

University Students' Experience in Dealing with Online Game Addiction

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Abstract. Students who are addicted to online games tend to experience academic and social life problems. Game addiction also affects physical and mental health. This study aims to explore student experiences in dealing with online game addiction. This research uses a qualitative phenomenology approach. The participants in this study were eight university students addicted to online games. Participants were interviewed in-depth for approximately 40 minutes. Data analysis was carried out using thematic analysis through ATLAS—the software which produced three themes and 12 sub-themes. The results of this study reveal three themes, namely (1) online games are addictive and difficult to stop, (2) game addiction causes conflicts that affect all aspects of life, and (3) efforts to escape from game addiction. The results show that game addiction is the same as drug addiction which shows craving and loss of control and affects life, including physical and mental health. Therefore, the problem of game addiction must be a concern for health workers so that there are no severe disturbances in both physical and mental health.

Keywords: adult behaviour, game addiction, university students

1 Introduction

According to BPS' data, in 2021, the number of internet users will reach 53.8%, and cellular phone users will reach 62.84% among all Indonesian. The numbers of internet users increase significantly in the age group of 16-25 years. Currently, 16-25 years use cell phones and the internet excessively to spend their free time. Playing mobile games is one activity that interferes with academic, family, and social life due to binge play that makes them forget everything[1]. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines game addiction as a pattern of playing behaviour, both online and offline, which is characterized by not being able to control the desire to play games, prioritizing playing games over interest in other activities or activities and a person continues to play games despite clear negative consequences [2]. In 2018, the International Classification of Diseases (ICD11), conducted by the WHO 2020, classified game addiction as a mental disorder that requires professional help to diagnose and treat. The age group that often experiences game addiction is teenagers to early adulthood, including university students.

Game addiction in college students often occurs because students do not have any activity to spend their free time. As a result of their game addiction, college students find it challenging to focus on their studies or to adhere to their study timetable [3]. WHO, in 2020, revealed that game addiction occurs when someone accesses the game at least 5 hours per day.

This massive spent time can lead to adverse effects on life. Previous research reveals that game addiction in college students affects their social and academic life. Game addiction can cause a decrease in student learning abilities and decreases academic performance [1], [4], [5].

Meanwhile, effects such as difficulty sleeping and daytime fatigue were also found in college students. Research reveals that game addiction affects students' mental health, including increasing the risk of anxiety and depression in adults [6], loneliness, and negative emotions [5]. Reducing academic and social [1],[4],[7]. In Addition, game addiction also causes physical problems such as fatigue, fatigue, sleeplessness, and musculoskeletal problems [8], [9].

The impact of game addiction on university students affects not only academic life but also physical and psychosocial health. Untreated game addiction can affect a person's life. Therefore, it is essential to explore game addiction. Previous research has looked at game addiction from psychological factors [8]–[11], the influence on mental health, and the academic activities of college students. However, there are still few studies that explore the experiences of students who are addicted to games. The results of this study are expected to be a guide in providing interventions for students who are addicted to online games.

2 METHOD

2.1 Research Design

This research is qualitative research using a phenomenological approach. Phenomenology is research that explores the experiences of participants to obtain an understanding of a particular phenomenon [12]. In this study, the phenomenon raised was game addiction.

2.2 Setting and Participants

This study was conducted in Manggarai Regency, NTT, on 8 (all male) students who experienced game addiction. Partisanship is chosen using the purposive sampling method, namely, students who play online games for at least 5 hours per day and are willing to be interviewed. Data collection was carried out with in-depth interviews for 30-45 minutes face-to-face at participants' homes. The interview questions opened by asking how the participants' gameplay patterns and the impact of the game on their lives, and the next question was according to the participant's answers. Data is recorded using *audio recording*. The data is transuded verbatim and returned to the participants for validation.

2.3 Data Analysis

Data analysis is carried out using thematic data analysis. Thematic data analysis is a method used to analyze qualitative data consisting of searching for data to identify, analyze and report repeated patterns [13]. Thematic data analysis is the proper method to analyze experiences, thoughts, and behaviours in the qualitative data obtained [14]. In the data analysis research, it was chosen to understand the dating behaviour of online games.

The data analysis stage consists of collecting data by interviewing and conducting interview transcripts, rereading data transcripts and marking significant participant statements, and determining category codes that are grouped into sub-themes using a software atlas. The studying existing sub-themes and forming theme clusters, seeing theme clusters that describe the phenomenon and adapt the theme to the participant's statement. The results of the data

analysis are three themes, namely online games are addictive and difficult to stop, game addiction causes problems that affect all aspects of life, and efforts to quit game addiction.

3 Findings

The study revealed three themes and 12 codes. The three themes are that online games are addictive and hard to stop, gaming addiction causes problems that affect all aspects of life, and attempts to quit gaming addiction.

Theme 1 Online games are addictive and challenging to stop

- Gaming addiction due to improving self-concept
Playing games increases my confidence because in games, its ranks and the higher my ranking, the harder it is to stop. I feel like after playing the game; I feel recognized that way, so it keeps me playing (P2)
Before playing the game, I felt like I had nothing to do. However, after playing games, I can improve. I have a mobile legend that when a challenge succeeds, it makes me feel I have great abilities. So I was constantly playing, and it was hard to stop. (P3)
- Addicted to games due to interesting online games and making you forget the time
After playing the game, I felt that time was dashing. I spent 10 hours watching that game, which was a little bit. Online games are also exciting and make me unable to stop. So I am always excited to get up early to play another (P3)
Before playing games, I was tired of spending time, but I spent time playing games. It felt like time was running short, and finally, I could not stop. (P8)
- Addiction to games due to unpleasant feelings When stopped
If you do not play games, something is missing in life. It feels weird like that, so it does have to play on. (P2)
Because you play too often, there is a bad feeling, like something is missing if you don't play games. (P7)

Theme 2: Gaming addiction causes problems that affect all aspects of life.

