Does the Hobby of Playing Violent Video Games Cause People to be Violent?

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Abstract

Violent video games causing violence in people, young and old alike. I suggest that video games are not to blame. People are known to be able to cause horrible acts. And in recent time, people tend to blame violent video games as the reason. But to the level of degree these people claim how these type of video games makes people act horribly; society would be on the edge of anarchy. But we clearly do not see society collapsing due to constant murders. Using the article “Analysis: Why it’s time to stop blaming video games for real-world violence” by Christopher J. Ferguson, to support my claim. Ferguson explains that it is common in history to blame a popular hobby or subject for violence in people. Ferguson also explains the biases he found when researching, that experimental studies which found result supporting violence in people are cause by violence in video games to be more likely to be published than studies that do show a link. As someone who is an avid gamer, I am an example of how violent video games does not inherently cause someone to be violent. I have played violent video games my entire life, Halo, Call of Duty, and Gears of War to list some. Still to this day, I have yet been into a physical altercation or past disciplinary action due to violence growing up. And there are many people who also play video games that are not inherently violent people. To conclude, based on my research violent video games do not cause people to be violent. And as someone who has played violent video games and who is someone who also have not been in a fight in their life, it would be a reasonable to assume that I am not a violent person. For how big of a hobby playing video games are, the claims that violence in people is caused by video games, not only me but, a drastically higher amount of violent situation would be reported.

Keywords: Violence, Video Games

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Humans can commit horrible acts or acts of kindness. There is debate as to whether it is human nature to be naturally violent and selfish, or naturally benevolent and selfless. When a person does a horrible act of violence, unlike when a person does an act of kindness, people find something to blame. Depending on the current year, society will have a different victim to blame. Currently that victim is video games.

# My Claim

With in the past 30 years, violent video games have been a common go to reason as to why a violent act has happened. With the increase of technology and popularity of video games, video games are ever evolving and changing. In the past 30 years due to competition, video games have been trying to one-up the game that came before it. This can cause a game franchise to push the boundaries of what is ok to show and what is not. So, when a game franchise like Mortal Kombat, which is arguably the forerunner of violent video games, it not unreasonable to assume that kids and adults will be influenced by the ever-evolving violence. Due to the popularity of violent video games, if violent video games cause people to be violent, then there would be much more violent cases that would border on anarchy in society. But since that is obviously not the case, then do violent video games really cause people to be violent?

## Evidence: Article 11

In the article “Analysis: Why it’s time to stop blaming video games for real-world violence” hosted on *pbs.org*, author Christopher J. Ferguson suggests that it is time we stop blaming violent video games on violent acts cause by people. According to *Stetson.edu*, which is a website for a private university located in Florida, Ferguson has a PhD in clinical psychology, MS in developmental psychology, and a BA in psychology. In the article previously mentioned, Ferguson states, “speaking as a researcher who has studied violent video games for almost 15 years, I can state that there is no evidence to support these claims that violent media and real-world violence are connected. As far back as 2011, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that research did not find a clear connection between violent video games and aggressive behavior.” (Ferguson, 2019). The article also explains, this is a recurring thing that happens in history. Listing as example, in 1950s comic books were the blame for violence, and in the 1980s it was to blame pop and rock music. To add to the examples, even further back the radio, which is commonly regarded as a revolutionary piece of technology that transformed entertainment and spread of information, was also to blame to cause people to be violent. In 2017, Ferguson found the biases in editorials publishing studies. Ferguson states, “I found evidence that scholarly journals’ editorial biases had distorted the scientific record on violent video games. Experimental studies that found effects were more likely to be published than studies that had found none.” (Ferguson, 2019). To show further proof of this bias, Ferguson states, “In 2005 the APA released its first policy statement linking violent video games to aggression. However, my recent analysis of internal APA documents with criminologist Allen Copenhaver found that the APA ignored inconsistencies and methodological problems in the research data.” (Ferguson, 2019). This type of biases of publishing results supporting one type of claim, instead of publishing results equally, manipulates the public and promotes a false narrative that to ruins any real conclusion on the subject. Based on this information, it is unfair to suggest that violent video games are the cause of violence in people and children.

### Real Life Example: Me.

From when I was five years old to this day, my main hobby is playing video games. I have played over hundreds of video games throughout my life. Many of which were violent, such as Call of Duty, Halo, Mortal Kombat, and Gears of War just to name a few. And many games were not appropriate for my age group growing up. According to the studies and claims from media that violent video games cause people to be violent, then it would not be unreasonable to assume I have caused some mayhem in my time on Earth. Although I have been suspected of having emotional instability by my pasts school growing up due to bullying, to this date I have yet to be in a physical altercation of any kind. I have zero arrests, most I gotten was a ticket for not wearing my seat belt, and I have no record of violent behavior of any kind in any of the schools I have attended. If these studies and claims that violent video games cause kids and adults to be violent then I would have multiple arrests for violent behavior in the least. And it is safe to assume there is hundred if not thousands of people who the exact same as me. For how popular the hobby is, there would be exponentially more violent cases in the news if the claim that violence in people is caused by video games is true.

##### Conclusion.

To summarize, violent video games has been the blame for many violent acts. But if it was really to blame, then due to the popularity of video games, society would be on the border of anarchy. Christopher J, Ferguson’s, who has multiple degrees in psychology one being a PhD according to *Stetson.edu*, article “Analysis: Why it’s time to stop blaming video games for real-world violence”, hosted on *pbs.org*, suggest that we should stop blaming video games as the cause of people becoming violent. The article suggests that throughout history there has been something that was popular to be the reason as to why people are violent. Listing such examples as in 1950 was comic books and in the 1980s were pop and rock music. Ferguson stating the biases in publication in that studies that show evidence of video games causing violence in people are more likely to be published than studies that suggest otherwise. With the information from the article, is it a reasonable conclusion that it is unfair to blame video games as the cause for people being violent. Being someone who has been involved with the hobby all through adolescence till current time, and having played hundreds of video games, many of which are violent, I have zero arrest and zero violent history. There are many hundred possibly thousands of people who are the same as me. This concludes that, for how popular the hobby is, that if the claims of video games cause people to be violent then there would be many times more reported cases of violence. (Mullins, 2021)

References

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