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## **The Relationship between Internet Addiction and Aggressive Behavior at Vocational High School of Central Aceh Regency**

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### **Abstract**

**Background:** Internet addiction is a psychological problem or dependence characterized by excessive or uncontrolled pleasure and behavior in using computers and internet access that causes disturbance and distress.

**Objective:** This study aimed to internet addiction associated with aggressive behavior in adolescents.

**Methods:** A cross-sectional design was employed. A number of 495 adolescents, who are all students at Vocational High School of Central Aceh Regency, were selected as the sample through the total sampling technique. Data were collected using the Buss-Perry Aggression questionnaire and internet addiction questionnaire. The

frequency distribution, and chi-square test were utilized for data analysis.

**Results:** The findings indicate that internet addiction is a factor associated with aggressive behaviour in adolescents ( $P$ -value = 0,001).

**Conclusion:** Indicate internet addiction associated with aggressive behavior in adolescents. This is due to the ease of internet access for everyone today, especially teenagers. However, the lack of selective access to information and frequent exposure to cyberspace results in addiction which eventually trigger aggressive behavior in adolescents.

**Keywords:** Aggressive Behavior, Internet Addiction, Adolescent, School

### **Introduction**

Internet addiction refers to a psychological dependence on the internet, characterized by increased internet-related activities, feelings of displeasure when being offline, and an increased need for the internet to obtain self-satisfaction effects [1]. Aggressive behavior encompasses a variety of verbal and nonverbal behaviors aimed at hurting someone. Verbal violence as an aggressive behavior or actions expressed to hurt other people can take the form of swearing, insults, ridicule, slander and threats. Nonverbal violence can include hitting, pinching, kicking, shouting, fighting, threatening and attacking other people [2]. The risk of aggressive behavior might depend on the type of mental health symptoms experienced by a teenager. Adolescents with delinquency, hyperactivity, and attention problems are more likely to act aggressively. Contrarily, those with symptoms of depression and anxiety are vulnerable to peer aggression, as are adolescents who are considered different or weak by their peers [3].

Aggressive behavior are potentially widespread in the school environment and has become a serious global concern. Aggressiveness at school includes physical aggression such as fighting and assault, verbal aggression like teasing, intimidation, and various other forms of violence including sexual harassment [4].

Several types of violence are most investigated due to their higher prevalence or severity of consequences, especially regarding psychological abuse, including pushing, terrorizing, damaging or exploiting, denying emotional responses, or isolating [5], intimidating [6], cyberbullying [7], sexual harassment [8], violence in dating [9], and violence in cyberspac [10].

Research conducted in a Turkish province involving 843 students (565 females, 278 males) denotes that the feeling of loneliness and smartphone addiction influence aggressive behavior. The correlation values between scales are smartphone addiction–aggression ( $p < 01$ ) and loneliness–aggression ( $p < 01$ ) [11]. Specifically, the boys with high Internet addiction are more prone to aggressive behavior; they browse the Internet primarily for fun, such as playing multiplayer online games, in which different factors regarding the game, including competitive instructions and elements of violence, would all foster

their aggressive feelings, thoughts, and behavior<sup>[12]</sup>. Based on the interview with the guidance and counseling teacher, it is known that the aggressive behavior exhibited by the students include some of them deliberately hitting, saying harsh words, insulting, which led to physical pain and hurt feelings to the insulted students. Besides, several students were also found to be involved in physical violence, as in brawls, with those from other schools. Based on the literature review previously conducted, numerous studies have explored relationships regarding aggressive behavior in adolescents. The present study aims to determine the relationship regarding aggressive behavior in adolescents at Vocational High School of Central Aceh.

**Methodology**

A cross-sectional design was employed in this research, which was conducted in April 2024 on all adolescents studying at Voactional High School, Central Tengah, Indonesia. A total of 495 respondents were enrolled in completing questionnaires, including the Buss-Perry Aggression questionnaire consisting of 29 question items and an internet addiction questionnaire with 26 items. Data collection was carried out in April 2024 after passing the ethical suitability test from the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Nursing, Syiah Kuala University with Document Number 112013161023. Data analysis used the frequency distribution test and chi-square test.

