

FRUSTRATION AND VERBAL AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WHO PLAY MOBILE LEGENDS: BANG BANG

Ade Christian Dillak¹, Dewita Karema Sarajar²

Program Studi Psikologi, Fakultas Psikologi, Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana^{1,2}

E-mail: dillakade234@gmail.com¹, dewita.sarajar@uksw.edu²

Received : 01 April 2026
Revised : 10 April 2026

Accepted : 05 May 2026
Published : 18 June 2026

Abstract

The development of competitive online games such as *Mobile Legends: Bang Bang* has become an integral part of university students' lives and has introduced complex emotional dynamics in digital interactions. One emotion that frequently emerges during gameplay is frustration, which may be expressed through verbal aggressive behavior. This study aimed to examine the relationship between frustration and verbal aggressive behavior among university students who play *Mobile Legends: Bang Bang*. The study employed a quantitative approach with a correlational design and involved 250 active university students from various higher education institutions in Indonesia who played *Mobile Legends: Bang Bang* for at least two hours per day. Data were collected using the Frustration Scale and the Verbal Aggression Scale (VAS), both of which have been adapted into Indonesian. Data analysis was conducted using Pearson correlation analysis. The results revealed a significant positive relationship between frustration and verbal aggressive behavior, with a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.665$ and $p < 0.001$, indicating that higher levels of frustration experienced during gameplay are associated with a greater tendency to display verbal aggressive behavior, and conversely, lower levels of frustration are associated with a lower tendency toward verbal aggression. This study implies that emotional regulation, particularly in managing frustration, is an important aspect in minimizing verbal aggressive behavior among university students in the context of competitive online games such as *Mobile Legends: Bang Bang*.

Keywords: Frustration; Verbal Aggression; Online Games; College Students; *Mobile Legends: Bang Bang*

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technology has fundamentally transformed how individuals access entertainment, particularly through online games, which have evolved into a global phenomenon. Online games are defined as internet-based games that enable players from different locations to interact, compete, or collaborate in real time (D Griffiths et al., 2012). Beyond serving as a source of entertainment, online games also function as digital social spaces where players communicate through text chat, voice chat, and third-party platforms such as Discord (Kaye et al., 2017). One of the most prominent mobile online games in Indonesia is *Mobile Legends: Bang Bang* (MLBB), a multiplayer online battle arena (MOBA) game released by Moonton in 2016. MLBB has gained widespread popularity due to its relatively low system requirements, accessibility on standard smartphones, and its competitive real-time gameplay (Arif & Aditya, 2022). According to GoodStats (2024), MLBB has recorded more than 27 million downloads in Indonesia, contributing to the country's position as one of the largest online gaming markets globally, with over 176 million active users. This indicates that online gaming has become an integral part of the digital lifestyle of Indonesian society, particularly among university students.

University students represent one of the most active groups of digital technology users, especially in online gaming activities. Data from the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII, 2023) shows that students account for the highest proportion of internet users in Indonesia at 32.09%, with online gaming being one of their primary activities. Furthermore, GoodStats (2024) reports that 42.23% of students spend more than four hours per day playing games. A survey conducted by Telkomsel through tSurvey.id also supports this finding, revealing that 67% of respondents predominantly students regularly play MLBB. In addition, a preliminary survey conducted by the researcher involving 20 students found that 75% of respondents actively play *Mobile Legends: Bang Bang*, with more than half reporting an average playing duration of over three hours per day. These findings suggest that students constitute an appropriate population for examining behavioral dynamics within online gaming environments.

From a psychological perspective, university students are generally in the developmental stage of emerging adulthood, typically ranging from 18 to the mid-twenties, which is a critical period for identity formation and independence (Syed, 2015). During this phase, individuals face various challenges, including academic demands, family expectations, and complex social dynamics that require strong adaptive abilities (Santrock, 2011). In this context, online gaming becomes a popular means for students to fill their leisure time, socialize, and seek entertainment (Kuss & Griffiths, 2012). Competitive online games such as *Mobile Legends: Bang Bang* allow students to engage in virtual communities, form teams, and participate in tournaments both within and outside campus environments (Arif & Aditya, 2022). With high gaming intensity, students frequently interact with other players in dynamic digital environments that require not only gaming skills but also effective social interaction management (Kaye, Kowert, & Quinn, 2017). However, such interactions are not always healthy, as they may involve negative communication patterns, including verbal aggressive behavior.

