

Original Research Article

The Relationship of *Online Gaming* with Mental Health in Adolescents at SMP Negeri 1 Bulukumba

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Abstract: *Introduction:* Online gaming is one of the most popular hobbies among young people and adults in the modern era. Out of 987 students at SMP Negeri 1 Bulukumba, nearly all own a smartphone, and around 80% actively play online games, many of which contain violence. Online gaming has the potential to affect mental health, trigger stress, anxiety, as well as emotional and social problems. Some students display excessive emotions when losing or experiencing network disruptions, even going as far as throwing their smartphones. The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between online gaming and mental health among adolescents at SMP Negeri 1 Bulukumba. *Methods:* This research is a quantitative study with an analytical observational approach and a cross-sectional design. The population consisted of seventh- and eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Bulukumba, with a total sample of 199 respondents selected using purposive sampling. The research instruments included online gaming activity and the Self-Reporting Questionnaire (SRQ-20) to measure mental health status. Data were analyzed using the Chi-Square test. *Results:* The analysis showed that most students play online games. A large proportion of students also demonstrated indications of mental health problems based on the SRQ-20 scores. The Chi-Square test resulted in a p-value of 0.006 (<0.05), indicating a significant relationship between online gaming and mental health among adolescents at SMP Negeri 1 Bulukumba. *Discussion:* The findings indicate that adolescents who play online games tend to have poorer mental health compared to those who do not play. This is consistent with previous studies stating that online gaming can increase the risk of mental disorders such as stress, anxiety, and depression among adolescents. *Conclusion and Recommendations:* There is a significant relationship between online gaming and mental health among adolescents at SMP Negeri 1 Bulukumba. Attention from schools and parents is needed to limit the use of online games and to provide education regarding their negative impacts on adolescent mental health.

Keywords: *Online Games, Mental Health, Adolescents.*

INTRODUCTION

According to the WHO, mental health is a condition of well-being in which a person is aware of his or her potential, is able to cope with the usual pressures of life, works productively, and contributes to his or her community. Mental health is a fundamental aspect of our ability as human beings, both individually and collectively, to think, express emotions, interact with others, earn a living, and enjoy life. (WHO, 2024)

Mental health is influenced by many factors, including social, psychological, biological, economic, and environmental interactions. In Indonesia, mental health efforts are carried out through activities to achieve the optimal degree of mental health for every individual, family, and community with a promotive, preventive, curative, and rehabilitative approach. This is carried out integratively and continuously by local governments and communities (WHO, 2011) in the journal (Esty Safriana *et al.*, 2024).

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According to a national survey conducted by the Indonesia-National Adolescent Mental Health Survey (INAMHS) in 2022, it was revealed that 1 in 3 adolescents (34.9% or 15.5 million adolescents) in Indonesia experienced mental health problems in the last 12 months. In addition, 1 in 20 adolescents (5.5% or 2.45 million adolescents) experienced mental disorders in the same period. Of these, only 2.6% of adolescents have used support or counselling services for emotional and behavioural problems in the past 12 months. (KPPPA, 2024).

Data from the 2018 Basic Health Research shows that around 11 million people in Indonesia, or 9.8% of the population, experience emotional mental health disorders, with symptoms of depression and anxiety. Among adolescents, the prevalence of severe stress reached 6.2%. Individuals with depressive or severe stress problems are at risk of committing dangerous acts, including suicide. In South Sulawesi, the prevalence of this disorder reached 12.83%, while Gorontalo recorded the second highest prevalence of depression in Indonesia, at 10.3%, and mental emotional disorders in adolescents reached 17.7% (Kemenkes, 2019).

Results of the 2023 Indonesian Health Survey (SKI) by the Ministry of Health In 2023, the prevalence of depression in Indonesia reached 1.4% nationally, with 2% most often occurring in adolescents aged 15 to 24 years. This means that 2 out of 100 Indonesian adolescents experience depression (Kemenkes) in (Luxia Fajarati, 2024).

Causes of mental health disorders According to the World Health Organization (WHO), several factors that can cause mental and psychiatric health disorders, namely genetic factors, economic factors, physical factors, social factors, excessive exposure to online games (Kemenkes, 2024).

The impact of mental health disorders, namely difficulty maintaining concentration while studying, closing yourself in, unstable emotionality, fatigue easily, low enthusiasm for learning (Ahmad Dani Faisal, 2023).

