

THE INFLUENCE OF ONLINE GAMING ADDICTION ON STUDENTS' INTEREST IN LEARNING

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the effect of online games on students' interest in learning in junior high school adolescents. This research used a qualitative descriptive design. The research was conducted at SMP 2 Bandar by involving 3 teachers and 8th-grade students at SMP 2 Bandar. Researchers collected data using an online questionnaire using the Google Forms platform that must be filled in by students who play online games. Researchers also interviewed 3 8th-grade teachers to find out how school support and teacher efforts increase the learning interest of 8th-grade students at SMP 2 Bandar addicted to online games. The results showed that students' interest in learning decreased due to online games; besides that, the role of parents in assisting children's learning was also lacking. Meanwhile, the results of interviews conducted with 3 8th-grade teachers show that there are various school supports and teacher efforts in overcoming and increasing students' interest in learning due to online games, such as always providing motivation and direction to students, providing policies to students and providing attractive and adequate learning facilities so that students are interested in learning and not bored.

Keywords: *Online Games, Qualitative Descriptive Design, School Support and Teacher Efforts, Student Interest in Learning*

Introduction

The Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) survey shows that Indonesia's internet penetration rate will reach 79.5% of the population in early 2024. This number is equivalent to 221,563,479 people from Indonesia's total population of 278.696.200 in 2023. Based on gender, the internet penetration rate is higher among men, at 87.6%. Its contribution or use amounted to 50.9%. The female internet penetration rate is 85.5%, and the contribution is 49.1%. From these, Generation Z (born 1997-2012, aged 12-27 years) is the age group most connected to the Internet. The latest research results by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), in March 2023, show the majority of Gen Z / teenagers now use the Internet to access social media (84.37%), news (84.28%), and entertainment (83.78%). Based on this data, it can be concluded that one of the data contained in this entertainment is online games.

Online games first appeared in Indonesia in 2001 when BolehGame released Nexia Online, an RPG game with simple 2D-based graphics. Since then, online games have risen in popularity to create other new games that are more sophisticated and more exciting, such as FreeFire, Mobile Legends, PUBG and many more that are enough to poison today's children, especially Gen-Z teenagers. Online games have benefits in the world of education, such as making children active. Online gameplay will train players to win games quickly and efficiently and earn more points. The concentration ability of online game players will increase because they have to complete several tasks, look for loopholes that might be bypassed and monitor the course of the game. The more complex a game is, the more concentration is required. It trains children to be leaders and can reduce stress.

Online games do not only have benefits but also disadvantages or adverse effects on students, such as Attachment to the completion time of tasks in the game and a sense of fun playing it often makes various activities neglected, including worship time, school assignments, college assignments or work becomes neglected because of playing games or thinking about it.

Changes in rest and eating patterns have often occurred in online game players due to decreased self-control. Mealtimes become irregular, and they usually sleep early in the morning to get cheap internet access at night—a waste of money. Paying for computer rent at an internet cafe and buying points or characters can sometimes cost millions of rupiah, not to mention the loss of children's character education and lack of interest in learning.

Law No. 20/2003 on the National Education System in Article 3 states that national education functions to develop abilities and shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation to educate the nation's life. National education aims to develop the potential of students to become human beings who are faithful and devoted to God Almighty, have noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens. Based on this law, character education is critical to encourage children to become civilized and educated human beings in the family, community and school environment. In addition, character education can also shape students so they can compete, be ethical, moral, polite and interact with the community. Based on this, to shape the character education of each student, the main element is the student's interest in learning. In education, a student must be highly interested in learning to have the provisions to fight in the future. Every learning process is, of course, expected that students get good learning results. However, in reality, the learning outcomes obtained by students are not always as good as expected. One of them is caused by online game addiction because children cannot manage the time between learning and playing games, so children's interest in learning is reduced or even lost. Addiction to online games results from the high intensity of individuals in playing games. Individuals who are already addicted tend to prefer to play games rather than do other work.

Multifactorial solutions to online game addiction are needed for the teacher's strategy in teaching. This strategy is essential in education, especially for students with little interest in learning. A teacher plays a vital role in encouraging student motivation in a school environment. Teachers must have various ways/strategies to attract students' attention so that they are interested in learning and take their eyes off online games. Teaching strategies that are exciting, unique, and not monotonous are the main things that attract students' attention to focus and not get bored in teaching so that, little by little, students will regain their interest in learning—the Importance of parenting. In a family/society environment, children must remain controlled from the parent's view. The role of parents in educating children is vital in encouraging children's motivation to learn. Parenting is the main thing in the process of child development. In the family/community environment, parents must properly provide parenting to their children. Parents must always provide motivation, rules and support for children to continue learning and divide time between games and learning. That way, children will remain controlled and have rules in the outside world.

