



Roblox addiction and the role of escapism among emerging adults in Jabodetabek

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Abstract

Online games can make users feel happy because it offers a sense of psychological satisfaction such as not thinking about social pressure, anxiety, frustration, and it gives happiness. Online games are currently widely used among certain groups in Indonesia such as Roblox. Online gaming addiction is a condition in which individuals feel an excessive dependence on online games, potentially causing negative effects on themselves, while escapism is a condition in which a person has a desire or tendency to avoid reality by seeking entertainment and peace of mind. This study aims to examine the relationship between escapism and online gaming addiction by distinguishing two dimensions of motivation, self-expansion and self-suppression. This study uses a quantitative method with participants aged 18-29 lives in Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, or Bekasi. The participants in this study were individuals in states emerging adulthood who played Roblox for at least 4 hours a day. The measurement tools used in this study were the Gaming Addiction Scale by Lemmens et al. (2009) with 7 dimensions and the Escapism Motivation Scale by Stenseng et al. (2021) with 2 dimensions. The results of this study show a significant positive correlation between the Self-Suppression dimension and Online Gaming Addiction ($r = 0.594$). Individuals who escape based on the pressures or problems (self-suppression) they tend to have an increased level of addiction to online games.

Keywords: *Emerging Adulthood; Escapism; Online Gaming Addiction*

Suggested citation

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Introduction

Online gaming has become a common part of everyday life, among children, teenagers, and even adults. Online games nowadays not only provide enjoyment for their users, but also satisfaction. According to Young (as cited in Ikhwan, 2021), playing online games can make its users feel happy because of psychological satisfaction, such as not thinking about social pressure, anxiety, frustration, and shifting to feelings of comfort and happiness when playing online games, thus making users more interested in playing online games. Based on the 2024 survey results, Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet (APJII) stated that online gaming usage is among the top three most frequently visited entertainment internet content, as much as 23.02% in 2023 and 18.40% in 2024. When viewed by generation in 2024, 35.97% were Gen Z, 12.35% were millennials, and 5.67% were Gen X in Indonesia who accessed or played online games (Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet, 2024).

This online gaming addiction can be seen in how long a person plays games, playing without any sense of time, and using games as an escape. Lemmens et al. (2009) define online gaming addiction as excessive and compulsive video game use that can cause social, emotional, or other problems. Players who are addicted to online games cannot control their gaming behavior. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), online gaming addiction is defined as a pattern of gaming behavior characterized by difficulty in controlling the frequency, intensity, and duration of gaming. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2020) classifies this gaming addiction as a mental health condition in the 11th edition of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD).

The popularity of online games encourages teenagers and adults to play because they believe that gaming can relieve fatigue and stress caused by personal, family, or environmental demands, especially among those aged 18-29 who are still in a transitional period of self-discovery and instability, particularly in metropolitan areas such as Jabodetabek. According to Jap et al. (2013), individuals who are addicted to online games are those who spend an average of more than 4 hours per day playing online games and play online games 4-5 times a week.

Escapism is a term derived from the word “escape,” which means to avoid, flee, or distance oneself from activities that seem unpleasant. Baumeister (as cited in Stenseng et al, 2021) describes this escape as a need to experience relief from one’s actions, emotions, and thoughts. According to the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI), escapism is a person's desire or tendency to avoid reality by seeking entertainment and peace of mind in their thoughts or imagination. Meanwhile, according to Calleja (2010, in Maxentia & Rahmadani 2021), escapism itself is seen as an attempt to avoid real things, which can manifest itself in the form of avoiding work, friends, and other things that can be found in the real world.

Stenseng et al. (2012) drew inspiration from Higgins' (1997) Regulatory Focus Theory (RTF) to explain two different motivations underlying the behavior of escapism, which has two dimensions: Self-Expansion, which refers to escapism into positive, well-being-oriented activities rooted in a promotion focus to develop oneself and experience new positive things. Meanwhile, Self-Suppression refers to things related to a person's escape from pressure or negative emotions, rooted in a prevention focus to suppress or avoid disturbing thoughts, emotions, or problems by blocking negative evaluations, reducing stress, and usually accompanied by negative things.

According to the official website (Roblox, n.d.), Roblox is an international platform where millions of users gather every day to unleash their imagination, make creations, exchange experiences, and share virtual adventures in an immersive 3D world developed by the community. Making Roblox one of the most widely used platforms today, there are 8.15 billion Roblox accounts worldwide, according to the latest records (Restiawan, 2025, para. 4). In Indonesia itself, there is no exact data on how many users there are for the Roblox application. The phenomenon that highlights the rise of Roblox users in Indonesia is the existence of several games or maps (as

they are called in Roblox) on Roblox that are currently trending like. The experience of playing together is one of the reasons for the high screen time of Roblox users.

