



The Phenomenon of Online Games among Rural Early Childhood in West Kalimantan

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Abstrak:

Artikel ini membahas penggunaan game online pada anak di pedesaan di daerah Kabupaten Sambas, Provinsi Kalimantan Barat. Dalam studi ini penulis menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan deskriptif. Data yang diolah berdasarkan hasil wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Sedangkan Teknik analisis data dalam penelitian ini adalah reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Sedangkan Teknik keabsahan data meliputi, triangulasi, member check, dan menggunakan bahan referensi. Adapun temuan penelitian ini adalah pertama, terdapat empat game online yang paling banyak digemari oleh anak-anak di pedesaan seperti, Fifa Mobile, PUBG Mobile, Mobile Legends: Bang-Bang (MOBA), dan Free Fire. Kedua, Banyaknya anak yang bermain game online mendapatkan respon dari orang tua seperti adanya kekhawatiran orang tua kepada anak ketika bermain game online akan berdampak pada motivasi belajar dan ibadah anak. Ketiga, Orang tua masih belum maksimal dalam membatasi dan mengawasi game online pada anak dikarenakan terbatasnya pengetahuan orang tua, Penelitian ini berkontribusi dalam memberikan deskripsi terkait banyaknya anak pedesaan yang menggunakan game online.

Kata Kunci: *Game Online, Anak Usia Dini, Pedesaan, Kalimantan Barat*

Abstract:

This article discusses the use of online games by rural children in Sambas Regency, West Kalimantan Province. In this study, the author used qualitative research methods with a descriptive approach. Data was processed based on the results of interviews, observations, and documentation. The data analysis techniques in this study are data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions. While data validity techniques include triangulation, member checks, and using reference materials, The findings of this study are that, first, there are four online games that are most popular with children in rural areas, such as Fifa Mobile, PUBG Mobile, Mobile Legends: Bang-Bang (MOBA), and Free Fire. Second, the number of children who play online games gets a response from parents, such as parents' concerns about children's learning motivation and worship. Third, parents are still not optimal in limiting and supervising online games in children



due to limited parental knowledge. This study contributes to providing a description of the phenomenon of rural children playing online games.

Keywords: *Online Games, Early Childhood, Rural, West Kalimantan*

Introduction

Foreign culture is not something that is forbidden but indirectly affects Indonesian society. Foreign cultures should be addressed wisely to maintain local culture (Hasanah & Halija, 2023). One of the foreign cultures that is increasingly popular in Indonesia is online gaming. The development of online games in Indonesia certainly affects traditional games because they are increasingly abandoned by children. Moreover, among the children who like online games, one of them is at the level of early childhood education in elementary school. (Hamzah & Suratman, 2023; Suratman, 2021). Although it has a positive and negative impact and is the subject of study in the academic realm, social facts show that online games have a significant impact on learning achievement in students at school.

The increasingly massive development of the internet makes changes that occur in aspects of life, including games for children (Suratman & Hamzah, 2022). Before the internet developed as it does today, children played a lot of offline games, such as traditional games, PlayStation, Nintendo, and others (Suratman, 2018). However, along with the development of the internet that enters villages in Indonesia, children have switched to online games. The increasing popularity of online games today has resulted in game players becoming addicted to playing them (Harahap & Ramadan, 2021). Online game addiction has become a phenomenon in modern society. Moreover, online game applications are very easily accessible through the internet network, which spreads quickly among the public. Not only internet users among adults but also teenagers and children can easily make online gaming connections through smartphones. The flexibility of internal use via mobile devices has become a new culture in gaming among children. This new facility has made it possible for internet users to no longer be tied to a location to play them online (Rahmawati et al., 2018).

In the era of globalization, the rapid development of information and communication technology has had a significant impact on social life. Although the internet provides many potential benefits, it also causes problematic behavior, including online games where the majority of users are students. However, little is known about the impact of online games on group behavior and norms in online interactions (Winarsih & Salsabila, 2022). The development of online games even raises a discourse about the possibility of issuing a haram fatwa banning online games such as PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds (PUBG), which occurred in the Indonesian public domain from March to July 2019 (Woltermann, 2023). This makes online games not only studied in the realm of education and psychology but also in the realm of religion. Several studies show that the impact of internet use, including online gaming, results in physical and psychological health



problems and adversely affects interpersonal relationships and daily activities (Rakhmawati et al., 2021).