Online gaming is one of the popular hobby trends among the young and adult generations in this modern era. Many online game players spend hours playing and spend a significant amount of money. Gaming activities continue to grow because there are always technological innovations that update trends, both in terms of game types and the latest updates. (Samuel, 2010) in the journal (Ula, 2023)

Based on the results of an initial survey that has been conducted by researchers by interviewing several students at SMP Negeri 1 Bulukumba, it was found that almost all students and students are known to have smartphones and often play online games. There are also students who when they are having fun playing online games and are told by their parents to increase their emotions because they feel disturbed, In addition, there are also a number of students who will be angry if they lose to their co-stars or because of their unstable internet network when playing online games, even worse they will slam their smartphones because they don't accept it.

Based on the background explanation that has been presented, the researcher is interested in further exploring "The Relationship of Online Games with Mental Health in Adolescents". So the researcher chose SMP Negeri 1 Bulukumba as the research site.

METHODS

The research design used in this study is quantitative with an analytical observational method that uses a *cross-sectional approach*. The population in this study is 987 people. There were 436 men and 551 women. This research was carried out in June 2025 and was carried out for 1 day with a sample of 199 respondents. The research variables were *online gaming* (independent variable) and mental health (dependent variable). The instruments used were an *online game questionnaire* and a *self-reporting questionnaire* (SRQ-20). using the *chi-square* test.

Hasil

Based on table 1 above, it can be seen that online game games for students in grades VII and VIII at SMP Negeri 1 Bulukumba in the category of playing online games as many as 101 people (50.8%).

Table 1: Frequency Distribution of Online Game Players for Grade VII and VIII Students of SMP Negeri 1 Bulukumba

	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Play Online Games	101	50.8
No Online Games	98	49.2
Quantity	199	100.0

Based on table 2 above, it can be seen that 149 people (74.9%) had poor mental health and 50 people (25.1%) had good mental health.

Table 2: Distribution of Mental Health Frequencies of Grade VII and VIII Students of SMP Negeri 1 Bulukumba

	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Good	50	25.1
Not Good	149	74.9
Quantity	199	100.0

Based on table 3, it shows that 17 (34.0%) respondents who play online games with good mental health and 84 (56.4%) who play online games with poor mental health are 84 (56.4%). Meanwhile, respondents who did not play *online games* with good mental health as many as 33 (66.0%) and respondents who did not play online games with poor mental health as many as 65 (43.6%).

Based on the results of the test, the value of $P = 0.006 < \alpha = 0.05$ was obtained. So the final result can be concluded that "there is a meaningful relationship between online game games and mental health in adolescents at SMP Negeri 1 Bulukumba".

Table 3: The Relationship of Online Games with Mental Health in Adolescents at SMP Negeri 1 Bulukumba

		Mental Health						P Value	
		Good		Not Good		Total			
		N	%	N	%	N	%		
Game Online	Play Online Games	17	34.0	84	56.4	101	50.8	0.006	
	Not Playing Online Games	33	66.0	65	43.6	98	49.2		
Total		50	100.0	149	100.0	199	100.0		

DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the research that has been carried out, online games were obtained among students in grades VII and VIII at SMP Negeri 1 Bulukumba in the category of playing online games as many as 101 people (50.8%) and the category of not playing online games as many as 98 people (49.2%).

According to the researchers' assumption about online games at SMP Negeri 1 Bulukumba, it is not only influenced by the length of time they play, but also by the type of game they prefer. Many students tend to opt for violent or war-themed games, and intense involvement in these types of games can significantly affect emotions. Excessive focus can also lead to changes in attitude, including the appearance of a habit of using rude or rude words.

This research is in line with the research conducted (Widodo *et al.*, 2025) entitled The Relationship Between Online Game Playing and Mental Health of Vocational School Students at Peristik Vocational High School with the results of the research of students who play online games as many as 22 (22.0%) and the category of not playing online games 8 (8.0%). In this study, it is stated that in adolescence, there is a strong urge to explore and try new things, including playing online games. Teens tend to have a higher risk of developing an online gaming addiction compared to adults. Teenagers have not been able to control the length of time they play, resulting in excessive focus on online games. (Handayani *et al.*, 2022) in (Widodo *et al.*, 2025).

