Debate Outline

I. Introduction

    A. Attention Getter: How many of you have ever played Whac-a-mole? That arcade game where moles pop up and you try to hit the moles back into the cabinet as quickly as possible. Fun Fact: The Whac-a-mole arcade game is the first example of a popular game in which a specific violent element seems to be central to the user experience (Chittaro, 2012).

    B. Reason to Listen: "Around 41% of the world population" (Dimitrievski 2024). Meaning almost half of the population is involved in video games or at least is involved socially with someone who does. We have spent weeks reading studies and academic articles about the negative effects of video games.

    C. Thesis Statement: Video games can be detrimental to a person's mental and physical health and contributes to addiction, anger issues and desensitizes them to violence.

    D. Today we will present the following:

        1. History of Videogames and how they have evolved overtime.

        2. Lay out and explain the scope of individuals and groups who are involved in video games.

3. We plan to explain the social aspects of video games including age gaps.

4. Finally, financial and economic concerns related to video games.

Now that I have talked about this I will hand it over to ⬛⬛ to give you more insight on the history of videogames and their evolution.

II. History of Video Games

    A. The history of video games has changed since Pong in 1972.

        1. "From those years onwards, development in the field accelerated as more complex and immersive games like role-playing and first-person shooters gained a great amount of popularity" (Arthi Sundararajan, 2022).

        2. Since their introduction in 1972 video games have become increasingly more complex as well as more realistic. Like pong, early video games were super simplistic with simple goals and gaming sessions lasted minutes instead of hours. As video games became more complex overtime the amount of time spent playing them increased from minutes to hours. With playing for hours kids are exposed to more graphic and mature content. With this issue they become addicted and all consumed with these violent games.

   B. Access to video games has become easier for children nowadays.

       1. "With interchangeable cartridges, gamers could play what they wanted, whenever they wanted, wherever they wanted - and this ultimately led to the success of the Gameboy which, combined with the Gameboy Colour, remains to be the 3rd best-selling console of all time (118m unit sales)" (Oliver Kicks, 2023).

2. The gameboy allowed for children to play video games no matter where they were. They were no longer confined to only playing at home or at a friend's house in front of the tv. Older video game systems required you to leave your house, visit a store and acquire new video games on physical media like a cartridge or cd. Now video games can be bought online and often leads to more impulsive buys. We now have access to online app stores on our phones that offer thousands of games at a simple click.

Transition: Now that I have talked about the history of video games, ⬛ is going to talk about the effects of video games on a national standpoint.

III.   Scope of who is involved.

    A. Children are being influenced by what they see when gaming.

        1. "Some adverse effects of streaming are related to anti normative behavior, harassment, or dissemination of offensive or inappropriate content)" (Ramirez 2021).

        2. Problematic gaming, especially in children and young people has become a growing concern among parents and caregivers. There is yet no clinical definition for video game addiction but it has been linked to a behavior addiction. Some factors linked to this issue are online gambling, time spent playing, and genre of game, as well as social and family factors. Always having access to video games can link to the uncontrolled viewing of pornography, compulsive buying, or addiction to social networks.

        3. A few years ago, my cousin was really into video games and she started to chat with random people on the internet. This led to a random man

asking to meet up with her and saying nasty things to her. This situation

severely altered her mental health and she had no idea on how to handle it

(unhealthy coping mechanisms). She had to be sent to a mental hospital

and go through a lot of therapy to come back from this experience. Her

mental health declined causing severe depression and anxiety that is still

affecting her to this day.

B.   School staff members are experiencing students with behavioral issues and poor

academic performances.

    1.   One of the main concerns is that excessive gaming can lead to addiction –

       negatively impacting a student's overall well-being, including academic

       performance(Rooji et. al, 2011).

    2.   Gaming can physically affect students because they are too wrapped up in

       their game to complete their assignments, study, or prepare for class in any

       way. Gaming can also increase hostility within the classroom. Teachers

       now more than ever are experiencing extreme behavioral issues in the

       classroom and some of it is linked to the use of video games.

    3.   Some kids are just allowed to watch whatever they want on their device

       because the parents don't want to parent and it keeps them busy. Due to

       this a lot of students are losing sleep at night and messing up their sleep

       schedule. If students aren't getting enough sleep it can reduce their overall

       attention and concentration. A study found that video game addicted

students have lower grades and have more destructive behaviors such as arguing and disrespecting teachers.

C. Parents have become a lot more lenient with what they allow their kids to play online.

1. According to our survey, parents have become much more lenient with regards to video games since the pandemic, allowing more game time and less supervision (Frontier 2024).

