

# The Relationship Between PUBG Online Game Use and Academic Achievement Among Communication Science Students at Semarang University

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## ABSTRACT:

**Background:** The increasing use of online games among students has the potential to impact learning activities and academic achievement. PUBG is one of the online games widely played by students, characterized by competitive gameplay with long playtimes.

**Aims:** This study aims to analyze the influence of the use of the PUBG online game on the academic achievement of Communication Science students at Semarang University.

**Methods:** This study employed a quantitative approach with a survey design. The study population consisted of 110 Communication Science students from the 2017 intake, with a sample of 87 students determined using cluster random sampling. Data were collected using a Likert-scale questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics, normality tests, simple linear regression, and t-tests with a significance level of 0.05.

**Result:** The results of the analysis show that the use of PUBG online games has a negative and significant relationship with students' academic achievement, with a regression coefficient of  $B = -0.279$ ,  $t = -3.035$ , and  $p = 0.003$ . The values of  $R = 0.313$ ,  $R^2 = 0.098$ , and Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.087$  indicate that the use of PUBG online games explains approximately 9.8% of the variation in academic achievement, while the rest is explained by other factors outside the research model.

**Conclusion:** Higher engagement in the online game PUBG is associated with a tendency for lower academic achievement, although its contribution to the variance in academic achievement is relatively small. Therefore, managing the intensity and time of play is important to maintain a balance between digital entertainment activities and students' academic demands.

**Keywords:** PUBG; academic achievement; students

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## INTRODUCTION

Academic achievement is an important indicator in evaluating the success of the student learning process in higher education because it reflects the student's ability to achieve learning objectives through a continuous learning process (Mona & Yunita, 2021; Nurwahidah et al., 2021; Sidabutar, 2020). This success is not only determined by intellectual ability, but is also influenced by various internal and external factors that shape students' learning behavior. (Hamu et al., 2023) In the context of higher education, the ability to manage time, maintain concentration, participate in academic activities, and complete assignments consistently is an important part of maintaining academic achievement (Hanafi & Widjaja, 2021; Hardani, 2024). This research document also emphasizes that the learning process requires strong willpower, clear goals, and is ongoing, while its success is influenced by factors both internal and external to the individual. Therefore, student achievement is important to study because changes in student activity patterns outside of academics, including the use of digital media and online games, are potentially related to the quality of their engagement in the learning process.

Ideally, students are expected to prioritize academic activities while managing digital entertainment activities appropriately so that they don't interfere with their study time or academic achievement. However, the rise of online gaming has created increasingly intensive media usage patterns that can compete with time allocated for academic activities (Lerianza et al., 2020; Safitri et al., 2020). PUBG, as an online battle royale game, offers a competitive experience, player-to-player interaction, and repetitive gameplay patterns that can encourage players to allocate significant time to playing. Research documents indicate that some students can spend significant amounts of time playing, and that the high intensity of play has the potential to reduce the time allocated for studying. This situation demonstrates the gap between students' ideal demands for productive time management and the reality of high involvement in online games. Thus, the main issue is not simply the existence of games as entertainment, but rather how involvement in these games relates to students' academic achievement.

The context of Communication Science students at Semarang University provides a relevant empirical opportunity to examine this issue. Initial observations that form the basis of this research indicate that Communication Science students at Semarang University played PUBG more often than Information Systems students from the morning class of 2017. PUBG's relevance in the campus environment is also evident in the PUBG competition held at Semarang University in December 2018, indicating that the game has become part of students' activities and interests within the university environment. This situation provides an adequate context to examine the relationship between online game use and academic activities. Furthermore, characteristics of game use can be identified through playing intensity, usage environment, frequency, and duration, while academic achievement can be observed through aspects of changes in learning behavior, grade point average, and academic interest as developed in the research framework.

Although the relationship between online gaming and user behavior has been a focus of previous research, research documents still show gaps in the types of games, outcome variables, and population contexts studied. The previous research used as a reference focused on Clash of Clans by examining the intensity of peer group communication, motivation, and playing intensity on addictive online gaming behavior (Larasati et al., 2023; Sandya & Ramadhani, 2021). This focus does not directly explain how PUBG involvement is related to student academic achievement. Therefore, the research gap in this study lies in the shift from studies oriented towards addictive behavior as an outcome to studies on academic achievement as an outcome, as well as from the game Clash of Clans to PUBG and from the context of previous research to Communication Science students at Semarang University. Therefore, the novelty that can be claimed based on this document is the specific

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examination of the relationship between PUBG and student achievement in the context of Communication Science students at Semarang University, not the claim that this study is the first of its kind globally.

