

The Effects Of Video Games On Children

Posted on January 23, 2020

Introduction

In this century, each child owns a playing console, so scientists and doctors cannot ignore the impacts of video games on these kids. There are many questions that are inevitable, including their concerns about the kids playing violent video games. Their major concern is to study whether it leads to any changes in the behavior of the layer or is only confined to the game world. Around 98% of pediatricians have worked on this issue, and their results state that violent media escalates child aggression, and the kids suffer terribly (Gentile et al., 2004). Also, the doctors believe that when a child is exposed to too much violence in the game, it aggravates aggressive thoughts and behavior, and he becomes used to it, thus causing desensitization to violence. However, not all the researchers agree with this. Some scholars believe that this finding is not correct. My thesis statement is that video games are becoming inevitable, but we cannot deny the fact that proves how children get the effects of the games and how the games alter their emotional and physical acts.

There is evidence that links many school shootings and aggressive behavior of children at school with the violent video games to which they were exposed. First of all, aggression and violence have to be defined to base our research on it. Violence is an aggressive act in which the person wants to harm others (Anderson & Bushman, 2002). But we can state that all violence is aggression, but all kinds of attacks are not violence. However, there are a few limitations to this research. First of all, people cannot be asked to play video games as a part of an experiment and then act violently or cause harm in the laboratories. It would be unethical. Similarly, another important to be made is that no researchers have ever said that media or video games are the primary sources of violence. All the researchers used the risk factor approach to consider the impacts of video games on the personalities of the children. More risk factors show that increased probability of the player being aggressive. Strasburger stated (p 203), "The research on media violence and its relationship to real-life aggression are clear: young people learn their attitudes about violence at a very young age, and once heard, those attitudes are difficult to change (Anderson et al., 2003). Studies reveal that real-life violence has media violence as a determinant at only 10 %, and the rest of it is caused by many other factors, such as family structures, parents, and teachers. However, we cannot deny the role of media violence, particularly video games and the efforts to control it. Actions are required at an individual as well as state level to avoid any incidents caused by this type of violence.

Human beings are designed to copy the acts of others since they are born. Scientists have discovered neurons called "mirror neurons" in the brains of people are responsible for this act. (Caggiano et al., 2009). This act of imitating things is beneficial for humans because we learn easily by observing others, and our learning capacity is increased (Umilta et al., 2001). It also results in good relationships

among the individual, but also, on the other hand, it has negative aspects.

Humans can be adversely affected by anti-social behaviors and aggressive attitudes. It is clear that children imitate whatever they see whether it's beneficial to them or not. They copy the acts and attitudes that are incidental to them. (Bandura, 1965) Kids imitate what they see in real life or on screens. For all the characters that are in the game, children like to act like those who are heroes who get rewarded or who have good social standing in the games. In violent video games, the main characters have all these qualities, so children are most likely to imitate them. In games like GTA and others, children are likely to copy the acts of the central character. In Thailand, an 18-year-old guy stabbed a taxi driver just to check if it was simple to kill a cab driver, as shown in the game. " (Reed, 2008) So, the government of Thailand banned GTA IV. Similarly, another act was reported in 2003 when Buckner, who was just 16, along with his brother Joshua, who was 14, killed a man and injured women in Tennessee by shooting at their cars (Calvert, 2003). They told the investigators that they were acting the way they did in Grand Theft Auto III.

Another horrible incident can be quoted, which states that in 2003, an 18-year-old guy, Devin Moore, was arrested, so he killed three policemen. When he was retaken into police custody, his words were, "Life is like a video game. Everybody's got to die sometime" (Leung, 2005). Police said that he was imitating the acts of GTA III. However, it cannot be said that only violent games were responsible for shaping their behaviors this way. There must have been many other risk factors that ignited these behaviors, but it is proven the fact that a severe form of violence is a result of the convergence of all the risk factors. Also, the studies suggest that it is nearly impossible to address which risk factor was the most influential in causing aggressive behavior. On the other hand, one cannot deny the fact that violent games have affected the functioning of all these children. There are many other cases in which children have done the same and landed themselves in trouble. Everyone can access these games with a single click on the internet, and any act of imitation by the player can result in a causal role of the game in his aggressive act. However, we cannot deny the action of other risk factors and learning procedures that influence the behaviors of the children.

Science states that when a child identifies an aggressor through any media, there are more chances that he will adapt his ways (Cantor, 1994). People usually recognize and identify those people and characters that are powerful and heroic, and they start relating them to their personal experiences. It is natural for all humans. (Berkowitz & Alioto, 1973). In violent video games, the players recognize the aggressor, and they play on behalf of it. So, the identification leads them to believe that there is no difference between the two. In these games, the focus is entirely on the aggressor and his personality, as he is the hero in that game. When a gamer is always exposed to such a hero, it affects his mental abilities, and he starts seeing the heroic acts in a very unusual way. He starts believing that the one who is negative and who can do anything is the hero without the discretion of the moralities. The designers of the games have also worked a lot to portray the aggressive characters in such a way that they appear realistic. Therefore, we can say that the identification of the players with the violent characters plays a vital role in affecting the children adversely.

