Internet Addiction among Late Adolescents

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Abstract— The objection of this research is to examine the level of internet addiction in late adolescents. Demographic variable (gender) and daily amount of time they spent online were examined too. This research used survey model that involved 260 college students from University of Sumatera Utara and taken by using purposive sampling technique. Data analysis include descriptive statistic and one way Anova. The result suggest that the level of internet addiction among late adolescents in University of Sumatera Utara is moderate, and there is no association between gender and level of internet addiction. Moreover, there is significant association between daily amount of time they spent online and internet addiction. This findings can be used as a guide to make further investigation about causes of internet addiction and make interventions to reduce the internet addiction level.

Keywords— Internet addiction, late adolescents.

I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, technological developments in the world are growing rapidly, especially internet. Internet is a global communication network that connects many computers from around the world (Ahmadi & Hermawan, 2013). With using internet, users can fulfill several needs, such as communicating, socializing, teaching-learning process, broadcasting news, and other needs. Internet also has unlimited access time, that it makes easier for users to access the internet anytime and anywhere (Ismail & Thohari, 2010).

According to Internet World Stats (2017), Indonesia is in the fifth position with the most internet users in the world. The results survey from Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia (2017) shows that the most internet users in Indonesia are teenagers. Robert (2011: Suryabrahmanyam & Smahel, 2011) states that currently adolescents are born in the digital world, where teenagers are surrounded by computers, internet, video games and mobile phones. It makes the internet has become one of the most common needs for teenagers and difficult to avoid in everyday life. Many teenagers prefer playing various applications on internet compared being involved with other media such as telephone, TV and radio (Louge, 2006).

Adolescence is in a phase when someone starts spending more time with friends than their own parents. Teens interact more with their friends as one of their basic needs (Papalia, Olds, Wendkos, Feldman, & Duskin, 2009). Nowadays with the development of technology, the social interactions that occur between adolescents has changed, where interactions occur not only face to face, but also through online interaction, or commonly referred to social media (Fitrianur, 2016). Social media is web sites that can be found on the internet that enable users to interact with other users. Besides social media, online games can also be used as a tool to interact with other users. Online games are sites that contain various types of games and involve multiple users to connect to each other at the same time through online communication networks (Young, 2009).

Opposite from its benefits, internet also can make teenagers become addict or experience problematic internet use (Siomos, Dafouli, Braimiotis, Mouzas, & Angelopoulos, 2008; Young, 2009; Caplan & High, 2011; Kuss & Billieux, 2017). Excessive internet use or commonly referred to internet addiction, is a condition where individuals spend a lot of time using the internet, causing negative consequences in everyday life, such as psychological, academic, and social problems (Young & Abreu, 2011).

Adolescence is considered as a period when someone often experiences emotional instability from time to time and requires self control to overcome it (Hurlock, 2011). Young (1998) states that internet addiction is a syndrome characterized by the inability to control the internet usage so that they spend a lot of time online. Young (1998: Young & Abreu, 2011) states that dependent users spent 20-80 hours per week. Someone who is addicted to the internet will continue to think about the time when they can be able to play the internet, even though that he/she is not playing the internet at the moment. In addition, they always got the feeling that they need to increase the time or intensity of internet access to get the same satisfaction as before, which eventually causes several problems in their lives such as academic problems, physical and psychological problems, and interpersonal relationship problems (Kuss & Griffiths, 2015). This is in accordance to the research conducted by Ozdemir, Kazucu, and Ak (2014) which shows that the problems caused by excessive internet use are related to the low self-control that causes the activities do not reach the maximum results, including inability to achieve goals that stipulated, and inability to provide appropriate time settings for their use of internet.