Verbal aggressive behavior is a form of destructive communication characterized by the intention to attack another's self-concept in order to cause psychological harm (Infante & Wigley, 1986). Research by (Ardiansyah et al., 2025) identifies that verbal aggression among gamers often manifests in forms such as insults, ridicule, blame, and threats. These behaviors include personal attacks, derogatory remarks, and the use of degrading verbal and nonverbal expressions. In the context of online games like *Mobile Legends: Bang Bang*, verbal aggression frequently occurs through in-game communication features such as text and voice chat. (Agus et al., 2024) identified five common forms of verbal abuse in this game, including insulting remarks about player performance, the use of animal-related slurs, profanity, sexual harassment, and derogatory comments targeting personal conditions. Furthermore, (Infante et al., 1992) highlight four main causes of verbal aggression in interpersonal communication: frustration, social learning, psychopathology, and deficiencies in argumentative skills. A survey conducted among 20 students revealed that 85% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they feel frustrated when experiencing defeat in games. Additionally, 60% admitted to having used harsh language, sarcasm, or verbal reprimands toward teammates when gameplay did not meet expectations. These findings indicate that negative emotions, particularly frustration, are often expressed through verbal aggression during gameplay.

Frustration is a negative emotional state that arises when individuals perceive obstacles in achieving desired goals, often accompanied by feelings of failure, disappointment, and helplessness (Berkowitz, 1989). This emotional condition is frequently associated with internal tension, anger, and the urge to release such feelings. According to the frustration aggression theory proposed by (Dollard et al., 1939) unexpressed frustration can become a primary trigger for aggressive behavior. In online gaming contexts, frustration may stem from various obstacles, such as repeated losses, poor team performance, connectivity issues, imbalance among players, and unsportsmanlike behavior (Kordyaka et al., 2020). (Hasan et al., 2013) found that losing in competitive games increases negative emotions, including frustration, which subsequently contributes to aggressive behaviors such as verbal aggression. Similarly, (Liu & Peng, 2009) argue that negative emotions following gameplay, particularly frustration, serve as strong predictors of verbal aggression.

(Breuer et al., 2015) further found that defeat in competitive gaming is closely associated with heightened levels of frustration. This frustration is often expressed verbally through aggressive language, with losing players more likely to produce insulting, sarcastic, or personally attacking remarks compared to those who win. Such reactions occur consistently, as defeat tends to generate stronger negative emotional responses, particularly anger and dissatisfaction, which are then channeled into the game's communication space. The competitive dynamics of winning and losing appear to intensify players' sensitivity to failure, making aggressive comments a common outlet for unregulated frustration. Consequently, competitive gaming environments can foster communication patterns dominated by negative emotional responses, reflecting how competitive pressure and game outcomes influence players' social behavior in virtual spaces.

In addition, research by (Zulfa et al., 2024) demonstrates that frustration significantly affects the level of aggressiveness, where higher levels of frustration correspond to a greater tendency to exhibit aggressive behavior. Similarly, (Anwar & Anidar, 2018) found a significant positive correlation between frustration and aggressive behavior among students, indicating that increased frustration leads to higher levels of aggression, including verbal aggression. These findings highlight how barriers to goal achievement can generate emotional pressure that triggers aggressive responses.

Considering this phenomenon, this study aims to examine the relationship between frustration and verbal aggressive behavior among university students who engage in competitive online games such as *Mobile Legends: Bang Bang*. Although previous studies have explored aggression in gaming contexts, limited research specifically addresses verbal aggression as a response to emotional frustration, particularly among university students. Therefore,

this study is important to conduct, as it seeks to fill the existing research gap and provide a deeper understanding of communication dynamics in online gaming environments.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Verbal Aggression

Verbal aggression is a significant construct in understanding negative communication behaviors, particularly within interpersonal and digital interactions. According to (Myers, 2002) aggression refers to physical or verbal behavior intended to harm others. In this context, verbal aggression specifically involves the use of language to inflict psychological harm, such as through insults, ridicule, threats, or degrading statements. This form of aggression not only affects victims emotionally but may also lead to prolonged interpersonal conflict, thereby disrupting social relationships and communication dynamics.

