

Emotional Responses and Learning Behavior of Students Toward Roblox Access Restrictions: A Study of Students at SMP Negeri 1 Langsa

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Article Information	ABSTRACT
Received: July 2026	Background: Government Regulation Number 17 of 2025 concerning the Governance of Electronic System Administration in Child Protection (Tata Kelola Penyelenggaraan Sistem Elektronik Dalam Pelindungan Anak/PP TUNAS), effective March 27, 2025, and Ministerial Regulation Number 9 of 2026 imposed digital access restrictions for children under 16 on several platforms, including Roblox. Although the policy was designed to strengthen child protection in digital spaces, it also generated emotional responses among adolescents who had long used Roblox as a medium of social interaction, peer relationship, and identity expression. Aim: This study aims to describe the forms of students' emotional responses following the Roblox restriction policy, examine how these conditions manifested in their learning behavior at school, and critically assess whether the policy constitutes an appropriate and psychosocially informed intervention for adolescents. Method: This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach involving 28 seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Langsa. Data were collected through questionnaires distributed to all 28 students, in-depth interviews with six key informants, and non-participant observation conducted on two separate occasions. The data were analyzed using Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña's interactive analysis model comprising data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing, while validity was ensured through source triangulation, technique triangulation, and member checking. Result and Discussions: Drawing on Erikson's psychosocial development theory and Hall's reception analysis framework, the findings revealed three decoding positions among students: oppositional, negotiated, and dominant-hegemonic. Students experienced disappointment, resistance, and a sense of losing social interaction space following the restriction policy. However, these emotional responses did not appear to substantially disrupt students' learning behavior, as most students were still able to maintain concentration and stable academic performance. The study also identified differences in adaptation patterns between male and female students in responding to digital restrictions. Conclusion: These findings suggest that digital restriction policies need to consider adolescents' psychosocial conditions during identity formation in digital environments. Keywords: Emotional Response, Learning Behavior, Digital Restriction Policy, Roblox, Guidance And Counseling
Accepted: August 2026	
Published: September 2026	



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Citation Information: Trias, M., Marimbun, M., & Chalidaziah, W. . Emotional Responses and Learning Behavior of Students Toward Roblox Access Restrictions: A Study of Students at SMP Negeri 1 Langsa. *Suluh: Jurnal Bimbingan Dan Konseling*, 12(1), 64–71. <https://doi.org/10.33084/suluh.v12i1.13035>

INTRODUCTION

The implementation of Government Regulation Number 17 of 2025 concerning the Governance of Electronic System Administration in Child Protection (Tata Kelola Penyelenggaraan Sistem Elektronik Dalam Pelindungan Anak/PP TUNAS), operationalized through Ministerial Regulation Number 9 of 2026, was designed to address cyberbullying, prevent child sexual exploitation, and create a safe digital environment (Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 17 Tahun, 2025). Nevertheless, this policy has instead generated negative responses among adolescents (Fahmi, 2026). This condition arises because for today's adolescents, the digital world is not merely an entertainment medium but a crucial social space for forming personal identity (Hall, 1980), building peer relationships, and expressing themselves (Erikson, 1968). Since March 28, 2026, eight digital platforms namely YouTube, TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, Threads, X, Bigo Live, and Roblox have been required to restrict access for users under 16 years of age (Kementerian Komunikasi dan Digital RI, 2026) through the deactivation of communication features, age verification via official identity documents or facial scanning, and strengthened content moderation (Kaufman, 2025). The Ministry of (Kementerian Komunikasi dan Digital RI, 2026) records that of 45 million Roblox users in Indonesia, 23 million are children under 16 who have long used the platform as a third place after home and school for social interaction, building friendships, and self-expression among peers (Kahayani et al., 2025). This phenomenon is clearly evident among students at SMP Negeri 1 Langsa, where initial observations and interviews revealed that some students expressed disappointment and rejection toward the restriction, while others demonstrated active resistance in various forms as efforts to maintain access to the digital social space they had long used (Observation and Interview, April 22, 2026).

