

Teenagers' perceptions of the PUBG game within the GPM Naku congregation



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ABSTRACT

This study delves into the perceptions of teenagers regarding the popular PUBG game within the GPM Naku congregation. Utilizing a qualitative approach, the research encompasses various data collection methods, including on-site observations, interviews with preselected key informants, literature reviews for gathering pertinent references, and documentation. Data analysis involves techniques such as data reduction, data display, and data verification. The results reveal a notable trend: teenagers' infrequent attendance at worship services correlates with their addiction to online gaming, particularly PUBG. In light of these findings, it is evident that the allure of online gaming, notably PUBG, often supersedes traditional religious commitments among teenagers. This study contributes to understanding the complex interplay between technology and religious practices among youth, shedding light on the factors influencing their engagement with both online gaming and communal religious activities. The implications of these findings extend beyond the confines of the GPM Naku congregation, offering insights that could inform strategies for addressing youth participation in religious communities amidst the pervasive influence of digital entertainment. Ultimately, this research underscores the need for a nuanced approach to addressing contemporary challenges in fostering religious engagement among young people in an increasingly digitalized world.

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1. Introduction

In the contemporary era, technological progress has achieved unprecedented levels of sophistication, fundamentally reshaping various aspects of human life. One compelling piece of evidence supporting this argument is the rapid pace of innovation and development across multiple technological domains. For instance, advancements in artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, and robotics have revolutionized industries such as healthcare, finance, and transportation [1]. These technologies enable tasks that were once considered impossible for machines to perform autonomously, showcasing the remarkable strides made in modern technology. Moreover, the widespread adoption and integration of internet technology into everyday life further underscore the extent of technological sophistication in the current era [2]. The internet has transformed communication, commerce, and information dissemination on a global scale [3]. With the advent of high-speed internet connections and wireless communication technologies, individuals can access vast amounts of information instantaneously, connect with people worldwide in real-time, and engage in e-commerce activities seamlessly [4]. This ubiquitous connectivity exemplifies the unparalleled advancements in modern technology and their profound impact on society [5].

Additionally, the proliferation of smartphones and other portable computing devices serves as another compelling indicator of technological progress in the contemporary era [6]. These devices have become ubiquitous tools that empower individuals to access a wide array of

services and functionalities on the go [7]. From communication and entertainment to productivity and personal finance management, smartphones have revolutionized how people interact with technology in their daily lives [8]. The exponential growth of mobile computing underscores the ongoing evolution and sophistication of modern technology. In addition to the broader advancements in technology described above, the proliferation of online gaming applications further exemplifies the remarkable sophistication of modern technology. Online gaming has become an integral part of contemporary culture, offering immersive experiences and social interactions on a global scale [9]. The seamless integration of high-speed internet connectivity, powerful computing devices, and sophisticated gaming platforms has enabled players to engage in immersive virtual worlds with unprecedented realism and interactivity [10]. Furthermore, the rise of esports has transformed gaming into a competitive spectator sport [11], attracting millions of viewers worldwide and generating significant economic activity [12]. The popularity of online gaming applications underscores the profound impact of modern technology on entertainment [13], socialization [14], and leisure activities in the current era of technological modernization [15].

Recent years have witnessed a surge in the popularity of various online-based games, a phenomenon driven by the rapid globalization and technological advancements. This trend has instilled concern across educational and governmental institutions alike, as they observe the impact on academic performance among students. Concurrently, the rapid evolution of internet technology has propelled the growth of online games, characterized by their electronic and visual nature. Notably, online games distinguish themselves by enabling players to engage with individuals from diverse geographical locations, transcending local boundaries [16]. Prominent examples of such games among today's teenagers include FreeFire, PUBG, and Mobile Legend, accessible via both personal computers and smartphones. In Indonesia, the proliferation of online game enthusiasts, numbering at 6 million individuals, predominantly comprises teenagers, with approximately 40% falling within this demographic [17]. However, this widespread engagement has brought about negative consequences, particularly concerning addiction. Studies indicate that a significant proportion of adolescents, both male and female, acknowledge addiction to online gaming [18]. The genesis of online-based games is intricately linked to the advancement of computer technology and networks, transitioning from localized networks to the expansive realm of the internet.