From a more specific theoretical perspective, (Infante & Wigley, 1986) conceptualize verbal aggression as a destructive personality trait that drives individuals to attack the self-concept of others rather than merely criticizing their ideas or arguments. Verbal aggression, therefore, involves messages intended to hurt feelings, demean dignity, or insult an individual's identity. This distinction is important because it differentiates constructive argumentation focused on ideas from destructive communication that targets personal identity. In communication settings, especially those characterized by high emotional intensity such as online gaming, this form of aggression becomes particularly salient as individuals may shift from debating strategies to attacking teammates personally.

Furthermore, (Buss & Perry, 1992) classify verbal aggression as one of the dimensions of aggressive behavior, manifested through verbal attacks such as sarcasm, insults, and hurtful comments. Although it does not involve physical violence, verbal aggression can have equally serious consequences in terms of damaging social relationships and affecting an individual's psychological well-being. Their perspective reinforces the notion that aggression should not be viewed solely through a physical lens, as verbal expressions can produce long-lasting emotional and social harm. In this study, the definition proposed by (Infante & Wigley, 1986) is adopted as the primary theoretical foundation. This is because their conceptualization emphasizes the psychological dimension of verbal aggression, particularly the intention to attack an individual's self-concept. Such an approach is highly relevant in the context of digital interactions, especially in competitive online games where communication often occurs rapidly and emotionally. By focusing on the underlying motive to inflict psychological harm through verbal messages, this definition provides a more precise framework for analyzing verbal aggression compared to broader definitions that encompass general aggressive behavior.

Frustration

Frustration is a central concept in understanding emotional responses that arise when individuals encounter obstacles in achieving their goals. (Harrington, 2005) defines frustration as an emotional response that emerges when individuals face barriers in attaining goals that are perceived as important or meaningful. In this sense, frustration is not merely a feeling of disappointment, but rather a complex emotional state involving anger, dissatisfaction, and stress resulting from a discrepancy between expectations and reality. Harrington further explains that frustration may arise due to unmet expectations caused by internal factors, such as limited ability, or external factors, such as environmental constraints or interference from others. Similarly, (Berkowitz, 1989) conceptualizes frustration as a negative emotional state that occurs when an individual's goal-directed behavior is disrupted or blocked. He extends the classical frustration-aggression framework by emphasizing that frustration generates negative affect, such as anger or irritation, which may lead to aggressive behavior depending on the individual's interpretation and situational context. This perspective highlights that frustration does not automatically result in aggression, but rather creates emotional conditions that increase the likelihood of aggressive responses.

In contrast, the frustration-aggression theory proposed by (Dollard et al., 1939) offers a more direct and deterministic explanation. According to this theory, frustration is defined as a condition that arises when the attainment of a goal is obstructed, and such a condition inevitably produces a drive toward aggressive behavior. Dollard and his colleagues argue that the relationship between frustration and aggression is linear, meaning that higher levels of frustration increase the probability of aggressive actions. The theory posits that frustration is the primary antecedent of aggression, with the assumption that all aggressive behavior is preceded by frustration. In this study, the definition proposed by (Dollard et al., 1939) is adopted as the primary theoretical foundation. This selection is based on the theory's explicit emphasis on the direct relationship between frustration and aggressive behavior, which aligns with the main focus of this research. The frustration-aggression model is particularly relevant in the context of competitive online gaming, where players frequently encounter obstacles such as defeat,

performance failure, or team-related issues. These conditions can generate frustration, which may subsequently manifest as verbal aggressive behavior. Therefore, this theoretical framework provides a strong basis for analyzing how frustration acts as a key trigger for verbal aggression among online game players.

University Students

According to (Undang-Undang (UU) Nomor 12 Tahun 2012 Tentang Pendidikan Tinggi, 2012), university students are learners who are enrolled in higher education institutions. They are considered members of the academic community and are positioned as mature individuals who possess self-awareness in developing their potential through structured learning processes in universities. This definition highlights that students are not merely passive recipients of knowledge, but active participants who are responsible for their own intellectual, emotional, and social development. As individuals in early adulthood, students are also characterized by increasing independence, critical thinking ability, and engagement in various academic and social activities, including the use of digital technology in their daily lives.