This condition reinforces that the gap between policy objectives and the psychosocial reality occurring in the field constitutes a genuine problem that urgently needs to be examined, and this study is present to describe in depth how the dynamics of students' emotional responses manifest in their learning behavior at SMP Negeri 1 Langsa.

Several contemporary studies indicate a tendency toward pathological reductionism that biasedly positions digital activity solely as a single determinant of children's behavioral deviation. Prior studies by Rismawati et al., (2026), Samsudin et al., (2025), and Insyira et al., (2025) tend to narrow their focus to internal variables such as digital addiction, reduced learning concentration, and disrupted sleep patterns, without adequately situating digital activity within its broader social and developmental context. Meanwhile, the sociological perspective expansion initiated by Kahayani et al., (2025) only maps the macro influence of the Roblox platform on the reconstruction of communal social interaction patterns. The shared limitation across this body of literature is its failure to recognize the virtual ecosystem as a crucial third place for adolescents in psychosocial transition a space where identity is formed, peer relationships are built, and self-expression occurs. Consequently, when external intervention in the form of state legal regulation through PP TUNAS was enacted, the existing literature failed to map how the forced revocation of digital access rights impacts students' mental stability at school (Hall, 1980). This constitutes the foundation upon which this study is built, aimed at integrating macro policy variables into a comprehensive guidance and counseling analysis.

These limitations indicate that studies positioning digital regulation as a contextual factor influencing adolescents' psychological conditions and learning behavior remain limited (Samsudin et al., 2025). This study integrates Erik Erikson's psychosocial development perspective (Erikson, 1968) and Hall's reception theory (Hall, 1980) to examine how adolescent identity is constructed while also understanding how students interpret digital space restriction policies. During preliminary observations at SMP Negeri 1 Langsa, differences in adaptation patterns between male and female students also emerged consistently, and while gender is not a primary focus of this study, these patterns are documented and discussed as part of the broader findings. Through this approach, the study seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of adolescents' psychosocial dynamics in responding to digital space restrictions.

PP TUNAS is a newly enacted regulation, and Indonesia is among the pioneering countries expanding child digital protection to gaming platforms (Kementerian Komunikasi dan Digital RI, 2026), yet its psychosocial impact on adolescents has not been scientifically examined. Without adequate study, future digital policy formulation risks overlooking the psychological reality of its target audience. Theoretically, the novelty of this study lies in its interdisciplinary integration combining Erikson's digital developmental psychology and Hall's reception analysis into a single conceptual framework. This combination not only fills theoretical gaps in Indonesian academic literature but also provides an analytical framework for reading how state regulation is decoded by adolescent identity. Accordingly, this study addresses two central research questions: (1) How do students at SMP Negeri 1 Langsa emotionally respond to the Roblox access restriction do they accept or resist the policy? and (2) Are there observable changes in their learning behavior following the restriction, and to what extent does the policy reflect an appropriate governmental response to adolescent digital needs? This study therefore aims to: (1) describe the forms of emotional responses following the Roblox access restriction, examining whether the policy is met with acceptance or resistance; (2) identify whether observable changes in learning behavior have occurred as a result of the restriction; and (3) critically assess whether the governmental policy of restricting adolescent digital access constitutes an appropriate and psychosocially informed intervention.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach (Sugiyono, 2013) because the phenomenon under investigation concerns students' emotional experiences, which are inherently subjective and contextual in nature, and therefore cannot be adequately examined through statistical measurement alone (Rijali, 2018). This approach was chosen to understand in depth how students make sense of and respond to the Roblox access restriction policy within the context of their daily lives. The study was conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Langsa, selected purposively based on preliminary observations on April 22, 2026, which confirmed that emotional responses toward the restriction policy were actively and visibly occurring among its students, making it a contextually relevant and information-rich site for this study. Prior to data collection, formal permission was obtained from the school administration, and the research process was conducted with the full knowledge and approval of the school's guidance counselor and homeroom teacher, fulfilling the ethical requirements of conducting research involving minors. The research subjects were 28 seventh-grade students, selected because this class was identified through preliminary observation as the group most actively affected by and responsive to the Roblox restriction policy. All 28 students were involved in the initial data collection process through the questionnaire, of whom 24 were identified as active Roblox users prior to the restriction. From this group, six students were selected as key informants for in-depth interviews using purposive sampling, based on two criteria: (1) variation in level of engagement with Roblox, ranging from active users to non-users, in order to capture the range of emotional and decoding responses toward the policy; and (2) activeness and openness in responding to the researcher's questions during the initial interaction, which reflected their capacity to articulate their experiences in greater depth and detail.