The selection of the online game PUBG as a variable was based on the game's characteristics and the students' level of engagement. PUBG is a multiplayer battle royale game that places players in a competitive situation where they must survive until they emerge victorious. The game progresses through repeated player interaction, competition, and engagement (Patricia & Sahetapy, 2021; Seftiawan et al., 2023). Conceptually, the selection of this variable can also be explained through the Uses and Effects Theory, which views individuals as active media users and places media use as an important part of understanding the consequences or effects that arise from such use (Alfirahmi, 2019; Saputra, 2019). The research document explains that media use can be understood through the amount of time spent using it, the type of media content, and the individual's relationship with the media consumed. Within this framework, PUBG is positioned not only as a type of digital entertainment, but as a form of media use whose intensity and pattern of use can potentially have consequences for other activities. Therefore, testing PUBG as a predictor of academic achievement is relevant to understanding whether students' level of engagement in digital entertainment media is related to their academic achievement.

Based on the urgency of academic achievement, the gap between learning demands and game usage, the context of high student engagement in PUBG, and the limited focus of previous research, this study aims to analyze the influence of the online game PUBG on the academic achievement of Communication Science students at Semarang University. This objective is consistent with the formulation of the original research that specifically tested the influence of PUBG on the academic achievement of students in that population. Theoretically, this study is expected to expand the application of Uses and Effects Theory in explaining the consequences of using interactive digital media, especially online games, in the academic context of students. Empirically, this study provides evidence regarding the relationship between involvement in PUBG and academic achievement, while practically, the results can be a basis for students and educational institutions to understand game usage patterns and their implications for learning activities. The original document also places the research results as a reference for subsequent research and as a means of understanding the behavior of student PUBG fans and players.

## METHOD

### Research Design

This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey design to analyze the influence of the online game PUBG on students' academic achievement. Primary data were obtained directly from respondents through a structured questionnaire. The independent variable in this study is PUBG online game usage, while the dependent variable is student achievement. The study was conducted at the Communication Studies Study Program, Semarang University. The survey approach was chosen because it allows for data collection from a sample derived from a single population and quantitatively testing the relationship between the two variables through simple linear regression analysis.

### Participant

The research participants were 87 students of the Communication Science Study Program at Semarang University, graduating class of 2017. All participants were students who were part of the target population of the study and were selected as a sample to provide information on PUBG online

game usage patterns and their academic achievements. Primary data were obtained by distributing questionnaires directly to the Communication Science students, graduating class of 2017.

### **Population and the Methods of Sampling**

The study population consisted of 110 Communication Science students from Semarang University, class of 2017. The document lists characteristics related to PUBG gaming engagement, including playing PUBG for more than 8–10 hours, constantly thinking about the game when away from the device, and spending money to fulfill in-game needs. The sample size was determined using the Taro Yamane formula with a precision level of 5%, resulting in a sample of 87 students. The sampling technique in the document is reported as Cluster Random Sampling. Thus, 87 respondents from a population of 110 students were used as the research sample.

### **Instrument**

The research instrument was a closed questionnaire with 23 statement items, consisting of 10 items for the PUBG online game variable (X) and 13 items for the student achievement variable (Y). The X variable was operationalized primarily through intensity and environment indicators, while in the document the Y variable was associated with addiction and laziness indicators. The questionnaire used a four-level Likert scale with scores of 1 = Strongly Disagree (STS), 2 = Disagree (TS), 3 = Agree (S), and 4 = Strongly Agree (SS). Examples of X variable items include "Do you play games for more than 5 hours a day?", "Do you not notice the fatigue you feel when you are engrossed in playing?", and items regarding the use of games on game centers, computers, and smartphones. Examples of Y variable items include statements regarding the tendency to play rather than study and the difficulty of dividing time between studying and playing games.

The validity of the instrument was tested using Pearson Product Moment correlation with the criteria of calculated  $r > \text{table } r$  at a significance level of 5%. For variable X, the calculated  $r$  value of 10 items was in the range of 0.394–0.626, compared to the table  $r$  of 0.213. The overall reliability of the instrument was tested using Cronbach's Alpha and produced a value of  $\alpha = 0.768$  for 23 items, thus the instrument was reported as reliable.

### **Procedures and Time Frame**

Data collection was conducted by first determining respondents from the 2017 batch of Communication Science students at Semarang University in accordance with the research sampling procedure. After the sample was determined, a questionnaire was given to respondents with instructions to choose one of four alternative answers, namely Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree, according to the circumstances or perceptions of each respondent. Primary data was collected through questionnaires, while secondary data was obtained from books, journals, the internet, and other relevant library sources. After the questionnaires were collected, responses were scored according to a Likert scale, then the data were tabulated and processed using SPSS statistical software. The document mentions data processing using SPSS 2018.