2. Prior to March 2020, parents were allowing around two hours of video games per day. This number is already high but it is only increasing. To be exact this number has increased by 50% in the span of four years. Kids are now gaming for three plus hours per day. This doesn't include the times that they play without their parents knowing. A lot of parents agreed that video games have more of an impact than social media. Video games are causing anxiety and low self esteem among children. 37.4% of parents let their children play video games online with anyone, 50.6% allowed their children to play online with their friends only.

3. Video games are social spaces, good or bad things can happen there, just like in real life. The games parents are letting kids play is just another place where they hangout. For example, If you have a 5-year-old, you wouldn't drop your child off alone at a mall, where strangers might approach. Now you might drop off your teen at the mall, but not before discussing who they're hanging out with, what they plan to do, and

perhaps an agreement about when to come home for dinner. The same general principles can apply to teens who game (Noguchi 2023).

D. Not being present at work has been linked to the reduced prices of online games.

1. Technological improvements and reduced prices for online video games have increased the attractiveness of leisure time for young men and may be contributing to declining hours of work, according to the researchers of Leisure Luxuries and the Labor Supply of Young Men (NBER Working Paper No. 23552).

2. The leisure time of playing video games is much higher now because it's more appealing to sit at home and play video games because you can collect unemployment money.

3. They have found that young men spend far more time playing video games than young women and older people of both genders. From 2000 to 2015, average hours of work for men ages 21-30 have fallen by 203 hours per year, compared to a fall of 163 hours for men aged 31-55. During the period 2004-15, approximately 60 percent of the 2.3 hours of increased leisure time per week for young men was spent playing video games, while younger women and older men and women spent negligible extra leisure time in this way. These data are drawn from the American Time Use Survey (ATUS).

4. Employees who excessively play video games tend to have poor social aspects in the workforce. This can range anywhere from reduced face-to-face interactions, difficulty collaboration on projects, isolation

from employees or group projects, poor communication, and all of this

could lead to disruptive behaviors during work hours due to thoughts of

needing to catch up on gaming.

5. When you play video games for so long you start to develop slang so

   much that it's like you are speaking another language. If employees are

   constantly using this inappropriate slang that will start to lose respect from

   their colleagues which can cause a hostile work environment.

Transition: Now that I have talked about the effects of video games from a national standpoint,

████ will now discuss the social aspects behind video games.

IV.   Social Aspects

    A. Video games can cause Social Isolation.

        1. Reduced Social Interaction: Excessive gaming can cause less face-to-face

           interactions and can lead to social isolation. Neglecting these face-to-face

           interactions with family and friends, and co-workers. This isolation can

           reduce real-world social connections and make you feel as though you are

           all alone and detached from society.

        2. Escapism/ Avoidance: For many individuals, video games offer an escape

           from the real world and serve as a retreat from life's problems. While

           gaming can be a temporary distraction, if overused may prevent players

           from addressing real life problems. This can halt or even hurt relationships

           and/or engage in social activities.

    B. Toxic and Negative social behavior in multiplayer video games.

1. Harassment/ Abuse: Toxicity is a significant problem in many online multiplayer games, where there is verbal abuse, trolling, or harassment. This can take the form of insults, racist or sexist comments, and other forms of bullying. The anonymity of online gaming can often embolden players to express negative behaviors they may not exhibit in face-to-face interactions.

2. Gender/ Identity Harassment: Female players, LGBTQ+ individuals, and players from marginalized communities are often subjected to harassment or discriminatory remarks. These behaviors can create hostile and unsafe environments, discouraging these players from participating in the community or enjoying the game.

3. Flaming/ Blaming Teammates: In team-based games, players often blame their teammates for failures, engaging in "flaming" (insulting others) or other forms of negative criticism. This can result in feelings of guilt, frustration, or anxiety for the targeted player, and can create a toxic team environment that undermines cooperation and enjoyment.

C. Addiction and Dependency that video games cause.

1. Excessive Playtime/ Addiction: Video game addiction, particularly in online games, is a growing concern. Players may become so absorbed in their games that they neglect other aspects of their lives, such as school, work, or relationships. This can lead to a cycle of dependency, where the

individual prioritizes gaming over real-world responsibilities, causing

negative consequences on mental health and personal development.

D. Unrealistic Expectation and Unhealthy Competition

    1. Pressure to Perform: Competitive multiplayer games often create an

        environment where players feel pressured to perform at a high level,

        leading to frustration and stress. This pressure can be intensified by

        teammates, opponents, or the game's reward systems, which may favor

        skill over enjoyment. As a result, players may feel compelled to constantly

        improve or maintain their rank, leading to burnout and unhealthy gaming

        habits.