This research is also in line with the research conducted by (Apriani *et al.*, 2025) Based on demographic data, male students tend to play more online games than female students. This is due to the social environment of men who are generally more involved in online gaming activities compared to women.

Based on the results of a study carried out at SMP Negeri 1 Bulukumba, 50 students in grades VII and VIII had good mental health (25.1%) and 149 people (74.9%) had poor mental health.

According to the assumption of mental health researchers at SMP Negeri 1 Bulukumba, many students have poor mental health that causes fatigue, dizziness or headaches, difficulty making decisions, and feeling anxious or worried. This results in the level of sensitivity and emotions of children often being unstable, so the role of teachers and parents in educating children is needed, especially after children move towards the maturation process, they will really need attention and guidance from their parents.

This is in line with the research conducted with the results of the research (Putra, 2020) entitled The Relationship of Online Game Addiction with Mental Health Status in Adolescents Aged 13-15 Years in Sidoarjo, the results showed

mental health with the normal category as many as 17 (5.9%) and the severe category as many as 36 (12.5%). It is mentioned that online game dependence in adolescents can lead to deviant behaviors such as truancy, rudeness, and truancy, as well as health problems such as sleep disorders and headaches. In addition, dependence on online games can also cause health problems such as fatigue (52 percent), dizziness or headache (30 percent), weakness (15 percent), and nausea (5%).

This is in line with research according to (Putri & Masitoh, 2022) which states that the majority of adolescents experience mental health disorders that include stress, anxiety and even depression that can affect their well-being and academic performance so that this condition needs attention from schools and parents to manage their health.

The relationship between online games and mental health in adolescents at SMP Negeri 1 Bulukumba showed that respondents who played online games with good mental health as many as 17 (34.0%) and respondents who played online games with poor mental health as many as 84 (56.4%). Meanwhile, respondents who did not play online games with good mental health as many as 33 (66.0%) and respondents who did not play online games with poor mental health as many as 65 (43.6%).

Based on the results of the analysis using the chi-square statistical test, the value of $P = 0.006 < \alpha = 0.05$ was obtained. Based on the results of the test, the value of $P = 0.006 < \alpha = 0.05$ was obtained. So the final result can be concluded that "there is a relationship between online games and mental health in adolescents at SMP Negeri 1 Bulukumba".

This research is in line with research conducted by (Widodo *et al.*, 2025) that the results of Kendall's tau-b test showed a p-value of 0.001 which means $p < 0.05$. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a relationship between gaming activities.

According to the researcher's assumption, based on the results of the study, most of the respondents who played online games with good mental health were 17 (34.0%). Because online gaming can be beneficial for mental health because these games can help people cope with stress, anxiety, and feelings of sadness. Especially if the game is played with other people (multiplayer), players can communicate through the live chat feature. This makes them not feel lonely and can still maintain social relationships even through cyberspace. So, playing online games also provides an opportunity to express yourself and interact with others, which is good for mental health.

This research is in line with research conducted by (Amelia Putri Nasution *et al.*, 2025) Online gaming can have a positive impact if used wisely. In addition to entertainment, this online game trains critical thinking, decision-making, and the ability to communicate and cooperate across cultures. In fact, interaction between players can be a means of learning a foreign language.

According to the researcher's assumption, based on the results of the study, most respondents who did not play online games with their mental health were not good as much as 65 (66.0%). This is due to poor mental health conditions in adolescents who do not play online games, possibly influenced by other factors, such as social pressure, conflicts in the family, loneliness, heavy schoolwork load, social media use, and poor sleep patterns.

This research is in line with research conducted by (Lili *et al.*, 2022) Online gaming has no significant association with mental health symptoms such as depression or anxiety in teens. The results of the study highlight that other factors, such as social media use and sleep patterns, may have a greater influence on adolescents' well-being conditions compared to the length of time they play games.

CONCLUSION

The online game of students at SMP Negeri 1 Bulukumba was obtained from respondents who played online games as many as 101 respondents and those who did not play online games as many as 98 respondents. The mental health of SMP Negeri 1 Bulukumba students was obtained by 149 respondents with poor mental health and 50 respondents with good mental health. There is a relationship between online games and mental health in adolescents at SMP Negeri 1 Bulukumba.

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