

Should Violent Video Games Be Banned?

To further explain the problem in question in the introduction to my paper, I will be using an article from the New York Times to explain the current legislation being discussed as far as the potential banning of violent video games, as well as some arguments for and against it. The article specifically explores a new law proposed in California to ban the sale of violent video games to minors (Liptak, 2010). I have another article regarding the same subject that goes into deeper detail; I will be able to use this article to explain my arguments and counterarguments further as they have been used in the court case (Hood, 2009).

I am using my first reference in support of the argument that violent video games affect the behavior of children, and the claim that parents should control which games their children do and do not play. The article states, “The evidence strongly suggests that exposure to violent video games is a causal risk factor for increased aggressive behavior, aggressive cognition, and aggressive affect and for decreased empathy and prosocial behavior” (Anderson, Shibuya, Ihorio, Swing, Bushman, Sakamoto, Rothstein, & Saleem, 2010). Similarly, another reference supports the same claim, comparing playing a violent game to a peaceful game and an abstract game: “Playing a violent game produced a significant increase in implicit aggressive self-concept relative to playing a peaceful game” (Bluemke, Friedrich, & Zumbach, 2010).

The Hastings study demonstrates that large amounts of game play, as well as playing violent games, are related to negative behavior and academic performance (Hastings, Karas, Winsler, Way, Madigan, & Tyler, 2009), supporting my claim that game play should be regulated by parents, in this case, so that it does not affect scholastic performance. The Polman study found that an aggression level change due to violent video game play occurred specifically for boys; aggression in girls was not affected by game condition (Polman, de Castro, & van Aken, 2008). This also supports the claim that parents should regulate video game play and not the law as the law affects all, and the study demonstrates that within this study, violent video games did not affect the aggression level of girls.

The Hamlen study shows that video game play neither makes children more creative nor less creative, while the Olson study demonstrates that violent video games are used by adolescents to “work through angry feelings or relieve stress” (Hamlen, 2008; Olson, Kutner, & Warner, 2008). These are in support of the argument that video games can be beneficial.

The Markey study undermines the counterargument that playing violent video games or video games in general can lead to “video game related deaths,” stating that “only some individuals are adversely affected by VVGs and that those who are affected have preexisting dispositions, which make them susceptible to such violent media” (Robinson & Kwan, 2007; Markey & Markey, 2010).

The argument that video games can be beneficial, even violent video games in particular, is supported by Christopher J. Ferguson. Ferguson asserts that the negative effects of violent video games have been emphasized, while the positive effects have been disregarded in the debate about violent video games. I will be able to discuss the beneficial aspects as far as skills improved, the use of the games as educational tools, and the potential improvement of vision through playing “intense action” video games (Ferguson, 2010; Li, Polal, Makous, & Bavelier, 2009). The article by Cheryl K. Olson can be used to support this argument as well by explaining what it is that motivates children to play violent video games as well as video games in general (Olson, 2010).

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