### **Analysis Plan**

Data analysis was conducted in stages using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the characteristics of respondents and the distribution of answers to each item through frequencies and percentages. Next, the assumption of normality was checked using the One-Sample Kolmogorov–Smirnov test, with a significance value  $>0.05$  used as the criterion for normal distribution. After the assumptions were met, simple linear regression with the equation was used to determine the effect of the PUBG online game variable on student achievement. The significance of the regression coefficient was tested using a t-test with a significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$ ; a p-value  $<0.05$  was used as the basis for stating a significant effect. The analysis was supplemented with a correlation coefficient to assess the strength and direction of the relationship and a coefficient

of determination ( $R^2$ ) to determine the proportion of variation in student achievement that can be explained by the PUBG online game variable. All statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS.  $Y = a + bX$

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Result

#### 1. Participant Characteristics

A total of 87 Communication Science students from the University of Semarang, class of 2017, participated in the study. Based on the figures listed in the respondent characteristics table, 72 respondents (82.8%) were recorded as female and 15 respondents (17.2%) as male. However, the narrative in the original document states that the majority of respondents were male, so there is a discrepancy between the table and the narrative explanation that needs to be verified before publication. Based on the reasons for playing games, 33 respondents (37.9%) played to relieve stress, 29 respondents (33.3%) to expand their network, and 25 respondents (28.7%) because they were members of a community.

**Table 1. Participant characteristics**

| Characteristics        | n         | %            |
|------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Woman                  | 72        | 82.8         |
| Man                    | 15        | 17.2         |
| <b>Reasons to play</b> |           |              |
| Relieve stress         | 33        | 37.9         |
| Adding relationships   | 29        | 33.3         |
| Community members      | 25        | 28.7         |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>87</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

#### 2. Overview of PUBG Online Game Usage and Academic Achievement

Descriptive results indicate a fairly high level of engagement in gaming. Sixty-one of the 87 respondents (70.1%) agreed that they play games for more than five hours a day, while 13 respondents (14.9%) strongly agreed. Furthermore, 55 respondents (63.2%) agreed that when they are engrossed in playing, they tend to ignore the fatigue they feel. Regarding the gaming environment indicator, 54.0% of respondents strongly agreed that playing in a game center provides a more engaging atmosphere and allows for direct interaction with other players. These findings indicate that gaming engagement is not only related to the duration of play, but also to the characteristics of the environment and social experiences during play.

Regarding academic activities, most respondents did not state that gaming directly replaced studying. Seventy-three respondents (83.9%) disagreed with the statement that they played games more often than they studied. Similarly, 72 respondents (82.8%) disagreed that they played games before or after studying, and the same proportion disagreed that they had difficulty dividing their time between studying and gaming. Thus, the descriptive data indicate a relatively high level of gaming intensity among some respondents, but respondents' perceptions of direct interference with study time did not show the same strong pattern.

#### 3. Descriptive Statistics and Normality Test

Overall, the student achievement score had an average value of  $34.11 \pm 4.782$ , while the online game score had an average of  $31.195 \pm 5.350$  with a total of 87 respondents observing. Normality testing using the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test showed

significance values of 0.083 and 0.061, respectively. Both values are greater than 0.05 so that the distribution of both variables meets the assumption of normality.

**Table 2. Descriptive statistics and normality test**

| Variables            | n  | Mean   | Elementary School | KS p-value | Conclusion |
|----------------------|----|--------|-------------------|------------|------------|
| Academic achievement | 87 | 34.11  | 4,782             | 0.083      | Normal     |
| PUBG online game     | 87 | 31,195 | 5,350             | 0.061      | Normal     |

#### 4. The Influence of PUBG Online Game on Academic Achievement

A simple linear regression analysis shows that the online game PUBG has a significant relationship with students' academic achievement. The regression coefficient for the online game variable is  $B = -0.279$ , with a standard error of 0.092, a t-value of  $-3.035$ , and  $p = 0.003$ . Thus, the regression equation based on the coefficients in the SPSS output is:

$$Y = 42.833 - 0.279 X$$

These results indicate that each one-unit increase in online gaming engagement scores is associated with a 0.279-unit decrease in academic achievement scores. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the relationship is statistically significant.

**Table 3. Simple linear regression results**

| Predictor        | B      | SE     | t      | p      |
|------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Constant         | 42,833 | 2,914  | 14,697 | <0.001 |
| PUBG online game | -0.279 | 0.0992 | -3,035 | 0.003  |

The overall regression model was also significant, with  $F(1,85) = 9.209$ ,  $p = 0.003$ . The Model Summary output showed  $R = 0.313$ ,  $R^2 = 0.098$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.087$ , and a standard error of the estimate of 4.569. Based on these values, the model explains 9.8% of the variation in academic achievement, while approximately 90.2% of the remaining variation is not explained by the PUBG online game variable in this research model.