Method

This study used a qualitative descriptive research design. The research was conducted at SMP 2 Bandar and involved three teachers and 8th-grade students who acted as respondents in the action research on the effect of online games on student learning interest. In collecting data, researchers used an online questionnaire using the Google Form platform, which had to be filled in by students who indicated playing online games with 13 questions. Besides that, the researchers also interviewed three 8th-grade teachers, which amounted to three questions that had to be answered to find out what kind of support and efforts the school made to overcome the students' interest in learning. After collecting data, researchers analyzed the data, including sorting, presenting, and drawing conclusions.

Findings and Discussions

Learning Interests of Students Who Play Online Games

Researchers tried to explore the truth about online game users in junior high school based on the discovery that the Internet is most widely used by Generation Z. The following are the results of observations in the field.

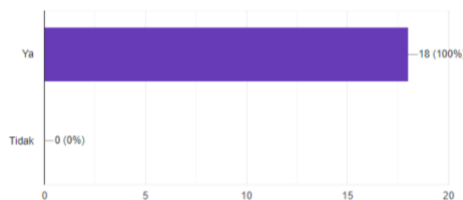


Figure 1. Number of Grade 8 students who play Online Games.

Figure 1 states that, out of all 50 8th-grade students, 18 indicated playing online games. In this case, these 18 respondents are part of the 73.7% of online game users in Indonesia played by Gen-Z. The following is shown in Figure 2: data on the age of online game users in 8th-grade adolescents at SMP 2 Bandar.

According to field research, students aged 12-15 who play online games were identified at SMP 2 Bandar. The distribution of respondents is as follows: 12-year-olds make up 5.6% (1 student), 13-year-olds account for 33.4% (6 students), 14-year-olds constitute 50% (9 students), and 15-year-olds represent 11.2% (2 students). This data indicates that most online game players at SMP 2 Bandar are 14 years old, comprising half of the Grade 8 students who play online games at this school. The types of online games preferred by each respondent are illustrated in Figure 2.

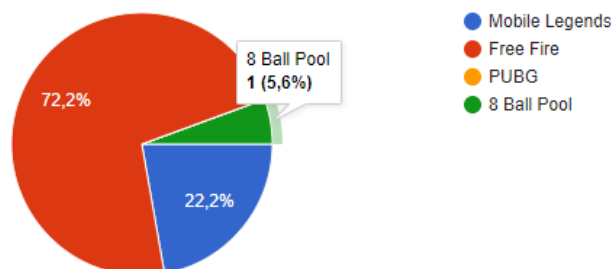


Figure 2. Games played by grade 8 students

Figure 2 illustrates the types of games each respondent prefers. Among them, 22.2% play Mobile Legends, 72.2% play Free Fire, and 5.6% engage with 8 Ball Pool. Free Fire is the most popular shooting game released in 2017. According to research by Louise (2024), Free Fire had 34 million users and 262.3 million downloads worldwide by October 2021. This popularity among Gen-Z is unsurprising given the game's widespread appeal. However, in the educational context, there's a noticeable decline in students' interest in learning, partly due to the rising popularity of online games among teenagers, which jeopardizes their academic focus.

Field research highlights a significant difference in the time respondents allocate to gaming versus studying. Of the 18 respondents, 16 spend more time playing games than learning, while only 2 dedicate more time to studying than gaming. This data shows that 88.8% of respondents prioritize gaming over studying, whereas only 11.2% focus more on their studies.

School Support in Overcoming the Problem of Low Student Interest in Learning at SMP 2 Bandar

Schools play a vital role in improving the quality of children's intelligence. In education, a student must be highly interested in learning to have the provisions to fight in the future. Every learning process is, of course, expected that students get good learning results. However,

students' learning outcomes are not always as good as expected. One of them is caused by online game addiction because children cannot manage the time between learning and playing games, so children's interest in learning is reduced or even lost.

Researchers tried to dig up information from 3 teachers at SMP 2 Bandar to find out about the learning interests of grade 8 students who play online games and how the school supports students who play online games. Three respondents helped the researcher complete this research: an English teacher, a social subject teacher, and an Indonesian language teacher.