**Results**

Table 1 describes that of the 495 respondents at Vocational High School of Central Aceh Regency, the majority are at the second grade (40.4%); most are male (63.4%); and most of their parents completed secondary education (the Senior High School level) (57.2%). Moreover, most of the respondents' parents work as farmers (46.1%), and the majority earn < IDR3,460,000 (68.9%). Internet addiction among the adolescents is relatively high, i.e. (68.5%). Aggressive Behavior among the adolescents at Vocational High School of Central Aceh Regency is included in the aggressive category, i.e. (75.2%).

**Table 1:** Frequency Distribution of Respondent Characteristics (n = 495)

S. No	Demographic Characteristic	f	%
1	Grade		
	Grade 1	170	34.3
	Grade 2	200	40.4
	Grade 3	125	25.3
2	Sex		
	Male	314	63.4
	Female	181	36.6
3	Parent Education		
	Elementary (SD-SMP)	49	9.9
	Middle (SMA)	283	57.2
	High (D1-S3)	163	32.9
4	Parent Occupation		
	Civil Servant	73	14.7
	Contract Employee	2	.4
	Private Sector Employee	77	15.6
	Self-employed	109	22.0
	Businessman	6	1.2
	Farmers	228	46.1
5	Parent Income		
	>3.460.000	154	31.1
	<3.460.000	341	68.9

6	Internet Addiction		
	High	339	68.5
	Medium	156	31.5
7	Aggressive Behavior		
	Aggressive	372	75.2
	Not Aggressive	123	24.8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 2:** The relationship between internet addiction with Aggressive Behavior in

Variabel	Perilaku agresif				P-value
	Aggressive		Not aggressive		
	n	%	n	%	
Internet Addiction					0,001
High	306	90,3	33	9,7	
Medium	66	42,3	90	57,7	

Table 2 displays that internet addiction among the adolescents is in the high rate, i.e. 90.3%, so it may result in aggressive behavior. The findings indicate that there is a relationship between internet addiction and aggressive behavior in adolescents at Vocational High School of Central Aceh Regency (p = 0.001).

**Discussion**

The findings indicate a significant relationship between internet addiction and aggressive behavior in adolescents at Vocational High School of Central Aceh (P-value = 0.001). This phenomenon occurs because the internet has become a source of information for students and a medium for teenagers to find information about whatever they need. On the other hand, if misused by teenagers, the internet triggers misunderstandings and fights. This study reveals that unexpressed anger may lead to excessive and dangerous internet use, making it an unhealthy approach to deal with stress caused by external circumstances<sup>[13]</sup>. Similarly, previous research signifies a significant relationship between internet addiction and aggressive behavior. This is because individuals, especially teenagers, display a greater tendency to get angry and attack others verbally or even physically when they are faced with negative events. The influence of information and internet media becomes one of the most determining factors in adolescent aggressive behavior<sup>[14]</sup>. Teenagers who spend a lot of time online are more likely to expose themselves to violent games. Today's most games are designed in such a way that teenagers are forced to be competitive and engage in extreme behavior to win the game. Also, it is seen that most of the teenagers find the online world more convenient and this, therefore, has a bad impact on their academic achievement. Excessive and undisciplined use of the internet by certain individuals has resulted in the emergence of the concept called internet addiction; and it is worrying to note that those aged between fifteen to twenty-four years have been found to be more prone to becoming internet addicts than older users<sup>[15]</sup>. Teenagers who tend to lose control and excessively use the internet are vulnerable to aggressive behavior. In particular, long-term excessive internet use will result in several structural changes in the brain, including a decrease in the volume of gray matter in the bilateral dorsolateral prefrontal cortex, leading to various dysfunctions such as depression and aggression. In general, these findings suggest that we should pay more attention to adolescents' online activities.

## Conclusion

Smartphones have become a vital part of individuals' lives, offering many features and applications to the users. Especially young people use this technology to increase social mobility and expand their communication networks. Unfortunately, this phenomenon may also lead to addiction and a lot of negative emotions.

Internet addiction is the factor associated with aggressive behavior in adolescents. In this case, the longer a teenager is exposed to the virtual world, the higher the potential for internet addiction. Much ease of accessing the internet makes it easier for someone to gain the needed information. Only teenagers tend to be unstable in utilizing this access to information so that whatever they are exposed to is perceived as of good value to them.

Furthermore, on the internet are videos of violence circulating freely. This is where the main factors causing aggressive behavior in teenagers can emerge at any time. Also, lack of parental supervision becomes the main cause of aggressive behavior in adolescents, making them reluctant to commit violence, not only to their peers but also to parents. Behaving aggressively might be considered by them as normal behavior.

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