The online-based games popular today differ significantly from their initial iterations. In 1960, when computers were first introduced, gaming was limited to two users. However, subsequent advancements allowed for multiplayer gaming across various locations simultaneously [19]. PUBG (Player Unknown's Battle Ground) epitomizes this evolution, offering a competitive multiplayer experience within the "Battle-Royale" genre. This genre draws inspiration from a classic Japanese film from 2000, adapted from a 1999 novel [20]. PUBG immerses players in a battle involving 100 individuals, each scavenging for resources within a vast arena. From melee weapons like frying pans to body armor and heavy firearms, players must fortify themselves for survival. Access to water and land vehicles enhances mobility, yet the ultimate objective remains: be the last one standing amidst the fray. Beyond individual play, PUBG offers cooperative formats like Duo (2 players) and squad (4 players), fostering strategic gameplay dynamics. The detrimental effects of continuous online gaming addiction manifest profoundly in interpersonal relationships. Previously nurtured bonds with friends and family suffer due to diminished communication and shared time. Socialization primarily occurs within the confines of online gaming environments, eroding real-world interactions. Consequently, social skills deteriorate, fostering rude and aggressive behaviors influenced by online gaming content. Persistent preoccupation with gaming impedes academic focus and reduces peer interactions.

This phenomenon renders online game users apathetic and disengaged from their surroundings, exhibiting behaviors such as dishonesty, recklessness, and a preference for one-way interaction via smartphones. Consequently, they become socially withdrawn, struggling to express themselves in real-world settings. The proliferation of IT and online gaming particularly captivates teenagers, leading to prolonged gaming sessions, a trend prevalent even within the Maluku Protestant Christian Church GPM Naku Congregation, notably among Sunday school attendees. These teenagers habitually spend excessive time gaming, individually or in groups,

often extending late into the night, a practice known as "mabar." Preliminary observations suggest that active involvement in online gaming significantly detracts from participation in Sunday school worship, primarily due to the extended duration of gaming sessions. Sunday school, serving as formal ecclesiastical education focused on Christian teachings and Bible study, experiences notably low attendance at the GPM Naku Congregation, largely attributed to teenagers' preoccupation with online gaming, causing them to overlook or disregard scheduled prayer times. The influence of online gaming on worship attendance is particularly pronounced among teenagers within the Nazareth Sector of the GPM Naku Congregation. This pervasive tendency to prioritize gaming over religious obligations underscores the need for further investigation. Consequently, the author embarked on a research endeavor titled "Teenagers' perceptions of the PUBG game within the GPM Naku congregation" to delve deeper into this phenomenon.

2. Method

The research methodology adopted for this study is descriptive qualitative methods, guided by insights from Dodgson [21]. This approach positions the researcher as the principal instrument, emphasizing a combined approach to data collection. Data gathering techniques encompass various methods to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the research context [22]. The qualitative nature of the study allows for the exploration of nuanced aspects and facilitates an inductive analysis process. In line with Creswell framework, data collection involves a multifaceted approach, incorporating techniques such as interviews and observations [23]. These methods enable the researcher to gather rich and diverse data, capturing the complexity of the phenomenon under investigation. Interviews provide a platform for participants to articulate their perspectives and experiences, while observations offer insights into behaviors and interactions within the research setting [24]. By employing multiple data acquisition techniques, the study aims to enhance the depth and breadth of the data collected. Following data collection, the analysis adopts an inductive approach, as recommended by Azungah [25]. This method involves deriving themes and patterns from the raw data, allowing for the emergence of new insights and understandings. Friedman perspective underscores the importance of analyzing descriptive data, such as interview transcripts and observational records [26]. Through systematic coding and thematic analysis, the data are organized and interpreted to identify key findings and themes. Additionally, Kirk and Miller emphasize the significance of direct observations and engagement with participants in qualitative research [27]. By immersing themselves in the research context, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the phenomena under study and establish rapport with participants. This participatory approach enhances the credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings, ensuring that the data reflect the perspectives and experiences of the participants accurately. The utilization of descriptive qualitative methods in this study enables a holistic exploration of the research topic. By employing a combination of data collection techniques and adopting an inductive analysis approach, the study aims to generate rich and nuanced insights. The rigorous application of qualitative methodologies ensures the validity and reliability of the research findings, contributing to a robust understanding of the phenomena under investigation in fieldwork settings.