Mobile Legends: Bang Bang

Mobile Legends: Bang Bang (MLBB) is an online game belonging to the multiplayer online battle arena (MOBA) genre, which has gained significant popularity, particularly among adolescents and students. The game is played by two opposing teams, each consisting of five players, with the primary objective of destroying the opponent's base. Developed and released in 2016 by Moonton, MLBB offers real-time competitive gameplay that requires strategic thinking, teamwork, and quick decision-making (Barseli & Sriwahyuningsih, 2023). Its accessibility via mobile devices and its interactive features, such as in-game communication systems, have contributed to its widespread adoption. As a competitive online environment, MLBB also provides a social platform where players interact intensively, which may influence behavioral patterns, including communication styles and the emergence of verbal aggression.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative correlational approach aimed at examining the relationship between frustration and verbal aggressive behavior. A correlational design was considered appropriate because it allows the researcher to identify the strength and direction of the relationship between variables without manipulating them. In this study, frustration was positioned as the independent variable (X), while verbal aggressive behavior was treated as the dependent variable (Y). Operationally, verbal aggressive behavior is defined as an individual's tendency to attack others' self-esteem through verbal expressions, either directly or indirectly, as a manifestation of anger, frustration, or a desire to dominate in social interactions. This behavior includes the use of language intended to harm others psychologically, such as insults, ridicule, threats, profanity, and sarcasm directed at degrading or provoking others (Infante & Wigley, 1986). To measure this variable, the study utilized the Verbal Aggression Scale (VAS) developed by (Infante & Wigley, 1986) which was later adapted into Bahasa Indonesia by (W. A. Nugroho & Reza, 2022). The instrument assesses eight aspects of verbal aggression, including attacks on character, competence, background, physical appearance, maledictions, teasing, ridicule, and profanity. Higher scores on this scale indicate higher levels of verbal aggressive behavior. Frustration, on the other hand, is conceptualized as a psychological condition that arises when individuals encounter obstacles in achieving their goals or fulfilling their needs, leading to feelings such as disappointment, anger, pressure, and helplessness (Dollard et al., 1939). In this study, frustration was measured using a scale developed by (R. A. Nugroho & Afriyenti, 2025) which is based on four key dimensions proposed by Dollard, namely frustration (disappointment), emotional response, habitual or coping mechanisms, and overt behavior. The higher the score obtained, the higher the level of frustration experienced by the individual.

The population of this study consisted of active university students who play *Mobile Legends: Bang Bang*, drawn from various universities across Indonesia, both public and private. The inclusion criteria required participants to be active students and to play the game for at least two hours per day. The sampling technique used was incidental sampling, in which participants were selected based on chance encounters, provided they met the specified criteria. Data collection was carried out using two Likert-type scales with four response options ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The verbal aggression scale initially consisted of 25 items, of which 19 items were retained after validity testing. Similarly, the frustration scale initially consisted of 40 items, with 35 items retained after the validation process. Prior to data analysis, both instruments underwent validity and reliability testing. Content validity was established through expert judgment to ensure that each item accurately represented the theoretical construct (Azwar, 2021). Item analysis was conducted using corrected item-total correlation, where items with a coefficient of

0.30 or higher were considered valid. The results indicated that several items were eliminated, leaving only those that met the required criteria. Furthermore, the reliability of the instruments was tested using Cronbach's Alpha to assess internal consistency. The verbal aggression scale yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.727, while the frustration scale showed a coefficient of 0.928. These values indicate that both instruments have acceptable to high reliability and are suitable for use in this study. Data analysis was conducted quantitatively using SPSS software. The analysis began with classical assumption tests, including the normality test using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method to determine whether the data were normally distributed, with a significance value greater than 0.05 indicating normal distribution. This was followed by a linearity test using ANOVA to assess whether the relationship between variables was linear, where a significance value greater than 0.05 for deviation from linearity indicates a linear relationship. After fulfilling these assumptions, hypothesis testing was performed using the Pearson correlation test if the data were normally distributed. However, if the data were not normally distributed, the Spearman correlation test was used as a non-parametric alternative. A significance value of less than 0.05 indicated a statistically significant relationship between frustration and verbal aggressive behavior.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Participants

Table 1. Gender Distribution of Participants

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	161	64.4%
Female	89	35.6%
Total	250	100%

Based on Table 1 the participants were predominantly male, with 161 individuals (64.4%), while female participants accounted for 89 individuals (35.6%). This indicates that male respondents were more dominant in this study.

Table 2. Age Distribution of Participants

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
17	4	1.6%
18	19	7.6%
19	39	15.6%
20	48	19.2%
21	76	30.4%
22	46	18.4%
23	8	3.2%
24	3	1.2%
25	3	1.2%
26	2	0.8%
28	2	0.8%
Total	250	100%

Based on Table 2, participants ranged from 17 to 28 years old. The largest proportion was 21 years old (30.4%), while the smallest proportions were participants aged 26 and 28 years (0.8% each). This indicates that most participants were in the early adulthood stage.