It is evident that the incident of the same thing again and again in the memory of a human being results in the formation of a permanent memory, which adds to the skill and improves the learning responses. (Gentile & Gentile, 2008). Also, when the entire sequence is repeated in mind, it has a stronger impact on the memory of the repeater than the repetition of only one sequence. Now, it is evident that video games are more repetitive than any other media. The player does the same kind of thing again and again, which leaves a strong impression on the mind of the observer. They complete the same acts in the game and get rewarded. They play the games and learn a lot from them. Particularly, if we talk about GTA, there is misogyny when the players sleep with the prostitutes and then kill them to save money, which conveys to the minds of the players that they can get whatever they want and the lives of the people have no worth as compared to their money. In simple words, we can infer that repetition of the same kind of attitude helps in shaping the acts of the players and their learning patterns.

Active listening and participation skills are some of the keys to improving memory and learning things easily. More knowledge is absorbed when we learn by active participation. (Gentile et al, 2007; Gentile & Gentile, 2008) Today, every child has a video game, and the advancement in technology has led to the formation of super easy consoles, which are even portable. These consoles have added to the thrill of the game by allowing the players to use guns and swords in front of the screen and play the game through their moves. This has eliminated the gap between their real-world moves and the moves in the games. In one way, it has created comfortable gaming with more thrills, but on the other side, it has opened the gates to a potent way of learning new behaviors. Interactive rehearsals lead to aggressive and anti-social behaviors in the real world.

Consider another side of the picture; there are many people who believe that gamers are not influenced by their games. There are millions of players, and these gaming kings are making a lot of money from these games, so if these were to affect the people adversely, there would have been hundreds of criminals on the roads trying to imitate the games. GTA has sold 70 million copies, and if it were the cause of violence, there would have been no peace in the USA as each house has a copy. But no, there are not. Also, the terrorists who are a threat to safety and peace do not play video games.

There must be some methods to check that the new generation is not being influenced by the games and they treat games just a time pass activity rather than a medium of learning. Parents must ensure that their children play good games and they should check the rating of games each game a rank and no child should play the game above his rank. Also, they must monitor the kid while playing; there must be some time for the match, and they should not be playing it all the time so that the repetition process can be decreased. Parents should also talk to their children about the game and share how their kids feel about it. It will give them an idea of the impact of the game on kids. Parents have to share the games with other parents to help them and themselves in parenting.

Conclusion

Summing up the essay, violent games affect the minds of the players adversely, and their psychology is affected. These games affect the learning process of the players and their mental approach. They start considering themselves the players in the game and repeat the same acts. This results in healthy and more developed behaviors that are adjacent to the ones in the games. There are many psychological methods that show that, yes, children learn from games. However, there is another class of people who believe that video games have nothing to do with violent behaviors, but we have tried to prove how it impacts the child. There are various methods to ensure that the children do not get distracted by the games and try to play the game just as a game, so the parents and the software boards must take care of this thing to ensure that there is no accident in the future related to this issue.

Work Cited

Anderson, CA, & Bushman, BJ (2002). Human aggression. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 53, 27-51.

Anderson, CA, Berkowitz, L, Donnerstein, E, Huesmann, LR, Johnson, J, Linz, D, Malamuth, N, & Wartella, E (2003). The influence of media violence on youth. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 4, 81-110

Bandura, A. (1973). *Aggression: A social learning analysis*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Berkowitz, L, & Alioto, JT (1973). The meaning of an observed event as a determinant of its aggressive consequences. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 28, 206-217

Caggiano, V, Fogassi, L, Rizzolatti, G, Their, P, & Casile, A (2009). Mirror neurons differentially encode the peripersonal and extrapersonal space of monkeys. *Science*, 324, 403-406.

Calvert, J (2003, October 23). Families sue over GTA III-inspired shooting. *ZDNet News*.

Cantor, J (1994). Fright reactions to mass media. In J Bryant & D Zillmann (Eds), *Media effects: Advances in theory and research* (pp 213-245). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Gentile, DA, & Gentile, JR (2008). Violent video games as exemplary teachers: A conceptual analysis. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 9, 127-141.

Gentile, DA, Oberg, C, Sherwood, NE, Story, M, Walsh, DA, & Hogan, M (2004). Well-child exams in the video age: Pediatricians and the AAP guidelines for children's media use. *Pediatrics*, 114, 1235-1241.

Leung, R. (2005). Can a video game lead to murder? Did 'Grand Theft Auto' cause one teenager to kill? *CBS News*, 17 June.

Reed, J (2008). Thailand bans Grand Theft Auto IV. BBC News Online, 4 August.

Umiltà, MA, Kohler, E, Gallese, V, Fogassi, L, Fadiga, L, Keysers, C, & Rizzolatti, G (2001). I know what you are doing. *Neuron*, 31, 155-165.