

PUBG; BETWEEN REAL AND UNREAL

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ABSTRACT

Playing games is an enjoyable activity. Almost everyone loves it. Player Unknown's Battlegrounds (PUBG) is a game enjoyed by people of all ages, particularly children. Due to its interesting features, PUBG has the potential to become gamers addicted. Furthermore, most of the feature contains violence, which children may imitate. They may believe the content is real. As a result, they will be able to replicate the brutality depicted in the game. They have difficulties determining what is real and unreal. Thus, the author of this scientific study aims to analyse the effect of playing PUBG on youngsters. The dataset was compiled using data from the official PUBG mobile Instagram account @pubgmobile id, the pubgmobile.com website, and articles. Simulacra and Simulation by Jean Baudrillard is applied in this study to aid the author in conducting this analysis. The result of this study indicates that playing PUBG could trigger violence and addiction.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Online games are an example of a type of digital game prevalent in current times (Iswan and Kusmawati, 2015: 12). Syahran (2015: 85) defines online gaming as a technology product that serves as entertainment. According to Munawir (2019), online games are now considered electronic media that both youngsters and adults enjoy. This game is so enjoyable that it has become a significant need for daily activities. Even at school, youngsters will attempt to steal time by playing games. Based on data from the Digital Indonesia Report 2021 from Hootsuite, Indonesia's number of mobile game players surpasses 60.5 percent of all mobile internet users. Moreover, this number will continue to keep increasing with the increasing number of persons surfing in cyberspace.

Games provide an escape from our daily lives and are something we engage in to have fun and be entertained. We tend to occupy ourselves by retreating into various fancies, alternate universes and performing tasks that we are ordinarily incapable of performing. A game forces us to be concentrated and aware of our current digital world's surroundings, and it encourages us to be active and motivated to explore digital world (Lin Gu, 2011).

According to Rieber (1996), play is critical for developing one's social, psychological, and intellectual abilities. Play is a sort of voluntary activity that is organically motivating and incorporates an element of make-believe. These characteristics resemble and are strikingly comparable to contemporary learning theories, which emphasize the need for self-motivation and rewarding activities.

Nicole Lazzaro (2004) outlines four "keys" to understand why we play video games: Hard Fun, Easy Fun, Altered States, and The People Factor. First, the term "hard fun" alludes to the importance of clearing and completing various hurdles inside games and the feelings and wants to be elicited. It stimulates creativity by pushing users to think creatively, uncover answers, and experience a sense of accomplishment when challenging issues are solved. Next, "easy fun" is a term that refers to the pure satisfaction that some players derive from participating in various

game activities. The emphasis is not on completing the game or attempting to solve the puzzle but on capturing the player's attention and cultivating a sense of curiosity, encouraging the player to explore and discover the game's contents. Then, "the altered states" is a term that refers to the various ways in which players utilize gaming to escape from reality, as a sort of therapy, and as a technique to enhance their mental condition. It examines how various game parts manipulate the player's emotions, altering their perception, behavior, and thought in various gaming settings. The last is the People Factor. It is a term that relates to how people use gaming as a means of social engagement. Through games, it is possible to build or, in some circumstances, weaken friendships and provide a shared social activity for some groups of gamers (Lazzaro, 2004).

The main reason we play games is for entertainment. They provide a sensation of stability, pleasure, and escapism. They create a sense of pride and exhilaration whenever a difficult task or challenge is completed. This sensation satisfies our basic needs and hence motivates us to continue playing (Lin Gu, 2011). Games give players a sense of control over their actions and the fact that those actions have consequences in the game environment. By exerting control over their activities, players can create engaging their own experiences through interaction with the game (Gee, 2003).

Online video gaming has grown to be one of the most popular leisure activities around the globe, particularly among the young (Ballabio et al., 2017; Männikkö et al., 2015). Numerous studies have consistently demonstrated that gaming can have beneficial effects, including therapeutic, medicinal, physiological, cognitive, and educational benefits (Griffiths 2002, 2019; Nuyensetal, 2019). However, gaming can be problematic and potentially addictive for a small minority (Kuss and Griffiths 2012; Pontes and Griffiths 2014). According to Granic et.al (2014), decades of important studies on the consequences of violent video games on children's and adolescents' aggressive behavior exist already, and this is a highly significant body of work to evaluate. The overwhelming majority of psychological studies on the effects of "gaming" have focused on its negative consequences: the propensity for aggression, addiction, and depression (Granic et.al. 2014). In today's society, the frequency of young people showing aggressive behavior is increasing (Kumar, 2020).

PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds (PUBG) is a multiplayer shooter game in which up to one hundred players battle it out in a 'battle royale,' with the winner being the last person or team remaining. The game can be played with either friends or strangers. The majority of players is addicted to this game and spends excessive time playing it. Numerous children play this game even though it is rated for users over sixteen due to user interaction and digital transactions.

PUBG is simple to learn but difficult to master. PUBG seems straightforward, and initially, the player must jump from the plane and walk to an area of the map away from the line of fire to locate equipment and weaponry. That is the easy part that everyone can achieve; nevertheless, the competition intensifies dramatically. The players must decide whether to sneak into the play area, avoid conflict, or charge with all guns blazing and an aggressive mentality. The game's growing difficulty curve makes it addictive (Soni, N. et.al., 2019).

According to research conducted on gamers, 47% have played one or more intensely violent games (Allahverdipour, Bazargan, Farhadinasab, & Moeini, 2010). In addition, PUBG is a virtual platform that enables players to evade reality while succeeding and engaging in a semi-real world of fiction that delivers prizes, a sense of accomplishment, and acceptance (Buttar, W.T. et.al., 2020).

Regrettably, the benefits and entertaining nature of PUBG can soon seize control of players' thoughts as they acquire an addiction to the game through excessive use. The overwhelming violence in PUBG can cause gamers to have aggressive thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Ultimately, this will make gamers less humane and more likely to engage in severe violence. Additionally, playing PUBG for an extended amount of time will increase psychological disorders (Buttar, W.T. et.al., 2020). According to Schivinski et al. (2018), video game addiction manifests itself in its users through obsessive gaming, social isolation, mood swings, decreased imagination, and hyper-focus on in-game achievements, which results in the obliteration of other life events.

Almost a year after the game's debut, numerous reports have surfaced detailing the harmful effects the game has had on individuals, as evidenced by their academic, sleep, behavioral, social, and other habits. As a result, it generates social, psychological, and behavioral concerns that must be handled immediately to steer adolescents away from extreme aggressive and violent issues. Thus, this study examines the elements contributing to PUBG addiction and its psychological effects on Indonesian youth.

The excessive screen time of playing games results in a lack of human interaction and an emotional connection between children and adults, as both are engrossed in their virtual worlds (Ferguson, Coulson, & Barnett, 2011). Certain kids may isolate themselves for hours to ensure uninterrupted gaming, resulting in a variety of health problems (Kuss & Griffiths, 2012). Numerous previous studies have suggested that specific psychological characteristics (including personality traits) may predispose certain individuals to excessive Internet use, with previous research focusing primarily on the effects of shyness (Chak & Leung, 2004), loneliness, and self-consciousness on Internet use levels (Engelberg & Sjöberg, 2004; Shapira, Goldsmith, Keck Jr, Khosla, & McElroy, 2000; Whang, Lee, & Chang, 2003; Yuen & Lavin, 2004). Additionally, risk variables for the development of pathological gaming included neurotic personality traits, social isolation, and impaired self-control, as well as mental health issues such as melancholy, anxiety, and ADHD (Ferguson et al., 2011).

From the effects above, the researcher views that PUBG can cause addiction and addiction can make someone think what he sees is real. In other words, virtual world is an interesting way to escape from reality. Someone can be easily entertained by the feature given on that game. Thus, in this study, the researcher aims to analyze the impacts of PUBG towards the youngsters.

To analyze how PUBG impacts the children, the researcher used the theory from Jean Baudrillard, Simulacra and Simulation. According to Jean Baudrillard (1981: 3), "simulation threatens the difference between the "true" and the "false," the "real" and the "imaginary"". "Simulacra are copies that depict things that either had no reality to begin with, or that no longer have an original" (Goldman, Robert; Papson, Stephen, 2003). "Simulation is the imitation of the operation of a real-world process or system over time (Banks, J. et.al., 2001).

Cited on "Simulacra and Simulations Jean Baudrillard written by Andalib (2015), he views that Simulacra and Simulation discuss how symbols and signs relate to contemporaneity (simultaneous existences). According to Baudrillard, our contemporary culture has "replaced all truth and meaning with symbols and signs, and human experience is a simulation of reality." Thus, the simulacra from Baudrillard refer to are significations of how culture and media symbolism produces experienced reality, the acquired knowledge through which our lives and common existence are rendered legible. According to Baudrillard, society has been inundated with these phantoms. Our lives are so immersed in society's construction that all significance has been obliterated because they are infinitely malleable. Baudrillard used the term "precession of simulacra" to describe this phenomenon in four stages.