Table 3. Distribution of Participants by University

No	University	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana	26	10.4%
2	Universitas Padjadjaran	14	5.6%
3	Universitas Hasanuddin	12	4.8%
4	Universitas Gunadarma	11	4.4%
5	Universitas Andalas	10	4.0%
6	Universitas Airlangga	9	3.6%
7	Universitas Diponegoro	9	3.6%
8	Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta	9	3.6%
9	Universitas Brawijaya	8	3.2%
10	Universitas Udayana	8	3.2%
...	Others (various universities)	124	49.6%
Total		250	100%

Based on Table 3 participants came from various universities across Indonesia. The largest proportion came from Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana (10.4%), followed by Universitas Padjadjaran (5.6%). Several other universities such as Universitas Hasanuddin, Universitas Gunadarma, Universitas Andalas, Universitas Airlangga, Universitas Diponegoro, and Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta also contributed notable proportions ranging from 3.6% to 4.8%. The rest of the participants were distributed across many other universities with smaller proportions, indicating a diverse sample.

Table 4. Average Daily Duration of Playing Online Games

Duration	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than 2 hours	3	1.2%
2–3 hours	114	45.6%
More than 3 hours	133	53.2%
Total	250	100%

Based on Table 4, most participants reported playing online games for more than 3 hours per day (53.2%), followed by those who played for 2–3 hours (45.6%), while only a small proportion (1.2%) played for less than 2 hours per day. This suggests that the majority of participants had a high level of engagement in online gaming activities.

Instrument Testing Results

Item Discrimination Test

The item discrimination test was conducted by referring to the corrected item-total correlation values for both scales, with a minimum criterion of ≥ 0.30 . For the frustration scale, the item discrimination analysis was carried out in two rounds. In the first round, seven items (items 1, 5, 11, 18, 19, 27, and 30) did not meet the required criterion and were therefore removed. In the second round, no items were eliminated, resulting in a final total of 28 valid items from the initial 35 items. Similarly, for the verbal aggression scale, item analysis was also conducted in two rounds. In the first round, items 6 and 12 were found to be invalid and subsequently removed, leaving 17 items that met the required criteria. Based on these results, it can be concluded that the retained items in both scales demonstrated good discriminatory power and were appropriate for use in the study.

Reliability Test

Frustration Scale

Table 5. Reliability of Frustration Scale

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
0.979	28

Verbal Aggression Scale

Table 6. Reliability of Verbal Aggression Scale

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
0.921	17

Reliability testing was conducted using the Cronbach's Alpha technique. The results indicated that the frustration scale obtained a reliability coefficient of 0.979, while the verbal aggression scale obtained a coefficient of 0.921. Both values exceed the minimum threshold of 0.70, indicating that the instruments have very high reliability and are dependable for producing consistent data.

Descriptive Statistical Results

Descriptive Statistics

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable	N	Range	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Frustration	250	38	74	112	96.34	8.919
Verbal Aggression	250	38	30	68	52.63	8.974

Based on Table 7, the frustration variable has a mean score of 96.34 with a standard deviation of 8.919, indicating a moderate distribution of scores among participants. The scores range from a minimum of 74 to a maximum of 112. Meanwhile, the verbal aggression variable has a mean score of 52.63 with a standard deviation of 8.974, with scores ranging from 30 to 68. These results suggest that both variables exhibit relatively similar variability and are moderately distributed across participants.

Data Categorization

Frustration (Variable X)

Table 8. Categorization of Frustration Levels

Category	Interval	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low	$X < 87.42$	38	15.2%
Medium	$87.42 \leq X < 105.25$	165	66.0%
High	$X \geq 105.25$	47	18.8%
Total		250	100%

Based on Table 8, the majority of respondents fall into the medium category of frustration, with 165 individuals (66%). Respondents in the low category account for 38 individuals (15.2%), while those in the high category total 47 individuals (18.8%). These findings indicate that most university students who play online games experience a moderate level of frustration.