Previous research conducted by Maxentia & Rahmadani (2021) entitled, “Hubungan Antara Escapism dengan Kecenderungan Kecanduan Game Online pada Anggota Komunitas E-sport Semarang,” found a significant positive relationship between escapism and online gaming addiction. The results of the study also mentioned that there were strong relationships between the two variables. This was also reinforced by research conducted by Damalena et al. (2023) entitled “Hubungan Antara Perilaku Escapism dan Kepribadian Neuroticism terhadap Adiksi Game Online pada Remaja,” which found a positive relationship between the variables studied. Then there is the study conducted by Annisa et al. (2025) entitled “Gambaran Escapism pada Remaja di Aceh Utara yang Mengalami Kecanduan Game Online,” which found that the majority of adolescents who experience online game addiction tend to use self-suppression as their reason for playing. However, the results of the escapism level were classified as low. These results show that there is inconsistency, proving that addiction is not always directly proportional to high escapism, so this study supports the concept that not all individuals engage in escapism and end up addicted. This study also reinforces the rationale for this study to better understand the motivations behind addictive behavior.

These studies differ in terms of the aspects, platforms, and escapism measurement tools used. The two studies above use measurement tools based on the escapism aspects developed by Warmerlink et al. (2009), while this study will examine escapism based on the Self-Expansion and Self-Suppression aspects developed by Stenseng et al. (2021), as in one of the previous studies. This study examines escapism based on the dimensions of Self-Expansion and Self-Suppression, where the approach of these two dimensions can provide a more relevant picture of the motivation behind addictive behavior in 18-29 year olds who are still in a period of self-discovery and instability, particularly in the metropolitan area of Jabodetabek. Therefore, this study is hoped to provide an overview of the motivations behind escapism, which may play an important role in explaining why someone experiences online game addiction.

Method

This study used a correlational quantitative research method. Data collection techniques included purposive sampling and snowball sampling, whereby the researcher deliberately selected participants with specific characteristics in accordance with predetermined research criteria. The researcher then used the snowball technique by asking friends who met similar criteria.

The population in this study consisted of 127 participants aged 18-29 years, with the largest results number, 55 participants, aged 21 years (43.4%), and the smallest number of participants being less than 7, with 2 participants (1.6%) aged 24 and 27 years. Playing Roblox for at least 4 to 6 hours or more a day. 99 participants (78.0%) were female, and 28 participants (22.0%) were male. Located in Jakarta (47.2%), Bogor (9.4%), Depok (7.9%), Tangerang (26.8%), and Bekasi (8.7%).

This study used measurement tools developed by Stenseng et al. (2021) and Lemmens et al. (2009), which were adapted and adjusted to the participants in this study. The Escapism measurement tool had a scale of 1-6, 11 items divided by 2 dimensions with 5 items on the Self-expansion dimension (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.813$), and 6 items on the Self-suppression dimension (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.729$). Meanwhile, the Online Gaming Addiction measurement tool uses a scale of 1-5, with 21 items divided by 3 items for 7 dimensions (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.940$). Data collection was conducted using a Google Form questionnaire. Data analysis was performed using Spearman's correlation analysis technique to examine the correlation between escapism and online game addiction.

Result and Discussion

Result

The results of this study show that the data obtained are not normally distributed. The test was conducted using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test. It is considered normal if, $p > 0.05$, and the data shown below have a significance value below 0.05, which means that the data in this study are not normally distributed.

Table 1. Normality test

| Variables | <i>Asymp. Sig (2-tailed) p</i> |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Self-Expansion | 0.001 |
| 2. Self-Suppression | 0.003 |
| 3. Online Game Addiction | 0.024 |

The results of this study show that there is a correlation between the self-expansion dimension of escapism and online game addiction, -0.229 , $p = 0.010$ ($p < 0.05$) meaning there is a significant negative correlation between self-expansion and online gaming addiction, which means that the higher a person's self-expansion, the lower their online game addiction tends to be. Meanwhile, there is a strong and significant positive correlation of 0.594 , $p = 0.001$ ($p < 0.05$) between the self-suppression dimension of escapism and online game addiction, which means that the higher a person's self-suppression, the more likely they are to become addicted to online games. There is a statistically significant negative correlation between self-suppression and self-expansion -0.083 , $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.01$). However, the strength of the correlation is very weak, so that in practical terms the two variables have almost no dominant influence on each other.