3. Results and Discussion

This statement underscores the importance of investigating teenagers' perceptions of gaming, particularly focusing on the PUBG game, due to its significant influence on adolescents' lives and its potential impact on various aspects such as academic performance, social interactions, and overall well-being. Scientific evidence supports the notion that gaming, including online multiplayer games like PUBG, can exert a profound influence on adolescents. Numerous studies have documented associations between gaming habits and academic performance [28]. Furthermore, gaming can impact adolescents' social interactions. While gaming can facilitate social connections and teamwork in multiplayer settings, excessive gaming may lead to social withdrawal and isolation [29]. Moreover, the overall well-being of adolescents can be influenced by their gaming habits [30]. Excessive gaming has been linked to

various negative outcomes, including increased aggression, decreased self-esteem, and symptoms of depression and anxiety. A meta-analysis published in *Perspectives on Psychological Science* found a small but significant association between violent video game exposure and aggressive behavior, suggesting that gaming content can impact adolescents' emotional and behavioral health [31]. The statement highlights the importance of investigating teenagers' perceptions of gaming, including the PUBG game, due to its significant influence on various aspects of adolescents' lives. Scientific evidence supports the notion that gaming habits can impact academic performance, social interactions, and overall well-being, emphasizing the need for further research to understand the complex relationships between gaming and adolescent development. Understanding how teenagers perceive PUBG is crucial for identifying any positive or negative effects associated with the game and for developing strategies to address potential concerns or leverage benefits. Through an exploration of teenagers' perspectives on PUBG, this research aims to provide valuable insights into the role of online gaming in contemporary youth culture and its implications for adolescent development.

3.1. Teenagers and caregivers comprehend gaming and its impact

The role of gaming in teenagers' lives is emphasized, highlighting its prevalence and influence in modern youth culture. Games have become integral to youth recreational activities, serving as sources of entertainment, socialization, and even education. Understanding how teens perceive gaming is crucial for gaining insight into their motivations, preferences, and behaviors regarding this ubiquitous form of media. This research also acknowledges the significant role of caregivers in shaping adolescents' attitudes and behavior towards gaming. Caregivers, including parents, guardians, and educators, play pivotal roles in guiding and supervising youth activities, including their involvement with gaming. Their perceptions and attitudes towards gaming can influence adolescents' gaming habits, as well as the rules and boundaries set around gaming activities in the home or educational environment. Furthermore, this research explores caregivers' perspectives, adopting a holistic approach that recognizes the importance of understanding how both youth and caregivers view gaming and its impact. Their perspectives may vary based on factors such as age, experience, and cultural background. By examining adolescents' and caregivers' understanding of these potential impacts, this research aims to provide a comprehensive picture of the role of gaming in adolescent development and the challenges and opportunities it presents for caregivers in promoting healthy gaming behavior. Online games are electronic and visually based games played using electronic visual media. They typically operate on servers, facilitating multiplayer engagement via the internet. These games are commonly provided as supplementary services by online service companies or can be accessed directly through relevant web pages or proprietary systems offered by game providers. In light of this, the informant was prompted with the question: "What is your understanding of online games?"

"Online games are those played by accessing the internet" (VB)

"Online games are games played by various groups using specific applications." (SP)

"Online games are video games that require the device used for playing to be connected to the internet network" (DP)

Based on the responses provided by the informants, it is evident that they possess a thorough understanding of online games. The implication for teenagers' understanding of online games, based on the statement that the informants have a deep understanding of them, suggests that teenagers may possess a comprehensive grasp of various aspects related to online gaming. This implies that teenagers are likely well-versed in the mechanics, dynamics, and intricacies of online games, including game objectives, strategies, and social interactions within gaming communities. Furthermore, their understanding may extend to the potential impacts of online gaming on various aspects of their lives, such as academic performance, social relationships, and overall well-being. Moreover, teenagers' deep understanding of online games suggests that they may be adept at navigating the complexities and challenges presented by gaming environments. They may possess a nuanced understanding of the risks and benefits associated with online gaming, enabling them to make informed decisions about their gaming habits and behaviors. Additionally, teenagers' understanding of online games may empower them to effectively

manage their gaming experiences, including setting appropriate boundaries, balancing gaming with other responsibilities, and seeking support if needed. Furthermore, teenagers' deep understanding of online games may have implications for their engagement with gaming communities and their ability to cultivate meaningful social connections within these environments. They may actively participate in discussions, collaborate with other players, and contribute to the development and evolution of gaming cultures. Additionally, their understanding of online games may foster critical thinking skills, problem-solving abilities, and creativity, as they navigate virtual worlds and overcome challenges presented by game mechanics. The implication for teenagers' understanding of online games suggests that they are active participants in gaming culture, equipped with the knowledge and skills to engage meaningfully with gaming environments while also being mindful of potential risks and benefits. This understanding underscores the importance of considering teenagers' perspectives and experiences in discussions surrounding online gaming and in the development of strategies to promote healthy gaming behaviors. Subsequently, the informants were queried regarding the adverse effects of online games on them and the duration of their daily online gaming sessions.