Data were collected through three complementary instruments. First, in-depth interviews were conducted individually with the six key informants using a semi-structured guide covering four main themes: their experiences of playing Roblox prior to the restriction, their emotional reactions when the policy came into effect, the perceived impact on their social interactions, and their personal assessment of their learning focus following the restriction. Second, non-participant observation was carried out in the classroom on two separate occasions, with field notes recorded systematically to capture expressions, interactions, and behavioral dynamics that written instruments could not reach. Third, a questionnaire was used as a preliminary mapping instrument and distributed to all 28 students, 24 of whom were identified as active Roblox users, to broaden the reach of data collection given the one-period time constraint during fieldwork, which made in-depth interviewing of all students impractical. The questionnaire data were read descriptively rather than subjected to statistical analysis, serving to reinforce and contextualize the findings obtained through interviews and observation. All data were analyzed using Miles et al.'s (2014) interactive model through three iterative stages, namely data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification, anchored theoretically in Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory (Erikson, 1968) and Hall's Reception Analysis (Hall, 1980). Data validity was ensured through source triangulation, technique triangulation, and member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

A. Profile of Roblox Usage as Students' Digital Identity Space

SMP Negeri 1 Langsa was selected as the research site based on several considerations. The school is recognized as one of the leading junior high schools in Langsa City, with a student population exceeding one thousand, making it a relevant setting for examining adolescents' digital platform usage patterns. Questionnaire data indicated that 23 out of 28 seventh-grade students were active Roblox users, with usage duration ranging from six months to seven years. Preliminary interviews further revealed the intensity of students' engagement with the platform; one participant reported having spent up to twenty million rupiah on in-game purchases. These findings suggest that the phenomenon observed at SMP Negeri 1 Langsa reflects a broader pattern of adolescent digital engagement in Indonesia rather than an isolated case.

Among the various online gaming platforms available, Roblox was among the most preferred by students. The platform allowed users to create personalized avatars and interact directly with peers through chat and on-mic features. Students frequently played together, particularly Tower of Hell, while simultaneously communicating and maintaining social interaction through the platform. One participant noted that what made Roblox enjoyable was not only the gameplay itself, but the sense of togetherness built through playing and talking with friends. These findings indicate that Roblox functioned not merely as entertainment, but as a meaningful social space within students' daily lives.

The implementation of PP TUNAS and Ministerial Regulation Number 9 of 2026 altered students' access to the platform. Roblox introduced three account categories based on age classification: Roblox Kids for ages 5–8, Roblox Select for ages 9–15, and standard accounts for users aged 16 and above. As most seventh-grade students were approximately 13 years old, they were automatically placed into Roblox Select accounts with more restricted communication access. Several avatar emotes previously used by students were also removed and reclassified as Restricted Content, accessible only to verified users aged 17 and above (Roblox Support, 2026).