Table 2. Correlation test

| | | Self-Expansion | Self-Suppression | Online Game Addiction |
|--------------------------|---|----------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Self-Expansion | R | 1.000 | -0.083 | -0.229 |
| | P | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.010 |
| 2. Self-Suppression | R | -0.083 | 1.000 | 0.594 |
| | P | 0.000 | 0.000 | <0.001 |
| 3. Online Game Addiction | R | -0.229 | 0.594 | 1.000 |
| | P | 0.010 | >0.001 | 0.000 |

The researchers then conducted a difference test to see if there were differences in motivation to play online games based on factors such as age, daily playing time, weekly playing time, annual playing time, gender, daily activities, and domicile. The results are shown in the table 3.

The difference test on the age of participants conducted using Non-parametric statistical analysis techniques to test differences between 3 or more groups using the K-Independent Samples, Kruskal-Wallis Test shows that there is no significant difference between participants aged 18-29 years on Self-Expansion $H(10) = 11.174$, $p = 0.344$ ($p < 0.05$), Self-Suppression $H(10) = 7.655$, $p = 0.662$ ($p < 0.05$), and online game addiction $H(10) = 9.928$, $p = 0.447$ ($p < 0.05$).

The difference test on the participants playing time in a day, conducted using Non-parametric statistical analysis techniques to test differences between 3 or more groups using the K-Independent Samples, Kruskal-Wallis Test showed that there was a significant result between the participants playing time in a day and the Self-Suppression dimension $H(3) = 14.049$, $p = 0.003$ ($p < 0.05$). and there was a significant difference between the participants' daily playing time and online game addiction $H(3) = 19.178$, $p = <0.001$ ($p < 0.05$). There was no difference in the dimensions of escapism and self-expansion $H(3) = 6.581$, $p = 0.087$ ($p < 0.05$).

Table 3. Difference test

| Categories | Self-Expansion | Self-Suppression | Online Game Addiction |
|---|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Age (18-29) | No significant difference | No significant difference | No significant difference |
| Daily playing time (4, 5, 6, > 7 hours) | No significant difference | Significant difference | Significant difference |
| Weekly playing time (16, > 16, < 16 hours) | No significant difference | Significant difference | Significant difference |
| Annual playing time (< 1, 1, 2, 3, > 4 years) | No significant difference | No significant difference | Significant difference |
| Gender | No significant difference | No significant difference | No significant difference |
| Domicile | Significant difference | No significant difference | No significant difference |

The difference test on the participants playing time within a week, conducted using Non-parametric statistical analysis techniques to test differences between 3 or more groups using the K-Independent Samples, Kruskal-Wallis Test showed that there was a significant result between the participants playing time within a week and the Self-Suppression dimension $H(2) = 11.667$, $p = 0.003$ ($p < 0.05$), and there was a significant difference between the participants' playing time within a week and online game addiction $H(2) = 18.590$, $p = <0.001$ ($p < 0.05$). There was no difference in the dimensions of escapism and self-expansion $H(2) = 1.795$, $p = 0.408$ ($p > 0.05$).

The difference test on the participants playing time within the year range was conducted using K-Independent Samples, Kruskal-Wallis Test, which showed that there was no significant difference between the playing time within the participants year range and the Self-Suppression dimension $H(4) = 11.393$, ($0.022 < 0.05$). and there was a significant difference between the length of time participants played games and online game addiction $H(4) = 17.933$, ($0.001 < 0.05$). There was no difference in the dimensions of escapism and self-expansion $H(4) = 7.443$, $p = 0.114$ ($p > 0.05$).

The difference test on the gender type of participants was conducted using 2-Independent Samples, Mann-Whitney. This shows that there is no significant difference between male and female participants in terms of Self-Expansion ($U = 1290$, $Z = -0.557$, Asymp. Sig. $0.577 > 0.05$), Self-Suppression ($U = 1119$, $Z = -1.556$, Asymp. Sig. $0.120 > 0.05$), and online game addiction ($U = 1380$, $Z = -0.032$, Asymp. Sig. $0.974 > 0.05$).

The difference test on domicile conducted using K-Independent Samples, Kruskal-Wallis Test showed that there were significant results between the participants' domicile and the Self-Expansion dimension $H(4) = 15.215$, ($0.004 < 0.05$), and there were no significant differences between the participants' domicile and Self-Suppression $H(4) = 1.762$, ($0.779 > 0.05$) and online game addiction $H(4) = 1.545$, ($0.819 > 0.05$).