The first stage is a faithful image/copy, where we feel. It may even be right, that a sign is a "reflection of a profound reality" (page 6), in other words, a decent appearance, in what Baudrillard referred to as "the sacramental order" (Andalib, 2015).

The second stage is reality perversion. We feel that the sign is an unfaithful duplicate that "masks and denatures" reality as an "evil appearance—it is of the order of maleficence." In this case, signs and images do not faithfully reveal reality. Still, they can allude to the existence of a hidden reality that the sign is incapable of encapsulating (Andalib, 2015).

The third stage conceals the absence of fundamental reality, in which the simulacrum appears to be a faithful replica but is a copy without an original. Signs and images purport to represent something actual, yet no representation occurs, and arbitrary images are just presented as objects they have no resemblance to. Baudrillard refers to this as the "order of sorcery," a semantic algebraic regime in which all human meaning is artificially manufactured to appear as a reference to (increasingly) hermetic truth (Andalib, 2015).

The fourth step is pure simulation, in which the simulacrum bears no resemblance to reality. In this case, signs only mirror other signs, and any claim to reality made by images or signs is incidental to other such claims. This is a regime of complete equivalence. Cultural products no longer need to pretend to be real in the conventional sense. Consumer experiences are so overwhelmingly artificial that even reality claims are expected to be couched in artificial, "hyperreal" terms. Any naive claim to reality is interpreted as lacking critical self-awareness and so as excessively emotional (Andalib, 2015).

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research analyzed the impacts of of PUBG towards the youngsters. The dataset was taken from the official PUBG mobile Instagram account @pubgmobile id, the pubgmobile.com website, and various articles. Jean Baudrillard's Simulacra and Simulation is used in this study to assist the author in doing this analysis. To figure out how the impacts of of PUBG towards the children, the author analyzed it by applying several stages.

First, the author selected information from PUBG mobile Instagram account @pubgmobile id, the pubgmobile.com website, and various supported articles. Then, the author analyzed the followers' comments and found supporting articles related to them.

Second, the author took some issues and examples of the players that addicted to it. The author analyzed the impacts deeply.

Third, the author connected the issues with the theory from Jean Baudrillard, Simulacra and Simulation.

The last, the author concluded the whole observation of the impacts of of PUBG towards the youngsters.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In order to fully understand the result of this research, firstly, the author The author compiled this research using data from the PUBG mobile Instagram account @pubgmobile id, the pubgmobile.com website, and other supplementary articles. The author then analyzed the followers' comments and discovered supporting articles.

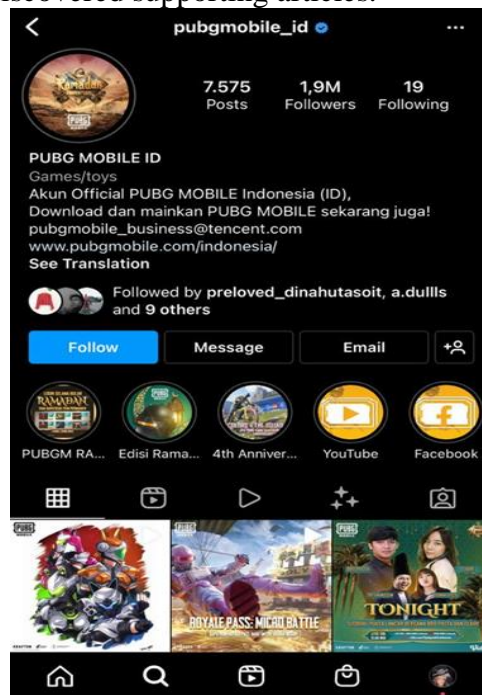


Figure 1. PUBG Official Instagram Account

Figure 1 shows that it is PUBG Instagram official account, Indonesia. It has 1.9 million followers. In this account, all players that are addicted to PUBG can see a lot of posts regarding to information of PUBG events, competitions, features, and many more. In this account, the players can also purchase some digital weapons or any other features needed for their level. It can

be seen from the comments on Figure 2.



Figure 2. Gaining Rewards

Figure 2 shows that PUBG offers Royale Pass Month 10. This account informs that the players have to log in and upgrade their Royale Pass soon as they will find a lot of items there. Cited in pubgmobile.com, Royale Pass is the primary method of earning in-game rewards for gamers. To boost your rank, you can gain Royale Pass points in the following ways. First, Complete Daily Missions and Royale Pass Challenge Missions. Elite Pass holders will gain access to Elite Missions, which will expedite their rank advancement. Second, participate in weekly challenges and activities to earn Royale Points Cards. Third, open a chest will also give you free Royale Pass points. The last, take part in in-game activities to earn more Royale Pass points for free.