Verbal Aggression (Variable Y)

Table 9. Categorization of Verbal Aggression Levels

Category	Interval	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low	$X < 43.65$	37	14.8%
Medium	$43.65 \leq X < 61.6$	164	65.6%
High	$X \geq 61.6$	49	19.6%
Total		250	100%

Based on Table 9, most respondents fall into the medium category of verbal aggression, with 164 individuals (65.6%). Respondents with low levels of verbal aggression account for 37 individuals (14.8%), while those in the high category total 49 individuals (19.6%). These findings suggest that verbal aggressive behavior among university students who play online games tends to be at a moderate level.

Assumption Test Results

Normality Test

Table 10. Normality Test Results (Kolmogorov-Smirnov)

	Frustration	Verbal Aggression
N	250	250
Mean	96.34	52.63
Std. Deviation	8.919	8.974
Absolute Difference	0.052	0.053
Positive Difference	0.042	0.043
Negative Difference	-0.052	-0.053
Test Statistic	0.052	0.053
Asymp. Sig (2-tailed)	0.095	0.084

The results of the normality test using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method indicate that the verbal aggression variable (Y) has a KS value of 0.053 with a significance level of 0.084, while the frustration variable (X) has a KS value of 0.052 with a significance level of 0.095. Since both significance values are greater than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$), it can be concluded that the data for both variables are normally distributed.

Linearity Test

Table 11. Linearity Test Results

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups (Combined)	10859.983	34	319.411	7.469	<.001
Linearity	8858.646	2	8858.646	207.148	<.001
Deviation from Linearity	2001.337	33	60.647	1.418	0.075
Within Groups	9194.421	215	42.765		
Total	20054.404	249			

The linearity test results show that the F value for linearity is 207.148 with a significance level of less than 0.001 ($p < 0.05$), indicating a significant linear relationship between variables. Additionally, the deviation from linearity has an F value of 1.418 with a significance level of 0.075 ($p > 0.05$), which indicates that there is no significant deviation from linearity. Therefore, it can be concluded that the relationship between frustration and verbal aggression is linear.

Hypothesis Testing Results

Table 12. Correlation Test Results

	Frustration	Verbal Aggression
Spearman's Rho		
Frustration	1	0.665**
Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
N	250	250
Verbal Aggression	0.665**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
N	250	250

Based on the correlation test results, there is a significant positive relationship between frustration and verbal aggression, with a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.665$ and a significance value of $p < 0.001$. This indicates a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between the two variables. In other words, higher levels of frustration are associated with higher levels of verbal aggressive behavior among participants.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate a significant positive relationship between frustration and verbal aggressive behavior among university students who play *Mobile Legends: Bang Bang*. The correlation coefficient value of $r = 0.665$ with $p < 0.001$ demonstrates that the relationship falls into a strong and statistically significant category. This finding suggests that the higher the level of frustration experienced by students during gameplay, the greater their tendency to express verbal aggression, such as using harsh language, blaming other players, or making negative

remarks. Therefore, the hypothesis proposed in this study is accepted, confirming that there is a relationship between frustration and verbal aggressive behavior among university students who engage in online gaming. These findings are consistent with previous studies. (Yuspita & Alini, 2025) found that frustration is significantly related to aggressive behavior, both in physical and verbal forms, where individuals with higher levels of frustration are more likely to exhibit aggressive tendencies. Similarly, (Salsabela et al., 2025) reported a significant relationship between frustration and verbal aggression, indicating that increased frustration during gameplay is associated with a higher tendency for players to express negative emotions through aggressive verbal communication. Furthermore, (W. A. Nugroho & Reza, 2022) emphasized that frustration experienced by online game players significantly contributes to increased aggression, particularly verbal aggression, as the limited space for emotional expression in online environments encourages individuals to channel frustration through verbal interactions.

Descriptive statistical results further support these findings, showing that the majority of respondents fall within the moderate category for both frustration (66%) and verbal aggression (65.6%), with a notable proportion also in the high category. This condition suggests that students who play online games experience consistent emotional tension and a tendency toward verbal aggression during gameplay, although not yet at extreme or uncontrollable levels. The presence of moderate levels of frustration and verbal aggression reflects recurring emotional pressure as a response to obstacles encountered during gameplay, which may escalate if individuals are continuously exposed to frustrating situations without adequate emotional regulation. This is particularly relevant when considering the participants' gaming habits, where more than half of the students (53.2%) reported playing for more than three hours per day, and 45.6% played for an average of two to three hours daily. According to (Kordyaka et al., 2020) prolonged gaming duration increases exposure to competitive and stressful situations, such as repeated losses, team errors, and high performance demands, thereby facilitating the accumulation of negative emotions over time.