    2. Toxic Competitiveness: In some games, competition can become

        excessively toxic, where winning becomes the only objective, and players

        lash out at others who they perceive as "weaker" or less skilled. This can

        lead to a negative gaming experience, where collaboration, fun, and

        enjoyment are overshadowed by the need to succeed at all costs.

    3. Exclusion (due to competitiveness): In online multiplayer games,

        experienced or more skilled players may form cliques, excluding

        newcomers or those who struggle to grasp the game's mechanics. This

        leads to feelings of alienation and discouragement for those who are not

        part of these established groups.

    4. Gatekeeping (due to competitiveness): Gatekeeping occurs when

        experienced players make others feel unwelcome or inferior because of

their skill level, play style, or understanding of the game. This is especially common in competitive games where players expect others to adhere to a specific standard of play. Gatekeeping can make players feel insecure and less likely to continue playing.

E. Negative impact that video games have on mental health.

1. Increased Stress and Anxiety: The competitive nature of many online games can result in increased stress and anxiety for players, particularly when they are subjected to negative interactions or when they feel the pressure to win. The fear of failure, social judgment, or losing rank can affect a player's self-esteem and mental well-being.

2. Loss of Sleep/ Fatigue: Late-night gaming sessions or compulsive gaming behavior can lead to poor sleep hygiene, which negatively impacts mental health. Players may experience fatigue, irritability, and decreased cognitive function, which can worsen stress levels and affect other areas of life, such as work or school.

3. Depression and Withdrawal: For some, video games can become a means of avoiding real-world issues, leading to feelings of depression and withdrawal. Prolonged isolation, neglect of personal responsibilities, and overreliance on the game can contribute to a cycle of emotional withdrawal and detachment.

Transition:

V. Financial/ economic concerns

A. Violent video games sell the best/ are the most popular.

　　1. When you think of video games, what are the first ones you think of? Depending on what genre you prefer, your answer may be vastly different then what I would think of. Even though there are a million different types of video games, one thing remains true. Violent video games sell the best. Think about Halo for example. This shooter style franchise started as a single video game in 2001 however now it has grown into one of the top grossing franchises. With this series they have made more than $6 billion in franchise grosses. Another hugely popular shooting style game is Call of Duty.

　　2. "Call of Duty: Modern Warfare, a first person shooter video game, grossed over $600 million in the first three days of its release." (Greitemeyer, 2002, pg. 2).

　　3. According to Mainleaf.com in 2024 "The video game industry is a colossal economic engine. According to the Entertainment Software Association (ESA), in 2023, the industry generated a whopping $329 billion in output (business sales) in the US alone."

B. People love to watch other people play violent video games.

　　1. Not only do people love playing violent video games, they also love to watch others play.

　　2. According to explodingtopics.com, "Viewing figures for esports in the US have grown year-over-year since 2018. In 2018, US esports viewing figures totaled 25.7 million. This grew to 30.3 million in 2019. And 34.8

million in 2020. This year, US esports viewing figures are estimated to be 39.2 million. This figure was predicted to climb to 46.2 million in 2023."

3. As eSport viewership continues to grow, so too does their profits.

C. Children can easily buy video games now.

1. Years ago, in order to buy a video game you had to go to a physical store. In order to buy a violent or m rated game you had to have someone unlock the case and you were required to show id to prove you were old enough to buy it. Now with online gaming that isn't the case. Children can sign up for an account on steam or epic or directly on their game consoles and purchase any game they want. All without parental permission.

2. "Digital content delivery makes it easier for players to buy games from the comfort of their homes, where it might be easier for a younger audience to access games developed for an older audience. For example, Steam, a computer storefront, asks for a simple confirmation of the date of birth without an identification check, whilst the Nintendo eShop for the Nintendo Switch does not check the player's date of birth at all." (S. Olejarnik, D. Romano, 2023)

3. My husband and I spend a lot of our free time playing an assortment of video games. We play everything from fantasy focused games to first person shooters. Our 7 year old son has watched us play for years and is now very interested in playing the same types of games. Because I have first hand knowledge of game buying sites and console stores I am able to closely monitor what games are purchased or accessed on my son's xbox.

However, even with my knowledge, he can still slip through the parental controls and buy things that are too mature for him. For example, my husband and I play Halo infinite and my son decided he wanted to play it as well. I am still not sure how he managed to download it but when I walked into his room to check on him one day, he was playing it with a group of strangers. And if you've played that game you know the community chat is not appropriate for a 7 year old.