In fact, the habit of playing games is not only carried out by urban children who are accustomed to the internet network but also by rural children due to the internet penetration that has entered rural areas (Gao et al., 2023; Sebre et al., 2024). In developing countries like Indonesia, the national priority is to catch up with developed countries in infrastructure development, including the internet. This is a big leap in internet access that has created a huge gap between the digital society and other societies (Onitsuka et al., 2018). The impact of the internet in the village is used, one of which is to play online games. Although online games are useful for self-relaxation, the negative impact makes individuals forget the time so that they forget their daily tasks and obligations such as studying, school, helping parents, socializing with many people, and also doing spiritual activities such as worship (Agbaria, 2023; Rochanah & Nabila, 2022).

Based on these social facts, it shows that online games are not only carried out by urban children but also by children in rural areas, including in Sambas Regency, West Kalimantan Province, which borders Indonesia and Malaysia (Syarif et al., 2023). Based on the observations that the author made, it shows that children in Sambas Regency, especially those at the elementary school education level, have a lot of love for online games compared to traditional games. This fact makes the author interested in studying online games in children, both at the level of early childhood education and in elementary school in rural areas, especially Sambas in West Kalimantan.

Method

This article aims to reveal social facts related to the phenomenon of children playing online games. The type of research used by the author is qualitative with a descriptive approach to explore data related to the phenomenon of online games among children in the Indonesia-Malaysia border area (Masmuri & Bayu, 2019; Zubaedah et al., 2018). This research was conducted in a rural area in Sambas Regency, West Kalimantan Province. The data was obtained through interviews, observations, and documentation (Suratman & Rahnang, 2021). Interviews were conducted with children who play online games and their parents. While the observation made by the author is observing children who play online games in groups in rural Sambas Regency, Data analysis techniques in this study are data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions. Meanwhile, data validity techniques include triangulation, member checking, and using reference materials (Sugiyono, 2016).

Results And Discussion

1. Types of Online Games for Children in Sambas Rural

Based on the results of interviews and observations that the author conducted with rural children in rural Sambas Regency, there are at least several types of online games.



There are at least four types of online games that are popular and downloaded by children in rural areas, namely:

a. FIFA Mobile

A total of nine children who the author observed showed that four of them had the FIFA Mobile online game downloaded via their smartphones. Based on the results of interviews, one of the reasons they downloaded this game is because the application on FIFA Mobile is a type of soccer game that can be played with 1 versus 1 users online.

Based on research conducted by Naufal Azra Noerabadi (2023), it shows that soccer online games are popular with children because, in this game, it is necessary to build a balanced team by choosing soccer players from various positions and abilities. In addition, children can combine the various abilities of soccer players to achieve the balance of a team. Therefore, soccer online games provide understanding for children to set strategies in soccer online games. Online soccer games teach children to provide passing, shooting, and cooperation in attack and coordination in defense. In addition, soccer online games provide a sensation of satisfaction for children and social exchanges when playing the game collectively (Pinheiro et al., 2020).

b. PUBG Mobile

Based on the author's observations of nine children, seven people on their smartphones downloaded the PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds (PUBG) game. Based on the results of the interview, it shows that PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds (PUBG) games for children in rural areas provide challenges, especially in adventure, and are easy to play.

PUBG Mobile is one of the online games played by children because it provides easier access because it can be played via smartphones. PUBG Mobile also provides challenges and entertainment for its players; moreover, PUBG Mobile can be played individually, in pairs with one person, or as a team of four people, either through random invitations or by inviting friends from their friends list. The advantage of PUBG Mobile is that players can interact with other players through communication features such as text messages, chats, and emoticons. Through this feature, players can communicate with other players they have not previously recognized. This advantage provides benefits by adding a social dimension to the PUBG Mobile online game experience (Gokma Riski Sitorus Pane & Angga Intueri Mahendra, 2023).

c. Mobile Legends: Bang-Bang

Based on the author's observations from 9 children, at least there are children who download the Mobile Legends: Bang-Bang game application. Children downloading this game have similarities with the PUBG game, namely, challenges and adventures when playing Mobile Legends: Bang-Bang. In addition, children revealed that this game is mostly played by their friends, especially in rural Sambas.