B. Students' Emotional Responses After the Restriction Policy

Students' emotional responses toward the restriction policy varied considerably. Prior to fully understanding the policy, nearly all participants initially believed that restriction-related information circulating on social media was a hoax. During classroom observation, students displayed enthusiastic reactions when discussing Roblox in general; however, the classroom atmosphere became noticeably quieter when the discussion shifted to the restriction policy, a shift that occurred spontaneously and constituted one of the key observational findings of this study.

Once students confirmed the validity of the policy, various forms of emotional response emerged. Questionnaire data showed that 11 out of 28 students reported feeling disappointed and angry, 8 students stated that they became more emotionally sensitive when the topic arose, while 9 students expressed that they had lost an important social interaction space previously available through Roblox. One participant gave voice to this sense of loss during the interview:

"Ya Roblox bukan cuman buat main biasa aja bang, disini kami bisa main bareng, ngobrol, ketawa - ketawa, pokoknya seru bang, apalagi kan pas lagi ngelewatin rintangan itu seru bisa sambil ngomong, sekarang ya udah ngga bisa."

("Roblox is not just for playing around, here we can play together, talk, laugh, it is really fun, especially when passing through obstacles together while talking, but now we cannot do that anymore.")

This statement reflects how deeply the platform was embedded in students' daily social routines, extending well beyond its function as a mere gaming application.

The findings also revealed resistance behavior among students. One participant openly admitted:

"Kalo saya pake KTP mamak saya bang, kebetulan ya dikasih juga sama mamak, mamak juga tau kalau untuk fitur di game ini."
("I used my mother's ID card, she actually gave it to me herself because she also knew it was just for the game features.")

This finding is notable not only as an act of resistance toward the policy, but also as an indication that parental awareness of digital restriction consequences remains limited, echoing (Rismawati et al., 2026) who noted that parents and educators often underestimate the emotional significance that online platforms hold for children. Several female students were also observed discussing the use of identity card templates obtained through a third-party video editing application as an alternative method to restore account access.

Not all students rejected the restriction policy entirely. Some acknowledged that Roblox remained playable despite the communication limitations, though they noted that the gaming experience was no longer as enjoyable given the reduced social interaction features. Meanwhile, five students who were not active Roblox users showed no meaningful emotional response toward the policy, as they held no emotional or social attachment to the platform.

C. Manifestation of Emotional Responses in Learning Behavior

Observational and interview findings indicated that the impact of Roblox restrictions on students' learning behavior was relatively limited. English subject score data showed no apparent decline during the observation period following the policy implementation, though these findings are insufficient to represent students' overall academic condition comprehensively. Several participants explicitly stated that they were able to separate gaming activities from classroom learning. One participant remarked during the interview:

"Kesel juga sih bang, masa kami mau main perlu dibatasi gitu, cuma ya kalo aku ya bang pas belajar gitu ya fokus belajar, nanti pas udah pulang baru main game."

("It is frustrating, why do we have to be restricted from playing, but when it comes to studying I just focus on studying, and then play games after I get home.")

This suggests that students were capable of compartmentalizing their emotional frustration from their academic responsibilities, demonstrating a developing capacity for self-regulation during the psychosocial transition phase.

Although some students reported temporary concentration difficulties during the initial phase of the restriction, this condition gradually subsided over time. Interview findings indicated that students briefly thought about the restrictions during lessons, particularly shortly after receiving the information, but this disturbance did not persist for an extended period and diminished without external intervention. Findings related to daydreaming behavior in class showed no direct association with Roblox restrictions, as similar patterns were observed among students who did not use the platform at all. Classroom observations suggested that students' concentration was more strongly shaped by teaching methods, classroom atmosphere, and the quality of instructional delivery than by their emotional responses to the restriction policy.

The study also found that students' interest in Roblox gradually declined following the restriction policy. Several participants explained that the platform had become less appealing as many communication and social interaction features were no longer accessible, and some students began redirecting their activities toward other games or non-digital activities outside the platform.

