

CYBERBULLYING : THE RISK OF PLAYING ONLINE GAMES ON ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract

Online games have become one of the most popular entertainments among adolescents. Instead of being used as a form of entertainment, sometimes online games become a medium of verbal violence or better known as cyberbullying. This study sought to find out whether adolescents who play online games have a greater tendency to become victims of cyberbullying, compared to adolescents who do not play online games. A survey is used by distributing questionnaires to 299 high school students. The results of this study indicate that there is an association between online games exposure and the tendency to become victims of cyberbullying. Adolescents who play online games have a greater tendency to become cyberbullying victims. This finding has implications for prevention and intervention efforts aimed at reducing cyberbullying.

Keywords: Cyberbullying, Online Games, Adolescent, Victim, Internet

Abstrak

Game online menjadi salah satu sarana hiburan paling populer di kalangan remaja. Namun sayangnya, bukan hanya digunakan sebagai sarana hiburan, game online justru menjadi media kekerasan verbal atau lebih dikenal dengan cyberbullying. Penelitian ini berusaha untuk mencari tahu apakah remaja yang bermain game online memiliki kecenderungan yang lebih besar untuk menjadi korban cyberbullying, dibandingkan dengan remaja yang tidak bermain game online. Survei ini dilakukan dengan menyebarkan kuesioner kepada 299 siswa sekolah menengah atas. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa ada keterkaitan antara eksposur game online dan kecenderungan untuk menjadi korban cyberbullying. Remaja yang bermain game online memiliki kecenderungan yang lebih besar untuk menjadi korban penindasan maya. Temuan ini berguna sebagai upaya pencegahan dan ditujukan untuk mengurangi terjadinya cyberbullying di dunia maya.

Kata Kunci: Cyberbullying, Online Games, Remaja, Korban, Internet

Introduction

Today, society has entered a new era of internet age (Catells, 2001 cited in Ovejero, et al., 2016: 2). With the presence of the internet, people can communicate with one another without knowing the boundaries of space and time. The Internet also contributes to the development in various areas of community life, one of which is the field of entertainment. One area of entertainment that is so popular is online gaming. This is proven by 72.3% of adolescents use the internet to play online games (Smith et al., 2008: 380).

While a game can be defined as a system in which players are attached to artificial conflict, constrained by existing rules and obtain measurable outcomes (Salen & Zimmerman, 2004: 80 cited in Nielsen, Smith, & Tosca, 2016: 31). While Online games can be defined as all game systems that utilize internet networks so that they can connect between one player and another player (Salen & Zimmerman, 2004: 80 cited in Nielsen, Smith, & Tosca, 2016: 31). When we play a game using internet channel, we have to realize one of the strongest appeals of online gaming. That is its interactive nature. The more interactive, the user's engagement or influence will be greater (Nielsen, Smith, & Tosca, 2016: 8).

Caillois (1958 cited in Nielsen, Smith, & Tosca, 2016: 36) divides games into four categories. First, *agon* (competition) that makes competition the center of the game and skill determines that someone can win or not in the game for example games in the field of sports to battle. Second, *alea* where is chance becomes the center of the game parameters. For example, lottery games are random. Third, *mimicry* or imitation can be understood as a game that focuses on the experience of being someone else, for example, adventure games or role play to become someone with a certain profession. Finally, *ilinx* or vertigo which offers players feel a certain sensation through physical activity in games, such as car racing games.

There are several categories of online gamers based on the amount of time spent playing a game every day or every week. First is a casual player that spends less than 3 hours per day playing online games. In playing online games, a casual player does not have a fixed frequency every day. Sometimes there are times where they play up to 3 hours or even do not play at all. The next category, the average is a category of amateur players who spend 3 to 4 hours a day, or 8 to 20 hours each week. Third,

professional or also known as a full-time player is a player who spends 5 to 6 hours per day or 25 to 30 hours each week to play online games. Fourth, determined is a full-time player that has a specific purpose in playing the game. They spend 7 to 8 hours each day or 40 to 48 hours per week to play online games. Last is the players who belong to the category fanatic. Players in this category are full-time players who dedicate themselves to playing online games. In general, these fanatical players spend more than 9 hours each day or 50 to 65 hours per week to play online games (Andrejkovics, 2017: 33).

Unfortunately, the presence of online games that should have a positive impact as a medium of entertainment misused as a medium of verbal violence or well-known as cyberbullying. This is because online games have a tendency to be one of the factors that encourage child abuse behavior (Fryling et al., 2015: 8).

Cyberbullying is one of the concerns of today's researchers and observers, as the potential dangers of verbal violence that occur are difficult to detect and have significant impacts over a period of time (Fryling et al., 2015: 5). Cyberbullying can be defined as an aggressive action by utilizing electronic media, carried out by individuals or groups constantly to victims who can not defend themselves (Smith et al., 2006 cited in Ovejero et al., 2016: 5). Basically, cyberbullying has a form similar to traditional bullying that involves aggressive behavior. Sometimes those forms overlap each other. In fact, most of the teenagers involved in traditional bullying as both offender and victim also have a tendency to engage in cyberbullying. However, the obvious difference between the two is the media as the intermediary used. Cyberbullying utilizes electronic communication media to convey its verbal violence, and it is this that makes cyberbullying more difficult to detect (Ovejero et.al., 2016: 6). Talwar et al. (2014 cited in Ovejero et al., 2016: 3) said that in the last 10 to 12 years, cyberbullying was the most common violence in electronic communication, especially in adolescents as the majority of users of electronic communication devices.