D. Scammers are prevalent in the gaming community.

   1. Finally, the last economic concern I want to touch on is scammers. Scammers are prevalent in everything we do and video games are no different.

   2. "Video games and virtual worlds may seem harmless, but recent public reports have underlined the harms incurred through the industry's use of design tricks, technology, and surveillance data to entice players into spending money. As the CFPB highlighted earlier this year, many video games and virtual worlds increasingly resemble traditional banking and payment systems that facilitate the storage and exchange of billions of dollars in assets, including virtual currencies. Gamers—or their parents and guardians—frequently report being harmed by scams or theft on gaming platforms." (CFPB ,2024)

   3. Scammers are a prevalent issue in every industry so it's no surprise they have found their way into our favorite video games. While there are things you can do to avoid them and protect yourself, do you think children or

teens know how to avoid them? Do you think they slow down enough to think about if the person they are interacting with is a scammer? I know I never did as a teenager.

4. "Despite the fact that young people are considered digital natives they are especially vulnerable to video games' effects because they are growing up and do have not the full potential of their psychosocial resources" (2022)

Now that I have explained the economic impact that video games have, ⊠ will start to explain our view on the possible rebuttals the opposing team may have.

VI.   Possible Rebuttals

A. Video Games help improve cognitive development because the games require critical thinking and memory abilities.

1. Games teach kids violence at a young age and desensitizes them.

a) "Authors observed that violent video games in general increased the accessibility of aggressive thoughts, and that trait hostility and trait aggression positively correlated with aggressive behaviors carried out during the experimental tasks" (Chittaro, 2012, p. 218).

b) "exposure to violent video games increases aggressive thoughts, angry feelings, physiological arousal and aggressive behaviors, and decreases helpful behaviors. Previous studies also found that more than 85 percent of video games contain some violence, and approximately half of video games include serious violent actions" (Nauert, 2017).

c) When children are exposed to violent video games they do not properly form empathy for violent things or for people's pain. Being desensitized at an early age can cause great harm as they grow into teenagers and adults especially if they do not learn how to properly handle their feelings and thoughts.

2. Because video games are repetitive they negatively affect children's memory and cognitive skills.

a) "Research indicates that excessive play of the same types of games might negatively impact school-age children's cognitive and academic skills as well as their capacity to maintain and enhance memories. Possible consequences of video game addiction may include memory and attention-related difficulties" (Amani Kappi, 2024)

b) When a video game has you doing the same thing over and over again it does not help children with their memory skills, because they are just repeating what they are doing.

c) When a child just repeats the same task over and over again there is no cognitive thought that goes into playing that game because they are just doing the same thing over and over again, therefore it does not improve cognitive or memory skills but actually harms it.

Transition: Now that I have explained how video games desensitizes children and how playing repetitive games hurts children's cognitive ability ▨ will talk about how video games do not help improve hand-eye coordination.

B. It is said that video games help improve hand-eye coordination because they require quick reflexes (▨▨) (3 Mins)

    1. While this is true, video games do require quick reflexes, you can't deny that video games have repetitive movements such as joystick movements, the buttons you press, etc.

    2. How do the reflexes that are required in video games, that you supposedly develop, get transferred to daily real-life movements?

    3. A study was conducted to examine the physiological responses to different activities, as well as document the activity level exerted in relation to treadmill walking and watching television (Majaj, 2021).

        a) Individuals who watch television had the lowest activity, heart rate, and rating of perceived exertion.

    4. This study can relate to video games because these reflexes are generally context-specific, short-term, and minimal.

    5. A more specific and broadened approach to improving reflexes involves engaging in actual hands-on, physical activities that require coordination and agility

        a) Typically you get them by participating in sports or through exercise. Some sort of physical activity.

C. Video Games have multiplayer games that allow you to communicate, cooperate, and compete with others. ▨▨▨▨

    1. The environments aren't always positive and children often experience cyberbullying.

a) As I mentioned previously, my son was caught playing halo without our permission. Because we haven't set it up for him, he had full access to the chat. He didn't have a mic so he couldn't speak to the others playing but he could hear everything they had to say. Not only was there inappropriate language being used but also racial slurs and straight out bullying of other players. As an adult I am able to just ignore what is being said, my son doesn't have that ability yet and takes everything personal. He only managed to sneak and play for a few minutes but those few minutes were enough to upset him. Because he's not good at the game he became the subject of his team's harsh words. That is of course when I walked into his room and realized what he was doing. He was extremely upset and didn't understand why they were so mean to him when he was just learning how to play the game. I had to explain to him that this is why his dad and I limit in-game communication so strongly.