In addition, (Roling et al., 2024) argue that the accumulation of frustrating experiences can impair individuals' emotional regulation, especially when exposure to competitive pressure occurs continuously without sufficient recovery time. This condition increases vulnerability to maladaptive emotional responses, including verbal aggression. In such contexts, negative emotions such as anger and irritation require immediate and accessible outlets. Online gaming environments provide communication channels that enable spontaneous expression, making it easier for individuals to translate emotional responses into aggressive verbal communication, such as blaming, sarcasm, or the use of offensive language toward teammates. From a theoretical perspective, these findings can be explained through the frustration-aggression theory proposed by (Dollard et al., 1939) This theory posits that frustration generates internal tension, which creates an aggressive drive that is expressed through behaviors shaped by situational and social constraints. When physical aggression is not possible or socially acceptable, this aggressive drive is more likely to be redirected into verbal forms of aggression as an alternative outlet. Thus, verbal aggressive behavior among university students in online gaming contexts can be understood as a manifestation of unregulated frustration that is expressed through verbal communication.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. The participants were drawn from a broad and heterogeneous population of university students across various institutions and regions, which means that the findings reflect general patterns rather than specific group characteristics. As a result, the findings cannot be generalized to particular student groups or more specific social contexts, as differences in academic environments, communication cultures, and gaming habits may influence how individuals express frustration verbally. Additionally, this study did not differentiate situational factors during gameplay, such as the level of competitiveness, player roles within teams, or the intensity of player interactions. These factors may play an important role in shaping the emergence of verbal aggression and should be considered in future research.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study conducted on university students who play *Mobile Legends: Bang Bang*, it can be concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between frustration and verbal aggressive behavior. The higher the level of frustration experienced by students during gameplay, the higher their tendency to exhibit verbal aggressive behavior; conversely, the lower the level of frustration, the lower the tendency for verbal aggression. These findings indicate that frustration plays an important role in the emergence of verbal aggressive behavior, particularly in the context of competitive interactions in online games. Therefore, the research problem proposed in this study has been answered, confirming that there is a relationship between frustration and verbal aggressive behavior among university students who play *Mobile Legends: Bang Bang*.