D. Gender-Based Adaptation Differences

The study identified tendencies in adaptation patterns between male and female students following the restriction policy, though these should be understood as observed patterns rather than definitive conclusions given the small sample size. Male students generally responded by shifting toward alternative platforms that still offered social communication features. A male student explained:

"Kalo sekarang jarang main Roblox bang, karna udah kurang seru semenjak ada pembatasan itu, sekarang ya main Mobile Legends bang, disini kan bisa on mic, jadi ya seru kalo sambil ngobrol sama Kawan - kawan."

("I rarely play Roblox now because it has become less fun since the restriction, now I play Mobile Legends where you can use the mic, so it is still fun talking with friends while playing.")

This suggests that male students prioritized finding functionally equivalent social spaces, maintaining the voice communication dimension of their peer interaction through alternative platforms. Female students, on the other hand, demonstrated a broader pattern of digital and non-digital diversification. A female student shared:

"Kalo kami yang cewe udah jarang juga sih bang main Roblox, kami sekarang main ML juga, terus scroll scroll TikTok, IG, kadang juga kami main keluar."
("We girls also rarely play Roblox now, we play ML too, scroll through TikTok and Instagram, and sometimes we go out and play outside.")

This pattern suggests that female students did not confine their adaptation to a single alternative platform but instead distributed their social and leisure activities across multiple digital and physical spaces. These tendencies indicate that students' adaptation processes following digital platform restrictions did not emerge uniformly, but varied according to individual social attachment patterns and coping preferences.

E. Data Triangulation

To ensure data validity, this study employed source and technique triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) systematically comparing questionnaire results, interviews, and observations. This process ensured that each finding was not derived from a single data source alone, but was substantiated through multiple complementary forms of information.

Table 1. Data Triangulation				
No	Finding	Questionnaire	Interview	Observation
1	Disappointment toward restrictions	39.3% agreed	Students expressed disappointment	Students became quieter during discussions
2	Loss of digital social space	32.1% agreed	Loss of voice chat and group play	Reduced enthusiasm during discussions
3	Resistance behavior	35.7% agreed	Attempts to bypass verification	Students discussed account recovery
4	Temporary concentration disruption	7.1% admitted difficulty focusing	Disruption occurred in early phase	Learning participation remained stable
5	Daydreaming not linked to Roblox	3.6% admitted daydreaming	Not directly related to Roblox	Similar behavior among non-users
6	Declining interest in Roblox	Not measured	Reduced interest in playing	Shift toward other activities
7	Separation of gaming and learning	Not measured	Gaming and studying viewed separately	Academic performance remained stable
8	Gender-based adaptation differences	Not measured	Different adaptation patterns	Differences in activities and discussions

The triangulation analysis confirmed two significant psychosocial patterns. First, early emotional responses including disappointment, resistance, and feelings of losing an interactive social space were consistently validated across all three research instruments, indicating that the emotional disruption following the implementation of PP TUNAS represented a genuine psychological reality among students. Second, the low percentage of concentration-related disturbances identified through the questionnaire, further confirmed through interviews and observations, suggested that students generally possessed adequate self-regulation capacity in maintaining academic concentration. The variation between questionnaire findings and the depth of interview narratives regarding daydreaming behavior does not reflect methodological inconsistency; rather, it illustrates the strength of qualitative descriptive research in capturing psychosocial realities that quantitative instruments alone may not fully reveal (Sugiyono, 2017).

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that Roblox functioned not merely as a form of entertainment for students, but also as a meaningful digital social space closely connected to identity exploration and peer interaction. As one participant expressed, Roblox was a place where students could play together, laugh, and talk with friends, experiences that carried genuine social weight in their daily lives. This finding supports Erikson's (1968) theory that adolescents in the identity versus role confusion phase actively seek spaces that allow self-expression, social recognition, and interaction with peers. Suparmi et al. (2024) further emphasized that peer environments play a significant role in adolescents' identity exploration processes, suggesting that digital platforms such as Roblox serve a similar function to physical peer spaces in supporting psychosocial development. In this context, avatars, communication features, and collective gameplay activities served as important mediums through which students constructed and negotiated their

digital identities (Kahayani et al., 2025). From a guidance and counseling perspective, this underscores the need for school counselors to recognize digital platforms as legitimate psychosocial spaces for adolescents, not merely as sources of distraction, so that counseling approaches can be designed with greater sensitivity to students' lived digital experiences.

