes a learning process. In addition, violent behavior may develop when the game character is defeated. Where aggressive actions often arise such as speaking harshly, slamming the keyboard, and so on. (Ramadhani, 2013).

A causal relationship is seen when there is addiction to online games, which in turn can induce aggressive behavior in students. This is due to the students' tendency to engage in violent online gaming activities, such as Free Fire, PUBG, and Mobile Legends. Aggressive behaviors that emerge include physical actions, such as frequently hitting friends when feeling upset, engaging in physical altercations, and difficulty controlling the urge to use violence. In addition to physical aggression, students also exhibit verbally aggressive behaviors, such as using harsh words or cursing. (Rondo, Wungouw, & Onibala, 2019)..

According to Linda in Putri (2019) According to Linda in Putri (2019), aggressiveness behavior in adolescents can be caused by several factors, namely hereditary factors (genes, brain systems, and blood chemistry) and surrounding factors (peer influence, anger, poverty, and anonymity). Aggressiveness in early

adolescence is of serious concern in social and psychological contexts as it can have long-term impacts on individual and societal well-being. Several studies have shown that continuous exposure to aggressive content in games can contribute to increased levels of aggressiveness in early adolescents. Therefore, this study aims to provide a clear picture of the level of aggressiveness in early adolescents who actively play online games.

Through this study, it is hoped that a deeper insight into how gaming contributes to early adolescents' aggressiveness levels can be found. The findings of this study are believed to provide a foundation for designing more effective intervention strategies and help support the positive development of adolescents in the midst of this technological era. By understanding the picture of aggressiveness in adolescents who play games, we can take more efficient actions in shaping positive play experiences and ensuring the mental and emotional well-being of early adolescents.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used is qualitative research with a descriptive approach. It seeks to understand and characterize certain events or events in depth and detail without trying to conclude or test cause and effect relationships. (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). In the process of data income, this research was obtained from interviews with three teenagers, namely AS (12 years old), SS (13 years old), and HR (15 years old). They were chosen as informants because they fall into the *early adolescence* category, which is from 12 to 15 years old (Sarwono, 2006). (Sarwono, 2006). In addition to interviews, this research data was collected through observation and literature review. If the research is about human behavior, work processes, or natural events, and not too many people are observed, observation is used. (Sugiyono, 2015). Meanwhile, literature study is a way of collecting data that involves understanding and researching theories from various literary works such as books, journals, and others that have a relationship with the research topic. (Adlini, Dinda, Yulinda, Chotimah, & Merliyana, 2022).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Adolescence is the stage between childhood and adulthood. Adolescence lasts between 12 and 21 years for women and 13 to 22 years for men. Early adolescence (12-15 years), middle adolescence (15-18 years), and late adolescence (18-22 years) are the three phases of adolescence. (Ramadhani, 2013). This study

will look at how early adolescents who play online games describe their aggression. The following are the informant data used in this study:

Table 1.
Informant Data

Initials	Age	Gender	Types Games Online
US	12	Female	Mobile Legends
SS	13	Male	Mobile Legends
HR	15	Male	Free Fire

Source: Data processed by researchers (2023)

Early adolescents who actively play online games have become a significant group in contemporary society. This phenomenon is reflected in their intense participation in a variety of online games covering various genres, such as shooters, battle royale and online strategy games. Based on table 1, the informants in this study play online games such as mobile legends and free fire. Mobile Legends: Bang Bang is a popular multiplayer online battle arena (MOBA) game. This game made by Moonton is intended to be played on mobile device platforms (Ramadan & Ramadan, 2023). In a 5-on-5 conflict, users form a team with other players to compete against the enemy team. Meanwhile, Garena Free Fire or commonly called Free Fire is a battle royale game made by Garena. The game, designed to be played on mobile devices, brings together 50 players with the goal of being the last player standing.

Interviews conducted with three informants related to the frequency of playing online games, on average AS spends three hours every day playing online games. HR spends more than 5 hours per day playing online games, while SS spends 3-4 hours every day. The intensity of early adolescents playing internet games over a long period of time may have harmful consequences. One of them is desensitization to violence. Continuous exposure to violent content in games may lead to desensitization to violence. Adolescents may become less sensitive to the negative impact of aggressive behavior. Some previous studies have shown that the longer the time spent playing games, especially violent games, the higher the risk of exhibiting aggressive behavior. Excessive exposure to in-game violence can affect emotional and behavioral responses. Like the interview conducted by AS when playing online games unconsciously often issued harsh language and curses to his colleagues if he did not play well. This also happens to SS and HR who also often use harsh language when playing online

games. In addition, informants AS, SS, and HR also admitted that they often vented their anger on objects around them, such as deliberately stomping on the keyboard, hitting the table, and even unconsciously hitting their friends because they were upset when they lost playing online games.

The concept of aggressiveness behavior is based on the basic notion of aggression. Aggression is physically and verbally abusive actions directed at other people or objects. So in this context, aggressiveness in adolescents can be interpreted as behavior shown by adolescents such as hurting, hurting, or harming others, whether it is done verbally or physically. (Putri, 2019). Widyastuti in Saputri et al., (2019) states that aggression is divided into two types, namely physical aggression and verbal aggression where both of these aim to hurt others.