REFERENCES

- Agus, A., Zainuddin, K., & Piara, M. (2024). Behavior of Verval Violence in Online Game Players (Mobile Legend: Bang Bang). *ARRUS Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 4(2), 184–198.
- Anwar, D. F., & Anidar, J. (2018). Hubungan Antara Frustrasi Dengan Perilaku Agresif Peserta Didik Kelas Ix Di Mtsn 1 Pesisir Selatan. *Jurnal Al-Taujih*, 4(1), 87–99.
- Ardiansyah, M. A., Sancity, N., Rohmah, L. D., Lulua, L., & Afkar, T. (2025). Analysis Of The Formation Of Toxic Language Of Mobile Legend Online Game Streamers On The Youtube Channel “Top Global Miya”(Morphological Study). *ASMARALOKA: Jurnal Bidang Pendidikan, Linguistik, Dan Sastra Indonesia*, 3(1), 79–91.
- Arif, M., & Aditya, S. (2022). Dampak perilaku komunikasi pemain game Mobile Legends pada mahasiswa Universitas Negeri Padang. *Journal of Intercultural Communication and Society*, 1(01), 31–45.
- Azwar, S. (2021). *Penyusunan Skala Psikologi Ed 2*. Pustaka Belajar.
- Barseli, M., & Sriwahyuningsih, V. (2023). Peran game online mobile legends sebagai pemicu turunnya motivasi belajar siswa. *Jurnal EDUCATIO: Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia*, 9(1), 164–169.
- Berkowitz, L. (1989). Frustration-aggression hypothesis: Examination and reformulation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 106(1), 59–73. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.106.1.59>
- Breuer, J., Scharkow, M., & Quandt, T. (2015). Sore losers? A reexamination of the frustration–aggression hypothesis for colocated video game play. *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*, 4(2), 126.
- Buss, A. H., & Perry, M. (1992). The aggression questionnaire. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 63(3), 452.
- D Griffiths, M., J Kuss, D., & L King, D. (2012). Video game addiction: Past, present and future. *Current Psychiatry Reviews*, 8(4), 308–318.
- Dollard, J., Miller, N. E., Doob, L. W., Mowrer, O. H., & Sears, R. R. (1939). *Frustration and aggression*. Yale University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1037/10022-000>
- Harrington, N. (2005). Dimensions Of Frustration Intolerance And Their Relationship To Self-Control Problems. *Journal of Rational-Emotive & Cognitive-Behavior Therapy*, 23(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10942-005-0001-2>
- Hasan, Y., Bègue, L., Scharkow, M., & Bushman, B. J. (2013). The more you play, the more aggressive you become: A long-term experimental study of cumulative violent video game effects on hostile expectations and aggressive behavior. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 49(2), 224–227. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2012.10.016>
- Infante, D. A., Riddle, B. L., Horvath, C. L., & Tumlin, S. A. (1992). Verbal aggressiveness: Messages and reasons. *Communication Quarterly*, 40(2), 116–126. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01463379209369827>
- Infante, D. A., & Wigley, C. J. (1986). Verbal aggressiveness: An interpersonal model and measure. *Communication Monographs*, 53(1), 61–69. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03637758609376126>
- Kaye, L. K., Kowert, R., & Quinn, S. (2017). The role of social identity and online social capital on psychosocial outcomes in MMO players. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 74, 215–223.
- Kordyaka, B., Jahn, K., & Niehaves, B. (2020). Towards a unified theory of toxic behavior in video games. *Internet Research*, 30(4), 1081–1102.
- Kuss, D. J., & Griffiths, M. D. (2012). Online gaming addiction in children and adolescents: A review of empirical research. *Journal of Behavioral Addictions*, 1(1), 3–22. <https://doi.org/10.1556/jba.1.2012.1.1>
- Liu, M., & Peng, W. (2009). Cognitive and psychological predictors of the negative outcomes associated with playing MMOGs (massively multiplayer online games). *Computers in Human Behavior*, 25(6), 1306–1311.
- Myers, S. A. (2002). Perceived aggressive instructor communication and student state motivation, learning, and satisfaction. *Communication Reports*, 15(2), 113–121. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08934210209367758>
- Nugroho, R. A., & Afriyenti, L. U. (2025). Hubungan Antara Perilaku Agresi Verbal Dengan Kontrol Diri Pada Remaja Di Kota Bekasi. *Jurnal Ilmu Psikologi Dan Kesehatan| E-ISSN: 3063-1467*, 1(4), 256–260.
- Nugroho, W. A., & Reza, I. F. (2022). Frustration As A Forming Factor Of Aggressive Behavior In Moslem Adolescents In Playing Online Games. *Indonesian Journal of Multidisciplinary Sciences (IJoMS)*, 1(1), 50–66.
- Roling, W. M., Grum, M., Gronau, N., & Kluge, A. (2024). You cannot have both – Two different ways of change implementation and their effects on adaptive performance and frustration. *International Journal of Industrial Ergonomics*, 104, 103669. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ergon.2024.103669>

FRUSTRATION AND VERBAL AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WHO PLAY MOBILE LEGENDS: BANG BANG

Ade Christian Dillak and Dewita Karema Sarajar

- Salsabela, G., Farihal, F., & Aminah, A. (2025). Frustration In Mobile Legends And Verbal Aggression Among SMAN 12 Students. *Jurnal Kajian Pendidikan Dan Psikologi*, 2(3), 77–87.
- Santrock, J. W. (2011). *Life span development 13th edition*. McGraw Hill. https://cursos.sis.org.br/Resources/gzGr7M/2FE051/life-span-development-13th-edition-john_w_santrock.pdf
- Syed, M. (2015). *Emerging Adulthood* (J. J. Arnett, Ed.; Vol. 1). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199795574.013.9>
- Undang-Undang (UU) Nomor 12 Tahun 2012 Tentang Pendidikan Tinggi, Pub. L. No. 12 (2012).
- Yuspita, T., & Alini, A. (2025). Hubungan Frustasi dengan Perilaku Agresif pada Remaja di SMK Negeri 1 Bangkinang. *Jurnal Pahlawan Kesehatan*, 2(3), 694–699.
- Zulfa, F. N., Fauziyah, N., & Oktorina, S. (2024). Pengaruh Frustrasi Dan Teman Sebaya Terhadap Perilaku Agresif Remaja Smpn X Surabaya: The Influence Of Frustration And Peer Influence On Aggressive Behavior Of Adolescents At Smpn X Surabaya. *Jurnal Psikologi Jambi*, 9(2), 30–38.