**Table 4. Summary of regression models**

| R     | R <sup>2</sup> | Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> | SEE   | F     | p     |
|-------|----------------|-------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| 0.313 | 0.098          | 0.087                   | 4,569 | 9,209 | 0.003 |

Thus, the main findings of the study indicate that involvement in the online game PUBG is negatively and significantly associated with students' academic achievement, but the strength of the relationship and the model's explanatory power are relatively low. The magnitude of the association is in the weak category, while the online game variable explains approximately 9.8% of the variation in academic achievement.

## Discussion

The results of the study indicate that the PUBG online game has a significant influence on the academic achievement of Communication Science students at Semarang University. The regression analysis produced a coefficient of  $B = -0.279$ ,  $t = -3.035$ , and  $p = 0.003$ , indicating that increased involvement in online games is associated with decreased academic achievement. However, the strength of the relationship is relatively low, with  $R = 0.313$  and  $R^2 = 0.098$ . This means that the use of the PUBG online game is only able to explain about 9.8% of the variation in academic achievement, while most of the other variations are related to factors outside the research model.

These findings can be explained through the Uses and Effects Theory, which places media use as an important element in producing effects on users (Komalasari & Naumi, 2018; Nikita, 2026). In this theory, media effects are determined not only by the content of the media, but also by how

individuals use the media. Media use is explained by the amount of time spent using it, the type of media content, and the relationship between the user and the media consumed (Arigia et al., 2016; Husna & Rianto, 2021). In the context of this research, the intensity of PUBG play is an important aspect because the more time and involvement students spend in the game, the more likely it is that this activity is related to changes in their learning behavior and academic achievement.

Descriptive results support these findings. Most respondents indicated a high level of gaming engagement; 70.1% reported playing games for more than five hours a day, while most also acknowledged that when engrossed in gaming, they tended to ignore fatigue. This aligns with the concept of media use in Uses and Effects Theory, particularly the dimension of usage time. The higher the intensity of media use, the greater the likelihood of certain effects. From an effectiveness perspective, usage intensity is also an important indicator for understanding an individual's level of media engagement, as used in the theoretical framework of this study.

However, the small  $R^2$  value indicates that online games are not the sole factor determining student achievement. These results also indicate that the relationship between media use and its effects is not absolute. In Uses and Effects Theory, the effects of media use are also influenced by an individual's needs, expectations, perceptions, and level of access to media (Sutrisno & Mayangsari, 2021; Triyaningsih, 2020). Therefore, students with the same level of PUBG usage do not necessarily have the same academic achievement. This study's findings further confirm that the intensity of online game use is one factor related to academic achievement, while other factors outside of game usage still play a larger role.

### **Implications**

Theoretically, the research results indicate that Uses and Effects Theory is relevant for explaining the relationship between digital media use and academic consequences, particularly through the dimensions of intensity and duration of use. Practically, students need to manage the intensity of their PUBG play to prevent it from interfering with academic activities, while universities can provide education on managing balanced digital media use.

### **Research Contribution**

This study provides an empirical contribution by extending the application of Uses and Effects Theory to the context of the online game PUBG and student academic achievement. Unlike previous research that focused more on playing intensity and addictive behavior in Clash of Clans, this study specifically positions academic achievement as an outcome in Communication Studies students at Semarang University.

### **Limitations**

This study was limited to 87 Communication Science students from the 2017 intake at Semarang University and used a survey design and self-report questionnaire. Therefore, the results cannot be broadly generalized or used to explain a strong causal relationship. Furthermore, the  $R^2$  value of 9.8% indicates that there are many other factors beyond online gaming that have not been included in the research model.

### **Suggestions**

Future research is recommended to involve a broader sample size from various study programs and universities and to include other variables that could potentially influence academic achievement. Measurement of game use could also be strengthened through more objective data on playing time, while academic achievement should use actual grades or GPA data to more accurately analyze the relationship between game use and academic achievement.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study shows that the use of the online game PUBG has a negative and significant relationship with the academic achievement of Communication Science students at Semarang University. The regression results show a coefficient of  $B = -0.279$ ,  $t = -3.035$ , and  $p = 0.003$ , which indicates that the higher the involvement of students in playing PUBG, the lower their academic achievement tends to be. However, the strength of the relationship is relatively low, with  $R = 0.313$  and  $R^2 = 0.098$ , so that the use of the online game PUBG only explains about 9.8% of the variation in academic achievement, while most of the other variations are influenced by factors outside the research model. This finding supports the use of Uses and Effects Theory, which emphasizes that media effects are related to the pattern and intensity of media use by individuals. Thus, PUBG is not the only factor that determines academic achievement, but the intensity of its use needs to be managed so as not to interfere with student learning activities.

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## **AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT**

YA conceived the research concept, collected and analyzed data, and wrote the initial draft. FA provided supervision, methodological review, and substantive revisions. KA provided supervision, content validation, and manuscript refinement. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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