2. Another issue with multiplayer communication is the lack of face-to-face interaction, as these games involve text or voice communications.

a) Not only is bullying rampant in most online game communities, there is also the issue of there being no face to face interaction. The lack of face to face interaction can cause communication mix ups.

b) Have you ever sent a text meaning one thing but it was interpreted completely differently than you intended? This is the same issue.

c) The lack of nonverbal commu ✕ on leads to communication issues. They aren't able to see the nonverbal cues that add context to the conversation.

3. Online Predators/ Safety concerns with online game communications.

  a) And last but not least, is safety. As adults we know the basics of being safe on the internet and we understand that it's very easy to hide your true identity while online. You choose what information is in your profile. And everyone is not always truthful. This can lead to kids thinking they made a new friend, however it's actually an online predator.

  b) According to kapersky.com in 2020, "Online predators are typically older gamers who use video games to lure and groom younger victims. This can culminate in inappropriate messages, webcam chats or even face-to-face meetings that could lead to sexual exploitation."

  c) According to Internet Safety 101, "online gaming gives predators the chance to build a kind of shared online experience, in effect becoming the child's defender, teammate and ally. After defeating a tough opponent or exploring a new level of a game, predators form a bond with younger gamers based on these common experiences and leverage them to venture into more personal territory."

Now that I have explained how online game communication can be detrimental, I will pass it to ✕ She will rebuttal the point that video games can be an outlet for stress release.

D. Video Games can be an outlet for stress relief (❌) (3 Mins)

1. Cathartic release: letting out strong feelings or built-up emotions

    a. The relationship between stress and anger is intricately linked by our psychological and physiological responses to perceived threats or challenges. The physiological response to stress involves the release of stress hormones, including adrenaline and cortisol, which increase heart rate, blood pressure, and energy supplies (Black 2024). Research shows that video games can reinforce aggression, rather than alleviate it. Gamers are being trained to associate their stress with aggression or competition.

2. Short-term distraction

    a. Video games being a short term distraction can lead to avoidance. People will stop wanting to face real world issues. Excessive gaming that is turning into avoidance can prevent people from coming to terms with and addressing their problems and responsibilities. As time goes on, avoidance can lead to isolation and anxiety.

3. Challenging games can build up more stress

    a. Challenging video games can build up stress by creating constant failure and frustration. This is most present when gamers are missing their goals or dying in difficult levels. There is a lot of pressure to perform well which can trigger peoples anxiety and the fear of failure. Many studies have investigated this correlation

using various methods. One study showed that people with Internet gaming disorder (IGD) demonstrated abnormal emotional regulation, expressed as anxiety and other psychological symptoms.[5] Some studies detected an association between anxiety and online gaming and IGD.[6] Furthermore, this association may not only exist in individuals with IGD; there is a possible correlation between anxiety and video gaming even in average gamers, as anxiety itself is a major concerning symptom that could interprets a person's well-being (PubMed Central 2024). In a lot of games there are a lot of different unpredictable events that could happen which can make players feel overwhelmed and out of control. Also, if there isn't a lot of guidelines or guidance in games then that can cause gamers to be confused and frustrated.

Transition: Now that I have explained how video games cause unneeded stress and anxiety, I will be passing it over to ▨▨▨. She is going to talk about ADHD and how it plays a role in video games.

    E. Video games benefit individuals who have ADHD (HW) (3 Mins)

        1. Enhance dopamine (they pay attention; excited/happy)

            a) What is dopamine? (go into detail about what it is, how it affects the body, how it affects individuals with ADHD)

            b) Video games give individuals with ADHD dopamine, which may cause them to be dopamine reliant (AKA only happy when playing video games)

2. Improve Focus/ Attention:

      a) Decreased Focus on Real World Tasks: Video games

3. Enhance ability to executive functioning skills:

4. Improve Impulse control:

5. Improve Social skills

6. Stress Relief/ Emotional Regulation:

7.

VII. Conclusion (☒☒)

    A. In conclusion, we believe that video games are detrimental to an individuals and societies physical and mental health, involving desensitization to violence, aggression, and causes a negative source for addiction.

    B. We reviewed and explained

       1. The history of Videogames and how they have evolved

       2. We explained the scope of individuals and groups who are involved

       3. We explained social aspects including age gaps

       4. Finally, we discussed financial and economic concerns

    C. By addressing how video games can impact mental health, addiction, aggression, and desensitization to violence, we hope to discuss how video games directly affect individuals personally and society at large.

    D. We hope to promote a greater awareness, encourage critical thinking, and healthier choices, making it a valuable discussion about physical and mental health.

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