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Argument Essay

Video games started out as simple games that were used to pass time. As technology has developed over the years with new innovative ideas, video games have changed as well. Many children today are surrounded by video games of all genres that impact their life in less ways compared to the other effects like family and social variables which can be more influential factors to violent behaviors.

Many scholars and politicians try to create a link between violent and explicit video games with the youth’s violence. Whitney DeCamp wrote an article called The Impact of Degree of Exposure to Violent Video Games, Family Background, and Other Factors on Youth Violence, where she states that,

Youth violence rates have steadily plummeted, even as violent video game consumption rates have soared (Ferguson 2015a). Other studies (Cunningham et al. 2016; Markey et al. 2015) have indicated that the release of popular violent video games is associated with immediate declines in societal violence. As such, these claims of video game violence being connected to real-life violence are not supported using aggregate crime data (388-389).

DeCamp is using studies provided by other scholars to show the immediate decline in violence when a new violent video game is released onto the market. This shows that violent video games actually positively impacts youth by decreasing the amount of youth violent upon the release date.

Many politicians have used studies that helps support their claims. In 2005, U.S. Senator Hillary Clinton held a press conference focusing on the youth’s risk of violent video games. Clinton states that,

According to the most comprehensive statistical analysis yet conducted, violent video games increase aggressive behavior as much as lead exposure decreases children’s IQ scores… Everybody knows lead poisoning is bad for your children, well I want everybody to know that exposure to violent video games is also bad for your children (99-100, Markey).

Clinton is comparing the effects of violent video games to the effects of lead poisoning. She uses logical fallacies to emotionally support her claims. Also, Whitney DeCamp states in her article that, “such claims are not limited to politicians, as some scholars also have references mass shootings or claimed that the effects of violent video games on violence are similar to the effects of smoking on contracting lung cancer” (388). DeCamp is providing information gathered from scholars like Patrick Markey who do research on the relationship between youth violence and violent behaviors, showing that not only does Senator Clinton use logical fallacies to emotionally persuade her opinion, but many other politicians and some scholars do the same.

Most recent studies found in 2017, started looking for a bigger picture when studying youth violence and the causes of it. Whitney DeCamp states in her article that, “Models examing video game play and violence-related outcomes without any controls tended to return small, but statistically significant relationships between violent games and violence-related outcomes” (388). This study shows that when focusing on violence and video games together, there was a correlation between the two, supporting that violent video games do invoke violent behaviors in the youth. DeCamp continues by stating “However, once other predictors were included in the models and once propensity scores were used to control for an underlying propensity for choosing or being allowed to play video games, these relationships vanished, became inverse, or were reduced to trivial effect sizes” (390). This evidence concludes that when looking at the bigger picture of youth and violence like family and social variables, violent video games were diminished to almost no effect on the youth at all. The youth’s environment and experiences through life were stronger influences on youth and violence than video games.

Although many people use logical fallacies to conclude why video games are bad for the youth or target one violent video game in particular, studies have shown the realistic aspect of video games and their contribution to youth violence.

Work Cited

DeCamp, Whitney. “The Impact of Degree of Exposure to Violent Video Games, Family Background, and Other Factors on Youth Violence.” *Journal of Youth & Adolescence*, vol. 46, no. 2, 2017, pp. 388-400, <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007%2Fs10964-016-0561-8.pdf>. Accessed 29 April 2018.

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