Smith et al. (2008) share the concept of cyberbullying into seven subdivisions, among others, bullying via short messages, bullying via pictures or videos, bullying via telephone, email bullying, chat-room bullying, bullying through instant messaging and bullying via websites. In cyberbullying perpetrators of violence use various features in communication technology to convey aggressive messages. This is the difference between cyberbullying and traditional bullying. The perpetrators tend to prefer to use

intermediary media in conveying verbal violence because the perpetrators do not have to look directly at the victim. This indirect communication makes the perpetrator not witness the negative impact caused by verbal violence that is done so that moral childbirth is disrupted (Ovejero et al., 2016: 11).

Cyberbullying has a dangerous impact on the victim, such as psychological effects that cause a person to close himself, feel worthless, feel alone and inferior. Furthermore, the act of cyberbullying makes its victims lose privacy because the perpetrators can reach their families wherever and whenever (Kizza, 2010 quoted in Wangid, 2016: 40). Cyberbullying not only affects psychologically but also physically. Yang (2012 cited in Fryling et al., 2015: 12) states that victims of cyberbullying, especially men, tend to behave more aggressively in their daily activities. In addition, other physical effects such as headaches, reduced appetite, disturbed digestive system and sleep disorders. Some of the effects of cyberbullying above if not handled appropriately can be fatal, namely the emergence of an urge to commit suicide (Ovejero et al., 2016: 8). Such effects indeed does not appear directly. Because the impact that is owned is latent, then usually the effect will be felt after a certain period of time.

In addition to the dissatisfaction of one player with other players, cyberbullying occurred in online games also driven by factors of the spectacle of violence that existed in the game. Yang (2012 cited in Fryling, et al., 2015: 6) states that games involving violence on the visual tend to increase hostility and aggressive actions among children in the school. This can refer to aggressive actions that occur both in traditional bullying and cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying in the online game is worth the spotlight, considering that adolescents aged 15-17 years who are the second largest users of online games are still in the transitional phase, so they do not have stable emotions and not mature enough to digest various exposure to violence (Batubara, 2010: 27). Some previous research related to cyberbullying in Indonesia states that the number of cyber victimization in children and adolescents is quite high. One in ten parents reported that their child had been a victim of cyberbullying (Ipsos, 2011, quoted in Safaria, 2016: 84). This was also conveyed by Yulianti (2015 quoted in Safaria, 2016: 84) that the number of cyberbullying in Indonesian teenagers is at a high level, both in private and government schools. Subsequent studies conducted by UNICEF (2014 cited in Safaria, 2016: 84)

state that 58% of 400 adolescents aged 10 to 19 years spread across 17 provinces in Indonesia do not understand cyberbullying. This study aims to examine whether there is an association between online games exposure and the tendency to become cyberbullying victims in Indonesian adolescents.

Methods

A total of 299 students from Santa Theresia High School, Central Jakarta, Indonesia were assessed in the 10th and 11th grade utilizing a total sampling technique. The age of participants ranges from 15 to 18 years old. Questionnaires were distributed directly to all respondents in the entire class. The questions in this closed questionnaire divided into nine questions related to socio-economic status, two questions related to the frequency of playing online games and eight statements related to online game play activities. The questionnaire statement is based on the operationalization of variables: online gaming activities with activities as its dimension and tendency becoming victims of cyberbullying which has 7 dimensions, there are: flaming; cyberstalking, harassment, denigration, outing and trickery, impersonation and exclusion. The time needed by respondents in filling out the questionnaire was 15 minutes on average.

Here are questions related to the frequency of playing online games:

1. Do you play games online?
2. How long do you spend each day playing online games?

While the statements submitted related to online gameplay activities are:

1. I get angry messages when playing online games;
2. I experience being followed through the internet by someone as a result of playing online games;
3. I get threat messages as a result or when playing online games;
4. I get an attacking message when playing online games;
5. I experienced a condition where other people disseminate incorrect information about me to embarrass me in public as a result of playing online games;
6. I experienced a condition where other people pretend to be myself to make me look bad and be in a threatened position as a result of playing online games;
7. I experience conditions where someone uploads my sensitive or personal content to be publicly humiliated as a result of playing online games;

8. I was not included in the group when playing online games.

The chi-square test was conducted to examine the differences between the students who play online games and who do not play online games regarding their experience becoming a cyberbullying victim.

Result and Discussion

The findings revealed that two hundred and thirty-six (78.9 percent) participants claimed to play online games, while the remaining sixty-three (21.1 percent) respondents answered not playing online games. Among participants who played online games, around half of them (52.5 percent) spend less than 3 hours, then 17.1 percent admitted to spending 3 to 4 hours, 5.4 percent spend 5 to 6 hours and 2.7 percent spend more than 9 hours playing online games each day.