The implementation of Government Regulation Number 17 of 2025 concerning the Governance of Electronic System Administration in Child Protection (Tata Kelola Penyelenggaraan Sistem Elektronik Dalam Pelindungan Anak/PP TUNAS) and Ministerial Regulation Number 9 of 2026 was interpreted differently by students depending on their level of emotional and social involvement with the platform. Hall's (1980) reception analysis explains this variation through dominant-hegemonic, negotiated, and *oppositional decoding* positions. Students who were non-users of the platform showed no meaningful emotional response toward the restriction policy and appeared to accept it without question, occupying a *dominant-hegemonic* position in which the policy was received as legitimate and unproblematic. A second group of students occupied a *negotiated* position, acknowledging that Roblox remained accessible despite the restrictions, yet expressing that the gaming experience had become less meaningful given the reduced social interaction features. These students neither fully rejected nor fully embraced the policy, but rather adapted selectively by continuing to use the platform within its new limitations while recognizing what had been lost. Students with the strongest emotional attachment to the platform, on the other hand, occupied an *oppositional* position, viewing the restriction policy as a threat to their social space, as reflected in their active attempts to circumvent age verification mechanisms. One participant, for instance, used their mother's identity card to bypass the verification system, an act that not only signals oppositional decoding but also reveals how deeply students valued the access being restricted. Blanchett et al. (2023) demonstrated that oppositional decoding tends to emerge more strongly when audiences perceive a policy or message as threatening to their identity or social space, and this pattern was clearly visible in the resistance behaviors observed during this study. For school counselors, this means that digital restriction policies carry psychosocial consequences that extend beyond technical access, and that students who demonstrate resistance behaviors may be signaling unmet needs for social belonging and emotional connection rather than simply exhibiting defiance. Rismawati et al. (2026) similarly noted that parents and educators often underestimate the emotional significance that online platforms hold for children, a pattern also reflected in this study, where one participant's mother actively assisted her child in bypassing the age verification system out of an understanding of the platform's social importance to her child.

An important finding in this study is that the emotional disruption experienced by students did not appear to meaningfully affect their learning behavior at school. Although disappointment, irritation, and temporary distraction emerged during the initial phase of the restriction, students generally remained capable of separating gaming space from learning space. As one participant put it, frustration toward the restriction existed, but when it came to studying, focus remained on studying, with gaming reserved for after school hours. This finding differs from several previous studies that primarily positioned digital gaming as a direct cause of declining academic concentration and learning achievement (Samsudin et al., 2025; Insyra et al., 2025). The data in this study instead suggest that many adolescents possess adaptive capacity and developing self-regulation skills during the psychosocial transition phase (Qonitah Taufiqoh, 2025). However, it is important to note that this resilience should not be taken for granted. School counselors play a meaningful role in supporting students through this process for instance, by facilitating psychoeducation on emotional regulation, providing space for students to express their frustrations constructively, and helping students develop healthy coping strategies when valued digital environments undergo change.

