



New study by Bournemouth academics finds that playing games increases moral reasoning skills

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New research from Bournemouth University has found that playing a wide variety of videogames increases people’s moral reasoning skills.

The research, conducted by Dr Sarah Hodge, Dr Jacqui Taylor and Dr John McAlaney, has been published in [Frontiers in Psychology](#).

The study used children from secondary school to sixth form from ages 11-18 and looked at the games they played in relation to their moral choices.

Project leader, Dr Sarah Hodge, said: “What I decided to do was basically look if there was a relationship between moral development and videogame gameplay. There’s a lot of research about violent videogames so I wanted to look at videogames more generally because there’s more to gaming than just violent videogames. We then decided to look at how it relates to moral reasoning by giving participants a moral reasoning measure.”

She added that “those who played games had higher moral reasoning skills. We found that there was a transition in moral reasoning between the ages of 11-14 that happened. It’s quite interesting, it did a big jump so it was quite a big transition that took place. We also found that students that played multiple genres of games have an increase in moral reasoning as well.”

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Dr. Hodge’s research offers a more positive outlook on how videogames affect younger people as opposed to [other reports](#) that link videogames to real-life aggression.

Indie game developer, Bradley Jones, said: “If games have the power to not only entertain, but also to develop a person’s character, then that can only be a good thing. I think implementing moral choices in games is not only a great storytelling tool, but also a great way for people to develop their character.”

However, it’s important to remember that being exposed to certain content at an early age can impact their lives negatively.

Gamer and Psychologist, Adam Booth, said: “I think its great that videogames have the potential to impact people in a positive way. It’s important to not let it overshadow the dark side of young people playing violent games though. Addiction and being exposed to mature content from an early age definitely have a negative effect on young people.”

About GeorgeBurton

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