Table 1. Cross-Tabulation
Online Games Exposure and Cyberbullying Victimization

No		Not a cyberbullying victim	Cyberbullying victim
1	Not online gamers	61	2
2	Online gamers	68	168

$$X^2 = 93.768, \quad p = 0.000.$$

Based on the cross-tabulation in Table 1, one hundred and sixty eight (71.2 percent) participants who played online games claimed to be victims of cyberbullying and only sixty eight (28.8 percent) participants who play online games, claimed not to be victims of cyberbullying. Conversely, there is a tendency for those who do not play online games then do not become victims of cyberbullying. There are 61 (96.8 percent) participants who do not play online games claimed to have never been the victim of cyberbullying. However, 3.2 percent participants who never played online games but had been the victims of cyberbullying. Moreover, comparative analysis using chi-square test indicated a statistically significant ($X^2 = 93.768, p = 0.000$). It can be concluded

that someone who plays online games will have a greater tendency as a victim of cyberbullying than those who do not play online games.

The results support previous research related to cyberbullying and online games. Smith (2008 cited in Kwak, Blackburn, & Han 2015: 1) states that the world of gaming increases negative behavior, one of them is cyberbullying. Fryling et al. (2015: 8) through his research also stated that online games have a tendency to be one of the factors that encourage violent behavior in children. Playing online games can increase violent behavior in children because online games can trigger someone to behave aggressively. This is because online games are dramatic and competitive media. Every activity in it encourages players to compete to achieve victory in a match (Esslin, 2017: 10). The direct involvement of players in each online game makes sense of ownership high and creates a strong desire to win. This is why playing online games is said to trigger aggressive behavior from the players, thus increasing the risk of someone getting aggressive treatment from others. This is the reason why those who play online games have a greater tendency than those who do not play and are not exposed to online games.

Table 2. Common Odd Ratio Estimate
Online Games Exposure and Cyberbullying Victimization

Estimate	75.353
Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided)	.000
Asymptotic 95% Confidence	
Common Odds Ratio	
Lower Bound	17.919
Upper Bound	316.879

Furthermore, based on the common odd ratio between online games exposure and cyberbullying in Table 2, those who play online games are estimated to have a tendency of 75.353 times to become victims of cyberbullying compared to those who do not play.

For those who play online games at least have a tendency of 17.919 times to become victims with the greatest risk of 316.879 times. In the significance value, it can be seen that $p < 0.05$, so it can be said that the above odds ratio is significant. This is

in line with the research of Lam, Cheng and Liu (2013: 169) which stated that the duration of playing online games is one factor that increases a person's tendency to be exposed to cyberbullying activities. Nielsen, Smith dan Tosca (2016: 35) also stated that frequency has an influence on the tendency to become victims of cyberbullying because of the ability of online games to shape a person's behavior as a result of exposure to high intensity. When someone has a high intensity on violent content, then that person will tend to behave aggressively, increasing the possibility for other players to accept aggressive behavior.

In addition, this cyberbullying activity occurs as a result of the presence of chat and speaker features in the game that can be accessed by all players Through this feature, players can socialize to all other players or strategize games with team members. However, unfortunately, it is not uncommon for the existence of this feature to be misused as a medium to convey verbal violence (Louie, Blackburn, & Han 2015: 1).

Table 3. Common Odd Ratio Estimate
Gender and Cyberbullying Victimization

Estimate	.104
Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided)	.000
Asymptotic 95% Confidence Common	
Odds Ratio	
Lower Bound	.060
Upper Bound	.181

Based on gender, boys have a tendency 0.104 times greater to be victims of cyberbullying. With at least 0.060 times the risk and maximum risk of 0.181. In the significance value, it can be seen $p < 0.05$, so it can be said that the above odds ratio is significant. This result in line with previous research. Li (2006, cited in Fryling et.al., 2015: 6) stated that boys and girls who spend the same time playing online games have a different tendency to become victims. Boys have a greater tendency to engage in cyberbullying activities, but they are afraid to report it to their parents.

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members. Unfortunately, it is often for the existence of this feature to be misused as a medium to convey verbal violence (Kwak, Blackburn, & Han 2015: 1).

Conclusion

These study findings highlight the impact of playing online games, which has raised the potential of being a cyberbullying victim. Our research work has the contributions to prevent cyberbullying. Prevention can be done with the support of three parties; adolescents, parents, and teachers. When playing online games, adolescents have to be selective in choosing games according to age category. Parents should pay more attention to that their children's online activities. Socializing and educating them about the internet world will build a better understanding to avoid cyberthreat than prohibiting them. This was also stated by Ovejero et al. (2016: 9) stated that parents must be able to build closeness with their child and pay more attention to their mood, especially after doing online activities. Teacher's role is also essential to educate students about the internet and cyberbullying threats. With the appropriate actions, students can be more vigilant on what might be faced when accessing the online world and utilizing the internet.

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