This study also observed tendencies in adaptation patterns between male and female students, though these patterns should be interpreted with caution given the small sample size and the absence of gender-specific measurement instruments in the questionnaire, particularly as recent longitudinal research on adolescents' gendered digital experiences suggests that clear-cut gender differences may be less consistent than commonly assumed (Shawcroft & Cingel, 2026). Male students tended to redirect their social and leisure activities toward alternative platforms that preserved the voice communication dimension of peer interaction, such as Mobile Legends, which offered on-mic features similar to those previously enjoyed on Roblox. Female students, meanwhile, demonstrated a broader diversification pattern, shifting across multiple spaces including Mobile Legends, TikTok, Instagram, and physical outdoor activities, rather than anchoring their adaptation to a single alternative. Rather than drawing definitive conclusions about gender differences, these observed tendencies suggest that students may vary in how they process the loss of a digital social space, with male students appearing to prioritize functional substitution and female students showing a more distributed pattern of adaptation across both digital and non-digital environments. School counselors should therefore avoid applying a one-size-fits-all approach when supporting students through digital transitions, and instead remain attentive to individual patterns of social attachment and coping preferences.

In the broader context of guidance and counseling services, these findings collectively highlight the importance of strengthening emotional regulation and adaptive coping among adolescents navigating change within digital environments. Digital restriction policies such as PP TUNAS should not be evaluated solely on the basis of technical compliance and access control; their psychosocial implications for adolescents in the midst of identity development must also be considered. School counselors are positioned to bridge this gap, by advocating for students' emotional needs, collaborating with teachers and parents to create supportive transitional environments, and designing counseling programs that are responsive to the realities of adolescents' digital live.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that Roblox functioned not only as an entertainment platform for students at SMP Negeri 1 Langsa, but also as a meaningful digital social space that played a genuine role in their identity exploration and peer interaction during adolescence. The implementation of Government Regulation Number 17 of 2025 concerning the Governance of Electronic System Administration in Child Protection (PP TUNAS) and Ministerial Regulation Number 9 of 2026 generated varied emotional responses among students, which can be understood through Hall's (1980) three decoding positions. Students with no prior attachment to the platform occupied a dominant-hegemonic position, accepting the policy without resistance. Those who continued using the platform within its new limitations while acknowledging what had been lost occupied a negotiated position. Meanwhile, students with the strongest emotional and social attachment to Roblox occupied an oppositional position, actively seeking ways to circumvent the restrictions as a means of reclaiming the social space they valued.

Despite the emotional disruption that followed the policy implementation, these reactions did not appear to meaningfully interfere with students' learning behavior at school. Most students demonstrated a capacity to separate their frustration from their academic responsibilities, maintaining focus during classroom activities and treating gaming and studying as distinct domains of their daily lives. This finding suggests that many adolescents possess developing self-regulation skills that allow them to navigate emotional disruption without allowing it to spill over into their academic engagement, though this resilience should not be assumed uniformly across all students.

The study also observed tendencies in adaptation patterns between male and female students. Male students tended to shift toward alternative platforms that preserved the voice communication dimension of peer interaction, while female students showed a broader pattern of diversification across multiple digital and non-digital spaces. These tendencies suggest that adolescents respond to digital restrictions in ways shaped by their individual social attachment patterns and coping preferences, and that a one-size-fits-all approach in supporting students through digital transitions is unlikely to be adequate.

These findings collectively emphasize that digital protection policies such as PP TUNAS need to consider adolescents' psychosocial realities more comprehensively, particularly given that the digital space functions as a legitimate arena for identity development and peer relationship formation during this critical phase. School counselors are positioned to play an important role in bridging this gap by supporting students' emotional regulation, facilitating constructive expression of frustration, and designing counseling approaches that are sensitive to the realities of adolescents' digital lives.

This study is not without limitations. The relatively small number of participants and its focus on a single school mean that the findings are not intended for broad generalization, but rather serve as a preliminary account of the psychosocial dynamics among students responding to digital access restriction policies. Future studies are recommended to involve broader and more diverse educational settings, employ gender-specific measurement instruments, and examine the long-term psychosocial effects of digital platform restrictions on adolescents' social development and emotional well-being.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author would like to express sincere gratitude to SMP Negeri 1 Langsa for providing permission and support during the research process. Appreciation is also extended to all students who participated in this study and contributed valuable information to the completion of this research.

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