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that there is a significant relationship between escapism and Roblox online game addiction, which is in line with Stenseng et al. (2012) Dualistic Model of Escapism theoretical framework. As can be seen in the results provided, the Self-Expansion dimension has a negative effect, while the Self-Suppression dimension has a positive effect on addiction. This is supported by the results of the correlation analysis, which shows that the Self-Suppression dimension has a strong relationship with increased addiction. Most participants in this

study saw gaming as a mechanism to escape from stress or unpleasant emotions. Based on the results shown, there is also a statistically significant negative correlation between self-suppression and self-expansion. However, the strength of the correlation is very weak, so that in practical terms the two variables have almost no dominant influence on each other, which means that although the relationship is not due to chance, an increase in self-suppression does not meaningfully predict a decrease in self-expansion (and vice versa) because the effect size is negligible.

The age of the participants in this study also reflected the emerging adulthood phase, making it difficult for participants to control the duration of their gaming when faced with problems. However, it can be seen that age did not play a significant role in addiction in this study.

The results of the study show that self-expansion plays a negative role in addiction. Participants in this study also used the online game Roblox as a means to seek new experiences, creativity, and social interaction that enrich themselves (promotion focus), which actually distances them from online game addiction behavior. Huda and Salehudin (2024) stated that gaming activities based on social and family motivation can have a positive impact, where psychological needs are fulfilled in a healthy manner within the game.

The results of this study found no significant difference in addiction levels between men and women. This indicates that the types of games on Roblox can provide aspects of creativity and socialization that appeal equally to both genders, so that the risk of addiction is now more influenced by individual coping mechanisms than biological factors in this study.

Another finding was also found in the participant status selection, which unfortunately could not be tested. The results of this status show that those in the transition phase, such as fresh graduates who are not yet working or final year students, show higher levels of addiction and self-suppression compared to the working or student groups. Referring to Arnett's theory (2000) and Novrialdy (2019), the absence of a clear structure of activities among unemployed groups or vulnerable students triggers an existential void, which is then compensated for through instant gratification in the virtual world.

This study found a threshold for playing duration among participants. The test results showed that the group with a playing duration of more than 5 hours per day had a significantly different level of addiction than the group below it. This reinforces the study by Fauzil and Rusli (2024), which links extreme playing duration to a decline in physical health and sleep quality. This study also found a critical weekly threshold of 16 hours. When playing time exceeds this limit, the motivation for playing games tends to shift from being merely a hobby (expansion) to emotional compensation (suppression).

Conclusion

Based on the results of data analysis and discussion, the following conclusions can be drawn. There is a significant negative correlation between the Self-Expansion dimension and Roblox online game addiction. This means that the higher an individual's motivation to play for self-development, insight, and social relationships, the lower the level of addiction experienced. Second, there is a significant positive correlation between the Self-Suppression dimension and Roblox online game addiction. This means that the higher an individual's motivation to play in order to escape from real-life problems or suppress negative emotions, the higher the level of addiction experienced. Third, the results indicate a statistically significant but negligible negative correlation between self-suppression and self-expansion. Practically speaking, these two variables exert almost no dominant influence on one another, meaning that changes in one dimension are

not reliable predictors of changes in the other. The results of the study show that Self-Expansion plays a negative role in addiction.

Participants in this study also used the Roblox online game as a means to seek new experiences, creativity, and social interactions that enrich themselves (promotion focus), which actually distances them from online game addiction behavior. Furthermore, no relationship was found between age and escapism motivation and online game addiction, which means that in this study, age does not play a role in indicating whether a person is addicted to games or not.

Contrary to old stereotypes that often associate gaming addiction with males, the results of this study found no significant difference in addiction levels between males and females. This indicates that the types of games on Roblox can provide aspects of creativity and socialization that appeal equally to both genders, so that the risk of addiction is now more influenced by individual coping mechanisms.

The results of this study found a threshold in playing duration for participants. When playing duration exceeded this threshold, the motivation for playing games tended to shift from simply a hobby (expansion) to emotional compensation (suppression). This data provides empirical indicators that time management is the key to preventing addiction and how a person's coping mechanisms influence game addiction.

Suggestion

For future research, it is recommended to consider the presence of moderator variables. Given the significant role of suppression, further studies should examine whether resilience, coping mechanisms, and social support play a role as variables that could potentially break the chain between escapism and addiction.

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