Based on the results of interviews in the field, they stated that students experienced a drastic decrease in interest in learning caused by online games. Not only does a reduction in interest in learning, but online games also have a hazardous impact, such as health. It is unsuitable for the eyes because they are too often in front of the cellphone screen; sleep is irregular; and their emotions are not controlled, so they can cause frustration in children and usually say dirty words. In addition, students also prefer to use their money for game top-ups rather than buying school supplies.

In this case, school support and policies towards the decline in learning interest of grade 8 students of SMP 2 Bandar caused by online games can be done in various ways, such as emphasizing the value of assignments to students, providing policies in the form of cellphone lockers; briefing students about the impact and dangers of online games; monitoring student learning and activities at school and home in collaboration with student guardians. The school's support and policies are based on the agreement of all school members to achieve a decent and optimal quality of education.

Teachers' Efforts in Increasing Student Learning Interest at SMP 2 Bandar

According to Inka K. et al. (2021), teachers' classroom management skills are crucial for encouraging student participation in learning activities. Teachers are a critical factor in the success of the teaching and learning process and significantly influence student interest in learning. Beyond their roles as facilitators and mediators, teachers must also serve as motivators who can inspire and energize students by employing various practical teaching skills. Learning activities are more successful when students are genuinely interested in learning.

Teachers play a pivotal role in the educational process, and their efforts to increase students' interest in learning are vital. Researchers investigated the efforts of 8th-grade teachers at SMP 2 Bandar to enhance student engagement in learning. Interviews were conducted with three teachers from this grade.

The interviews revealed several strategies teachers at SMP 2 Bandar use to boost student interest in learning. These include assigning regular tasks to help students develop consistent study habits, educating students on the negative health impacts of excessive gaming, and the benefits of reducing game time. Additionally, teachers provide motivation, set good examples, offer rewards for academic achievements such as prizes for top rankings, and recognize diligence in completing assignments. These methods encourage students to be more dedicated to their studies and foster a competitive spirit. Furthermore, the school supports these efforts by providing adequate facilities and engaging learning media to prevent boredom and maintain student interest in the learning process. These are some of the strategies teachers at SMP 2 Bandar employ to enhance student engagement in learning.

The Role of Parents in Controlling the Learning Interest of Children Who Play Online Games

Parents play a significant role in the family. In this case, parents cannot be separated from their responsibility to guide their children to be better. However, in the current era, the role of parents in advising children is sometimes defeated by the existence of advanced technology in the form of cell phones. The use of mobile phones in this era of "globalization" greatly influences adolescents' social interaction and behaviour. Children often fight against their parents/people around them because their character education is insufficient. The research

results (Fauzan, 2021) show a relationship between the role of the family in avoiding the negative impact of gadget use on children and children's behaviour in using gadgets. It can be seen that the better the role of the family is, the better the child's behaviour in using gadgets will be. Families can play a role in children's use of gadgets with full supervision and guidance. Parents supervise gadgets, from usage time to features, applications, and media. In this case, researchers dug up information in the field, and the results are presented in Figure 3.

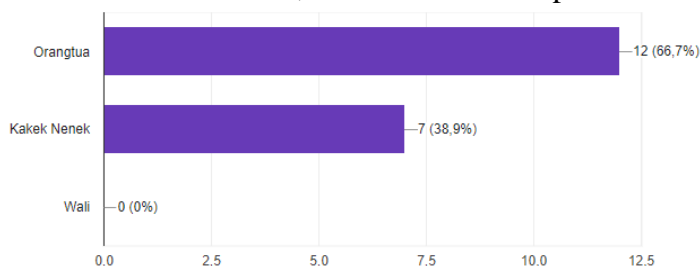


Figure 3. The results of respondents' answers regarding who they live with

Figure 3 shows that 66.7% of children who play online games live with their parents, while 38.9% live with their grandparents. In this case, the role of parents is significant in assisting children to grow and develop every day. At the age of teenager, they need assistance and affection from parents. According to Dheri & Wahid (2021), it is necessary to have dialogical assistance from parents to minimize the negative influence of gadget use on children. The negative impact of gadgets can affect children's psychological development, especially aspects of emotional growth and moral development. Excessive gadgets can negatively impact children's social and emotional development by leading to self-isolation from social interactions and difficulties in emotional management. Research indicates that children who engage with gadgets for extended periods, especially with low parental involvement, exhibit lower prosocial behaviour levels than those with limited gadget use and more parental engagement (Apriyanti, 2021).

Parental assistance to children is significant in the learning process at home. Parents must understand and know their children's brain development every day, as shown in Figure 4, presented below.