"The negative impacts I experience include reduced sleep duration, decreased concentration on studying, and diminished time allocated for worship. I engage in gaming activities for approximately seven hours per day." (MS)

"The pocket money provided by my parents is allocated towards renting WiFi and purchasing data quota. I spend approximately 12 hours per day playing games" (VB)

Similar sentiments were expressed by other sources comprising teenagers who engage in online gaming. The responses indicate that teenagers are aware of the adverse effects associated with playing online games, including the expenditure of time, energy, and financial resources solely for gaming purposes.

3.2. Adolescents' perceptions of online games

Online-based games were highly popular in the past. However, their nature has evolved significantly since their inception in 1960. Initially, computers introduced during that period could only accommodate two players for gaming purposes. Subsequently, advancements enabled multiple users to engage in gaming simultaneously from different locations. The integration of information technology (IT) with the emergence of online games has sparked interest among teenagers, who often dedicate prolonged periods to gaming. This phenomenon is observable within the Maluku Protestant Christian Church, particularly among Sunday school teenagers. In their daily routines, these individuals frequently indulge in online gaming sessions lasting more than an hour. In light of these observations, the informant was prompted with the question: "What aspects attract you to playing the PUBG online game?"

"I am interested in PUBG because it alleviates boredom" (MS)

"I am interested because I have made numerous friends through online games, both within the Ambon area and beyond." (BH)

Based on the responses above, it can be concluded that teenagers in the Nazareth sector of the GPM Soya congregation express interest in playing the online game PUBG due to its captivating nature and entertainment value. Additionally, the game facilitates the formation of numerous friendships, both locally in the city of Ambon and beyond its vicinity. Based on the perspectives of the informants, it is evident that they possess a considerable understanding of online games and their impact on teenagers within the GPM Naku Congregation. The results of the interviews clearly indicate that both caregivers and teenagers in the Nazareth sector of the GPM Naku congregation grasp the concept of online games and comprehend their effects. Consequently, the presentation of data linked to theoretical frameworks, through explanations reflecting the informants' perspectives on adolescent perceptions, will be analyzed and discussed scientifically. This analysis will be based on the contextual findings in the field regarding teenagers and online games, alongside their associated impacts, further explored through the results of interviews to ascertain the depth of the research's meaning. Online games

markedly differ from traditional games in that players can engage not only with individuals in their immediate vicinity but also with participants from various locations worldwide. Among contemporary teenagers, popular online games include FreeFire, PUBG, and Mobile Legend, accessible via personal computers or smartphones. The rapid evolution of smartphone technology has propelled the swift development of online games. Consequently, online games are characterized as networked games, facilitating interactions aimed at achieving goals, completing missions, and attaining high scores in the virtual realm. Teenagers at GPM Naku perceive online games as engaging pastimes capable of alleviating boredom. Interviews conducted by the author revealed that these games are played on a daily basis, often for extended periods, sometimes reaching up to 12 hours per day.

Perception is a cognitive process initiated by the reception of stimuli through the five senses, which are then interpreted by individuals to facilitate awareness and understanding of the sensed stimuli. According to the findings obtained from interviews conducted with teenagers from the Nazareth sector of the GPM Soya congregation, they perceive the PUBG online game as a source of entertainment that piques their interest. Additionally, they acknowledge that playing this game enables them to forge numerous meaningful friendships, both within and beyond their local vicinity. While online games are primarily viewed as sources of entertainment, teenagers also recognize the potential negative impacts associated with excessive gaming. They are aware that prolonged engagement in online gaming can adversely affect various aspects of their lives, including their physical health, academic performance, relationships with their immediate environment, and religious practices.

4. Conclusion

The PUBG online game significantly impacts human life, particularly among today's teenagers. It instills a sense of ambition in players, compelling them to persist until they achieve victory and fostering addictive tendencies. Failure to effectively manage time between online gaming and responsibilities as students and members of SMTPI can result in severe consequences. This phenomenon is observed within the GPM Naku Congregation, where online games detrimentally affect attendance at worship activities, including Sunday schools and worship services, due to their widespread popularity.

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