



A Literature Review of the APA & Contrasting Research on the Effects of Violent Video Games

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INTRODUCTION

“How does the American Psychological Association’s (APA) research and contrasting recent research, on the effects of violent video games compare?” There is still a large ongoing debate among psychologists and the media on this topic. Psychologists have conducted their own research and have come to their own conclusions, but they don’t all seem to agree. In an extensive paper written in 2015, the APA concluded that there is “a consistent relation between violent video game use and increases in aggressive behavior”. I have found several other sources that contradict this statement. Throughout this project, I have conducted a literature review by visiting papers written by people with experience in the field of psychology and compared it to the APA’s research.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Why is the research important?

Research on how video games affect people’s daily lives is essential for the safety of the player and others around them. If there is a connection between video games and violent behavior, the public must know about it so that there can be regulations put on video games, such as how violent and graphic they can be. If on the other hand, there is no connection between video games and violent behavior, the public should also be made aware of this. In this case, there would be no reason to have strict regulation of video games. Nowadays, many parents believe that video games make their children more violent, but if this is not true then video games could be played without fear of influential violence.

What is currently known?

The debate on whether violent video games make people more violent is still very controversial. Experts do not agree, and there is research supporting both sides. What is certain is that “violent crimes among youths have decreased since 1996, even as video game sales have soared”(6). Although this may be true, there is still research that suggests violent video games make people, especially children, more violent.

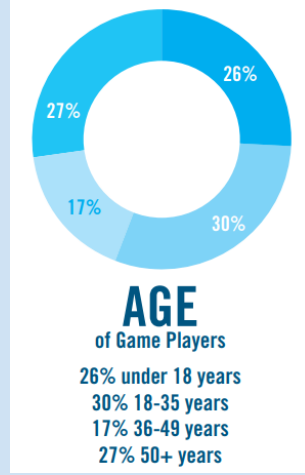
How will I investigate the topic? Research Methodologies

I will conduct a literature review from reliable sources, such as publications written by/about people with experience in the field of psychology. I will study the research in detail and compare it to the APA’s research. In doing so, I hope to find major differences in their experiments to possibly find any issues with the research and conclusions.

CONCLUSION

There are many reliable sources of research on video games depicting violence coming to different conclusions. Each source has its strengths and weaknesses. Researchers have all taken their own approach to exploring the topic. After analyzing the information I have gathered and reviewed from the APA and contrasting resources, I can conclude that there needs to be more research done in order to come to a better conclusion. Improvements should be made in this field of research such as further controlled biases, the examination of video game depicted violence with more objective methods. Without improvements in the research methodologies, it will be difficult to differentiate between what is right and wrong. Additional objective, unbiased, and reproducible psychosocial research performed by a number of different sources should be conducted in order to more carefully answer the question of the influence of video game depicted violence.

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF SOURCES

Source	Descriptions of Research	Demographics of Subjects	Reliability	Outcome
(1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> APA formed a team to review their 2005 <i>Resolution on Violence in Video Games and Interactive Media</i> Three step process: “(a) Identify the relevant literature, (b) review the literature’s findings systematically, and (c) synthesize the findings into coherent conclusions and recommendations.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young adults Males and females 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Task force consisted of seven senior scientists Task force was formed by consulting with frequently published researchers in the field All had PhDs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “The research demonstrates a consistent relation between violent video game use and increases in aggressive behavior.” Longer exposure to violent video games is associated with “higher levels” of aggression and other adverse outcomes.”
(2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psychology professor Dr. Christopher Ferguson analyzed the opinions of 109 clinicians who work with children and families “to see whether they believe video games are a problem for society.” Purpose of the study was see if there was a link between age and opinions about video games. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Older adults Majority were not gamers Males and females 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Christopher Ferguson has a PhD in clinical psychology Awarded Distinguished Early Career Professional Award from Division 46 (media psychology and technology) of the APA Named fellow of the APA through Division 1 (General Psychology) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 39.5% of the clinicians believe that video games cause violent behavior As people get older they lose touch with cultural changes and tend to become entrenched in their beliefs, or do research that is overly influenced by their biases More research, not influenced by bias, needs to be done in order to truly see if there is a link between violent video games and violent behavior
(3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greg Toppo published an article in <i>Scientific American</i>, which looked at research that connects violent video games to increased violent behavior Although not an expert in the field of psychology, he looked at the legitimacy and reliability of the research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most under 30 Males and Females 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greg Toppo is the national K-12 education reporter for USA Today Although not an expert on the topic, his unbiased approach is unique He does not skew any of the data he examined and uses direct quotes from subjects to strengthen his arguments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Research has failed to show a causal relation between playing violent video games and perpetrating violent acts. The fighting that kids engage in with video games is more akin to play than violence.” He ends the article with, “In a way, we are pointing fingers at the wrong people. When we worry that a violent video game is going to turn our kids into killers, aren’t we the ones who can’t tell fantasy from reality? Kids already know the difference.”
(4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In <i>Southern Economic Journal</i>, Scott Cunningham and Benjamin Engelstätter look to see if there was a relationship between violent video games and violent crime Researched this by looking at statistics of violent crime in America and of violent video game sales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited to available statistics in America 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scott Cunningham is an associate professor of economics at Baylor University Dr. Benjamin Engelstätter is research associate at the Zentrum für Europäische Wirtschaftsforschung 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The following weeks after a popular video game is released, crime rates decrease As sales of video games have soared over the past decade, violent crime rates have decreased Does not mean that video games have contributed to this at all, but it is an important fact to keep in mind
(5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Christopher Ferguson looked at statistics of video game sales and youth violence, other research, and by conducting his own study His own study and the German study he looked at were longitudinal (took place over a few years) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> His experiment used 165 boys and girls ranging from 10-14 years old Other experiments he reviewed only used young children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Christopher Ferguson has a PhD in clinical psychology Awarded Distinguished Early Career Professional Award from Division 46 (media psychology and technology) of the APA Named fellow of the APA through Division 1 (General Psychology) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Christopher Ferguson’s and the German study found no links between violent video games and violent behavior An experiment led by a graduate student of his found that both violent and nonviolent video games tend to relax people over time, not anger them Many previous experiments that connected violent video games to violent behavior occurred over a short period of time, which yields limited results

Many of the experiments let the subject play the first person shooter game, Call of Duty. Over 10 millions copies of the game Call of Duty Modern Warfare 2 have been sold.