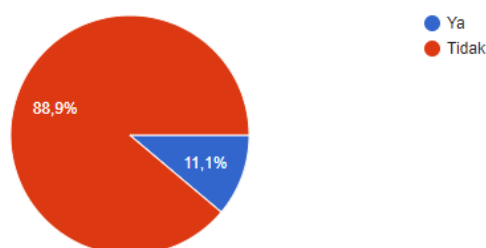


Figure 4. Parental assistance to children while learning

Figure 4 shows the respondents' answers about the role of parental assistance when children study. There are 11.1% of children accompanied by parents while studying and 88.9% of children not accompanied by parents while studying. Based on these results, it is evident that the role of parental assistance is significantly lacking in supervising children while learning. They do not determine whether their children are studying seriously or not. In this case, the role of parents in assisting children has been reduced so that there is no attention to the development of children's interest in learning. According to (Dheri & Wahid, 2021), parents must be able to supervise more for their children, and then a child can turn things seen as wrong by society into good things. When children play online games and are supervised by their parents, they can

play online games to explore potential so that they can get benefits for the child. Like to compete, but still with supervision from the family so that they do not become addicted.

Ki Hajar Dewantara stated that the essence of education is the family's responsibility, while schools only participate (Dewantara, 2011). Parental involvement in education services is a form of parental participation in assisting their children's education process at school and home (Musyawarah, 2013). In addition, parents must also provide rules for dividing study and game time for children. The results of research in the field state that 15 out of 18 children are given rules by parents, and 3 out of 18 children do not have parental regulations. In this case, the role of parents, in addition to supervising children, must also be to provide rules at home. Parents must provide rules for dividing study time and playing games with children, so children have limits when playing with cell phones. In addition, parents must respond to children's unwillingness to go to school, as shown in Figure 5 below.

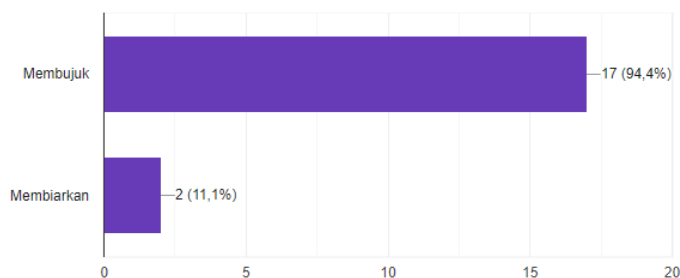


Figure 5. Parents' attitudes toward their children

94.4% of parents persuade, and 11.1% of parents let their children go when they do not want to attend school. Parents must always persuade and reject children's lousy will, such as not wanting to attend school. If parents allow children's will like that, then children's behaviour will be arbitrary and do not care about their education. So, as parents, they must always persuade, guide, and supervise children. Parents play a crucial role in shaping and controlling their children's behaviour. Establishing clear expectations and consistent boundaries provides a framework for children to learn self-discipline and responsibility. Open communication fosters trust and allows parents to guide their children through challenges. Additionally, modelling appropriate behaviour is essential, as children often imitate their parents' actions. In distance learning, parents can further support their children's academic and social development by actively participating in their education, which helps reinforce positive behaviours and attitudes towards learning (Apriyanti, 2020).

Conclusion

Of the 50 students in grade 8 of SMP 2 Bandar, 18 play online games. The results of research in the field show that 18 students' interest in learning significantly decreased due to playing online games. Online games have a severe impact on students' interest in learning at SMP 2 Bandar, such as in terms of health, it is not suitable for the eyes because they are too often in front of the cellphone screen; irregular sleep; and also uncontrolled emotions in themselves so that it can cause frustration in children and frequently say dirty words. The school supports the action to limit students' addiction to online games by emphasizing the value of assignments to students, providing policies in the form of cellphone lockers, briefing students about the impact and dangers of online games, and monitoring student learning and activities at school and home by working with student guardians. In addition, teachers at SMP 2 Badar also make efforts to increase students' interest in learning, such as giving assignments, providing direction, providing motivation and good examples, giving rewards to students, and providing adequate facilities and engaging learning media so that students are not bored and interested in participating in the learning process.

Parents are essential in child development, not just the school environment. Parents become their children's teachers at home. Children's behaviour is primarily processed in a family and the rest in the school environment. Parents are essential in supervising and assisting children in the family environment. Parents must provide direction and rules in the family so that children can be orderly, respect time and divide time.

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