Mobile Legends: Bang-Bang (MOBA) is a type of online game that combines two types of RTS (real-time strategy) and RPG (role-playing game) games. In this game, players run one character from two opposing teams in sequence to destroy the opponent's base. Each playable character is required to cooperate with team members to win the game. The high level of competition from MOBA games attracts a lot of attention until official tournaments are held both regionally and internationally (Chan et al., 2020). MOBA games have long been popular in Indonesia; at least 50 million people download MOBA game applications. As for the benefits of this game being a means of entertainment for someone and useful for practicing skills in playing, MOBA games are recommended for those who play them to be able to control themselves so as not to be addicted to playing games (Rani et al., 2020).

d. Free Fire

Based on the author's observations of nine children, at least seven children downloaded the Free Fire game application. Although it has similarities with the Mobile Legends: Bang-Bang game, they are both adventurous and challenging when facing enemies. Based on the results of interviews with children, the reason they download this game is because it has many characters and weapons to choose from compared to other games.

One of the online games that is widely used by students today is the Free Fire game. At least this game has been downloaded, reaching 100 million. This is because this game can be used on smartphones. Free Fire is a complex action adventure game in the battle royale genre where game players can choose the desired character, location, and weapon according to the level of the player being played together (Hamila & Rustan, 2023). According to Esports, the most downloaded game in the world in 2019 was Free Fire, and the Google Play Store awarded Free Fire as the most popular voting game in 2019. At least 80 million active users every day as of May 2020 (Jarrah et al., 2023).

2. Parents' Response to the Phenomenon of Playing Online Games in Children

The development of the use of online games among children in rural Sambas Regency has received mixed responses from parents. Based on the results of interviews, the author shows that parents in rural Sambas have concerns about their children when playing online games. This is in accordance with the results of the interview, as follows:

“Regarding children playing games, of course, I as a parent have concerns when children play games that they are lazy to learn, and worship because they play games. I as a parent have tried not to play games but it is difficult to change children not to play games” (Interview NR, parents in rural Sambas).

Based on the results of the interview, it shows that parents' concerns due to online games have an impact on children's learning and worship motivation. Regarding the impact of online games, it is relevant to the findings of research conducted by Zandrato and Harefa (2022), that online games have an impact on the learning achievement of students



who are over-addicted and have an impact on ignoring tasks given by teachers at school. However, efforts are made by parents against the use of online games by children by limiting the use of smartphones in their children. This is in accordance with the results of the interview, as follows:

“For the limit of playing gadgets, we limit it, because if it is not restricted, children will be addicted. If the way I limit children is playing gadgets, children are given gadgets when they come home from school until the afternoon. But for the evening usually my son also plays gadgets. If he plays gadgets, he usually plays games” (Interview RM, parents in rural Sambas).

Although there are efforts to limit children from playing smartphones or online games, the limits given are not too strict in limiting and supervising the use of gadgets or online games by children. The efforts that can be made by parents in limiting children from playing online games by limiting the use of gadgets, supervising children in playing gadgets, providing the right time schedule for playing gadgets, diverting children to other games, accompanying children when playing online games, giving attention to children, and hiding gadgets from the reach of children to the right time limit (Ulfah, 2020; Widyastuti, 2020). According to Sonja Kewitz et al (2023), playing games for 115 minutes per day is considered excessive. Meanwhile, based on the results of the author’s interview with parents in rural Sambas, at least their children play online games for more than 3 hours per day. This is confirmed based on the results of the interview, as follows:

“If my child plays gadgets for more than 3 hours a day, because from the afternoon until before maghrib, not to mention that at night he usually plays gadgets again. If forbidden to play gadgets it is a bit difficult because my child will cry looking for the gadget” (Interview RM, parents in rural Sambas).

Based on the results of the interview, parents have difficulty limiting their children when playing online games. Although there have been efforts made, there are several obstacles faced by parents, one of which is children’s addiction to playing online games. According to the author, the obstacle is a lack of parental knowledge regarding the impact of using online games on children. In addition, parents still do not understand how to limit children from playing online games. Moreover, by playing online games, children tend not to interfere with the work of parents, making parents give gadgets for children to play online games.

Conclusion

This study discusses the phenomenon of online games among children in rural Sambas Regency. There are at least some findings in this study related to the use of online games by rural children. First, there are at least four online games that are most popular with children in rural areas, such as Fifa Mobile, PUBG Mobile, Mobile Legends: Bang-Bang (MOBA), and Free Fire. Second, the development of playing online games in children



gets a response from parents, such as parents' concerns to children when playing online games will have an impact on children's learning motivation and worship. Third, parents are still not optimal in limiting and supervising online games in children due to limited parental knowledge. This research is limited to qualitative research with a descriptive approach and a limited number of informants. Therefore, further research can be conducted with a larger number of informants and diverse informant backgrounds, both in rural and urban areas.

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