- Psychological problems due to gaming problems
Since playing the game, I am more often irritable if I am bullied. Not good either, but it is very annoying if something bothers us playing (P1)
If I do not play games, I feel lonely and stressed so. Playtime does feel like it has gone, but it comes on and on. There may also be a psychological burden because of playing this game. (P7)
- Physical health problems resulting from gaming addiction
During the course of playing this game the impact that I felt the most was the physical impact. Eyes are often red, and insomnia, and staying up late also because of playing games so that tomorrow morning you cannot get up or are too late and the body is sick (P2)
I have been playing games for almost 13 hours, and then my body hurts, and my head is heavy. Until now only played for 5-6 hours my body was aching. My hand also felt sore once it was once immobile. I have also been in RS because of typewriting. (P8)
- Social problems resulting from gaming addiction
Sometimes when I play games, I do not ignore the conditions around me. I never said playing games, and there was an event at home. My family scolded me for not caring about them. So playing this game makes us not care about society, and I also realized I lost many friends in the real world. So (P3)

My parents were often angry because I played games until the night and threatened to take my cell phone. I cheated them on the task so. Well, if you often play games, we do not focus on the surrounding environment (P8)

- Academic problems resulting from gaming addiction
My grades declined, and I did not pass because of playing this game. I honestly feel guilty too. Well, indeed, because during playing games, I do not care about academic activity and rarely go to campus either (P4)
I am lazy to do assignments and also go to campus not concentrating because I stay up late playing games (P5)

Theme 3: Efforts to reduce gaming addiction

- Reduce gaming due to impaired academic life
To stop playing games feels difficult, so I usually reduce it because I still need to pass the course. However, say wants to graduate and feels sorry for the parents as well (P4)
I have started to reduce games, I am still playing games, but it is not like I used to because of that, I still want to go to college and get a bachelor's degree (P7)
- Reduce gaming due to being reprimanded by parents and loved ones
My boyfriend forbids me to play HP too much because I seem not to be paying attention. I was also afraid of being decided, so I reduced playing games. So (P2)
Because of too many games, my parents got angry and confiscated my cell phone. So I am playing fewer games afterwards. Maybe it will stop anyway; we'll see later (P6)
- Reducing gaming due to the many negative impacts felt
I cut back on the game because I felt like there was nothing positive I got. I feel the impact, especially the physical, because of frequent dizziness and also insomnia (P3)
I reduced playing games because I felt too many negative things, especially since I had been in the hospital. After all, I was exposed to the typeface. So I tried to reduce it even though it was hard. (P8)

4 Discussion

This study aims to explore the experiences of students who experience game dating. The results of the study revealed that students consider online games addictive and challenging to stop, significantly because online games increase self-concept, are interesting, difficult to stop, and feel that they are not. It is convenient if it stops. Previous research revealed that students experience game addiction because of exciting and challenging games that make them forget the time [6]. In Addition, addiction to games increases students' self-confidence [14]. They feel guilty if they stop playing games [15]. WHO states that feelings of guilt for not playing games, forgetting playing time, and games are the characteristics of a person experiencing addiction [2]. This idea can harm an individual if the addiction to the game makes them do nothing other than games and disrupts his social life. Research reveals that self-control in playing games and looking for physical activities can make a person not addicted to games [1]. Therefore, it is important to remind college students who play games to do physical activity and socialize so as not to get caught up in addiction.

The results of this study revealed that game addiction affects various aspects of a person's anxiety, be it physical, psychological, social, or academic. The same results were also found in previous studies that gaming addiction can cause psychological problems such as loneliness and anxiety if not playing [9],[10],[16], physical problems such as frequent dizziness, fatigue, musculoskeletal problems, to sleep disorders [7],[17], social problems such as conflicts with parents, close people, to not have friends in the real world [5],[7],[17], and academic problems

such as failure in college, not focusing on studying, and not attending [4],[17]. Gaming addiction is detrimental to college students physically and psychologically, and academically. The problem can become seriously affect the physical and mental health of students. Therefore, it is necessary to prevent game addiction to avoid harmful impacts.

The results of this study revealed that participants had an effort to quit gaming addiction because game addiction affects their health, academics, and lives. Previous research revealed that there are efforts to reduce playing games because they have had a real impact that disturbs students [18]. One way to change the behaviour is to provide education on the impact of these behaviours [19-20]. Therefore, it is necessary to make an impact of playing online games on students and ways to be free from online game addiction so that students can understand and change their dating behaviour. Health workers have an essential role in educating students about gaming addiction's impact. It is also necessary to work with universities and mental health services on campus to pay attention to this issue.

5 Conclusion

Gaming addiction occurs mainly because college students spend a lot of time playing games, so they forget time. This research reveals three themes, namely, online games are addictive and difficult to stop; game addiction causes problems that affect all aspects of life, and efforts to quit game addiction. This research reveals that addiction to online games interferes with student life physically, psychosocially, and academically. Therefore, health workers need to conduct health education for students about the impact and how to reduce game addiction so that it does not affect students' lives.

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