Aggressiveness is prone to be experienced by early adolescents because 12-15 years old is the initial period of adolescence, which is often accompanied by significant hormonal changes. Hormonal fluctuations can affect mood and emotional responses, which in turn can increase the potential for aggressiveness. Therefore, exposure to violent content through media, including online games, can influence how adolescents respond to conflict situations. Excessive exposure to violence can increase the likelihood of aggressive behavior.

According to Karina Istifarisny, a psychologist, online games that contain elements of violence can trigger brutal acts. Karina also mentioned that teenagers are most vulnerable to committing careless and harmful acts because in terms of emotional control, they have not yet functioned perfectly. (Sukardi, 2022). Atkinson and Hilgardin Putri (2019) explained that there are at least three aspects of aggressiveness, namely physical aggressiveness, verbal aggressiveness, and damaging other people's property. The following is an explanation of these three aspects:

Physical Aggression

Physical aggressiveness is defined as the use of physical violence to express anger and feelings, aimed at others who are perceived as the source of anger/unpleasant or offensive emotions. (Putri, 2019). Early adolescents who intensively play online games may exhibit physically aggressive behaviors, such as a tendency to hit or attack friends or opponents in the game. This can create a situation of tension in the real world. Based on the results of interviews conducted with informants AS, SS, and HR, it shows that they often commit physical aggressiveness to friends when playing online games. The physical aggressiveness they do is like hitting a friend. This is

sometimes done without them realizing it. According to Moore and Fine, a teenager is said to be physically aggressive when using physical abilities such as kicking, biting, pinching, throwing and others. (Syifa, 2018).

Verbal Aggression

Verbal aggressiveness is defined as words directed at others that are considered offensive, insults (cursing), and behavior that seems to blame others are examples of this kind of behavior that can cause psychological harm to the target. (Putri, 2019). In addition to physical aggression, verbal aggressiveness can also arise. Teenagers may use harsh words, curses, or verbal threats against fellow

players or even in their daily lives. Based on the results of interviews conducted with AS, SS, and HR, it shows that they often use harsh words containing swearing or cursing at others. According to Moore and Fine, adolescents are said to commit verbally aggressive acts if they mock, yell, insult, and so on. (Syifa, 2018).

Damaging Other People's Property

These behaviors include destroying other people's property and indirectly injuring others. (Putri, 2019). Early adolescents may experience high levels of frustration or criticism when playing online games, especially if they experience defeat or difficulty in achieving certain goals in the game. Destroying property in the real world can be a way for them to express these negative emotions. As is the case with HR who sometimes stomps on the keyboard when he loses playing online games.

In Albert Bandura's *social-learning* theory regarding aggression behavior. The theory explains that human behavior has continuous reciprocal interactions between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental influences. (Ariesta, 2021). And most human behavior is obtained from observing others. This theory emphasizes the concept of modeling, where individuals learn through observation and imitation of the behavior they witness (Syifa, 2018). (Syifa, 2018). In the context of aggressiveness in early adolescents who play online games, they can be influenced by the violent acts they see in the game and imitate them in real life, including hitting, cursing at friends, and damaging friends' personal belongings. From one observation to another, a new behavior is formed that will be used as a guideline in acting. (Irham & Wiyani, 2013). This exposure is in accordance with previous research which found that the more often adolescents play violent themed online games, the more often adolescents witness violent behavior displayed in the game, resulting in the development of a mindset about violent acts and an increase

in aggressive behavior in them. (Trimawati& Wakhid, 2020). This statement reflects the concerns of a number of studies and views in the field that link continuous exposure to Aggressive behavior of adolescents increases when they play violent internet games, especially in early adolescence. Aggressive behavior can have an impact on both the perpetrator and the victim. Aggressive perpetrators have a negative self-concept and have difficulties in social relationships. Meanwhile, for the victim himself will arise a sense of fear and threat (Saputri et al., 2019).

Research conducted by Musthafa in Hasibuan, Djalal, & Hasibuan (2022)) suggests that the intensity of online games has a positive influence on aggressive behavior in children. Where the higher the intensity of playing online games, the higher the aggressiveness in children. Continuous exposure to violence in online games can stimulate or increase aggressive tendencies in players. This may be reflected in increased aggressive behavior both in the context of the game and in everyday life. Early adolescents may be less able to distinguish between the virtual world and the real world, especially if they are constantly exposed to content depicting violence. This may affect their understanding of the real consequences of aggressive actions.

CONCLUSION

Exposure to violent online games can increase the tendency of aggressiveness in early adolescents. Aggressiveness that can occur is physical aggressiveness, verbal aggressiveness, and behavior that damages other people's property. So that conclusions can be drawn. The more often early adolescents play violent online games, the more likely they are to show aggressive behavior. The role of parents in supervising their children's online gaming activities is very important. Parental education about the influence of games and limits on playing time can help reduce negative impacts.

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