The next observation could be seen from Figure 3.



Figure 3. Comments among PUBG gamers

Figure 3 shows the comments among players. From the comments above, the researcher views that most of the PUBG Followers there have a good relationship even though they probably do not know each other. One account named @jumaidi.aditya invites any followers to collaborate in reaching the mission and we could see that Jumaidi’s offer is responded positively. The other followers even directly share their ID. It shows that they are interested in doing the mission in a

team. It is strongly supported by another account named @deksatria_pu. He said that he was interested in it and asked @jumaidi.aditya to make a group of Royale Pass so that they will get many rewards. In a closer observation, the researcher views that this account @pubgmobile_id and pubgmobile.com could represent the interest of Indonesian gamers in playing PUBG. From their interest, the researcher views there must be a tendency of being addicted. The following analysis can be seen from this case.

Cited on PramborsFM.com, Zain Ali, an 18-year-old Pakistani teenager, shot and killed his mother and two brothers at his home on January 19. At first, he believed his mother and two siblings might resurrect. He believes in that rationale since he continues to play Player Unknown's Battlegrounds (PUBG), a game that allows players to resurrect after being shot. "The aggravation of losing raises my tension, and I shoot them hoping that they will resurrect like in the game (PUBG)," Zain told police, according to Vice. One of Zain's neighbors acknowledged that he rarely leaves the house due to gaming addiction. On the other hand, Zain is a well-behaved child who never fights with other children. Fear and anxiety now permeate the environment around Zain. Some children who had never played PUBG before became intrigued by the game's content.

From the case above, we can see that Zain is addicted to PUBG. Due to his addiction, he has problem in defining what is real and unreal. He thinks what he sees and plays on PUBG are real. The characters that show in PUBG can be alive even though they have been shot. His problem in seeing the reality affects on what he sees in his real life. Thus, he tried to shoot his mother and his two siblings. He thought they would be alive as what he saw in PUBG, but they did not. They passed away. This addiction can affect to his brain as he cannot differentiate what is real and unreal. He has difficulties seeing the reality while what he sees on PUBG is unreal. It is constructed to be real, but actually not. It is just simulation. As Jean Baudrillard (1981: 3) stated, "simulation threatens the difference between the "true" and the "false," the "real" and the "imaginary" ". Cited in Liputan6.com, a child in Haimen, Jiangsu, China became one of the casualties due to his infatuation with this famous video game that was on the increase. PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds, widely known as PUBG is the key factor that drove a boy to leap from the fourth floor of a building and die tragically.

According to *ET Today*, a poor youngster called Xu Tianci fell from the fourth storey of an apartment building in the morning on August 30, 2018. His mother was quite depressed and blamed the game played by her son. He said the game had impacted his son and caused him to jump off buildings. PUBG is an online multiplayer online game where up to a hundred players will parachute into an island in quest of weapons and equipment to kill others.

One of the game's slogans reads "Winner, winner chicken meal," which will appear when you are the final player standing. The game is designed for players to manage their avatars so they can run and shoot other people while also being able to execute long-distance jumps from building to building with ease. Xu's mother claimed that the game was what encouraged her son to imagine he could do what the character did in the game he played (Liputan6.com). In a closer analysis, it can be interpreted that Xu is also one of the gamers that cannot differentiate what is real and imaginary. He sees the power that he plays on PUBG can be applied in reality. Thus, he tried to jump off the building as he thought he would be okay, but in reality he fell off and got injured.

4. CONCLUSION

To conclude, playing games is entertaining. However, we also need to be careful as games are constructed to be real. Playing games without any guidance and limited time could cause addiction and addiction could lead violence. People will see something real on game and they think it is applicable in the real life. Indeed, playing games helps us escape from reality but it doesn't mean it kills our real life and someone's life. As previously stated in the discussion, the players in this game have an extremely deep bond. This relationship gives them the impression that this game is more authentic. Their close relationship and their determination to win awards and advance to a higher level have formed a community. They not only exchange suggestions on how to win an award through that community but also build great relationships. As a result, they

play more and more, leading to addiction. When someone is addicted, they lose track of time spent with family and friends in real life. Finally, they believe their digital game to be their actual reality. They were unable to distinguish between their real and virtual lives.

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