Internet addiction is associated with demographic variables. Kuss and Griffiths (2015) found that age and gender are risk factors to internet addiction. They found that early exposure appears as a significant contribution to behavioral problems related to technology over-use in children and young adolescents. Adolescent prone to internet addiction because of the identity formation problem, and the control of emotion regulation that is not yet sufficiently consolidated. Based on gender, they found the large majority of internet addict users are males. Males tend to look online game as a result of their lack social competence that is not well formed during adolescence and make them vulnerable to excessive engagement with online games, while for females, they addicted to social media, because they are searching for the exchange with friends, and seraching for spending a lot of time in social communities, chat and writing to each other.

Based on the description above, the primary aim of this study is to examine level of internet addiction among late adolescents of University of Sumatera Utara, and then to explore the association of demographic variable (gender) and the daily amount of time they spent online with the internet addiction.

II. OBJECTIVES AND METHOD

The main objective of the research was to examine the level of internet addiction among late adolescents of University of Sumatera Utara. The research subjects were 260 college students of University of Sumatera Utara, ranged from 18-21 years old; the samples were taken by using purposive sampling technique with several predetermined criteria. In this study, quantitative data is obtained through reliable and valid internet addiction scale that has been tested, and also including demographic variable (gender) and daily amount of time they spent online. The internet addiction scale was based on the theory proposed by Griffiths (2005: Kuss & Griffiths, 2015) which included salience, mood modification, tolerance, withdrawal symptoms, conflict, and relapse. The scale put forward in this research used Likert model in which items used statements with five choices of answer: Absolutely Agree (AA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Not Agree (NA), and Absolutely Not Agree (ANA). The scores moved from 1 to 5, and the scales were presented in form of statements of favorable (support) and unfavorable (not support). The data were analyzed by descriptive statistic and one way Anova.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that the level of internet addiction categorized in three levels, that is mild, moderate, and severe (Young, 1998). Based on result, 36 adolescents (13.85%) had mild addiction, 221 (85%) adolescents had moderate addiction, and 3 adolescents (1.15%) adolescents had severe addiction. Young (1998) states that someone with moderate addiction experience some problem with their life, either academic, physical and psychological, and also their social life. One of the reasons that can explain why the teenagers become addict is academic demands in the college. Kuss & Griffiths (2015) states that college students is marked by rapid autonomy and mastery. First, to striving for autonomy, the student must strives for mastery. When they entering university, they have many challenges as they are required to succeed, become an expert, or a master in something. This entails a high commitment, thus it's rather difficult to obtain. Rather than taking on this challenge in real life, students may choose to succeed in virtual life as this seems the easier way to obtain the valued goal of mastery.

This study also find that there is no significant correlation between gender with internet addiction (F= 2.20; p> 0.05), which is in accordance to some studies (Gupta, Maurya, Singh, Patel, 2018; Kirik, Arslan, Cetinkaya, Gul, 2015). This is because adolescents born in digital era (Robert, 2011: Suryabrahmanyam & Smahel, 2011), where the internet becomes the most common need and popular leisure activities that can not be avoided. Jackson (2001) also states that among college students, males and females students use internet equally often, but used it differently. The difference of the gender in internet addiction is just males tend to addict to online games while females tend to addict with social media (Young, Pistner, O'Mara & Buchanan, 1998).

The result of this study also indicate there is significant correlation between the amount of time they spent online with internet addiction (F=28.98; p< 0.05). This result is in accordance to some studies that indicate the more time they spent online the more addict they can be (Young & Abreu, 2011, Kuss & Griffiths, 2015). This finding also in accordance with the statement that someone with internet addiction will always feel the need to increase the time or intensity of internet access to get the same satisfaction as before, which eventually causes several problems in their lives (Kuss & Griffiths, 2015).

IV. CONCLUSION

This study presents the descriptive assesment of level internet addiction among late adolescnets in University of Sumatera Utara. The study revealed that 36 adolescents (13.85%) had mild addiction, 221 adolescents (85%) had moderate addiction, and 3 adolescents (1.15%) adolescents had severe addiction. The study also showed that gender makes no difference in internet addiction while the daily spent time online makes significant difference in addiction level. This finding can be used as a guide to make further investigation about causes of internet addiction and make interventions to reduce the internet addiction level.

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