



VIOLENT VIDEO GAMES AND THEIR IMPACT ON AGGRESSION IN YOUNG FEMALE GAMERS

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of violent video games on aggression levels in young female gamers. While much of the existing research has focused on the effects of violent video games on aggression in males, there is a growing need to understand how these games affect female players. Through a combination of surveys, behavioral assessments, and psychological evaluations, this study examines the relationship between exposure to violent video games and aggressive behavior in young females aged 12 to 18. The findings suggest that regular exposure to violent video games is associated with increased aggression, measured through both self-reported feelings of anger and observed behaviors in controlled settings. The study also explores the moderating effects of personality traits, such as empathy and impulsivity, on this relationship. By highlighting the distinct impacts on young female gamers, this research contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the social and psychological consequences of violent video game exposure. The implications of these findings for parents, educators, and policymakers are discussed, emphasizing the need for awareness and potential regulatory measures to mitigate adverse effects.

Keywords

Violent Video Games, Aggression, Young Female Gamers, Behavioral Impact, Psychological Effects, Video Game Violence, Gender Differences, Adolescent Psychology, Aggressive Behavior, Video Game Research.

INTRODUCTION

The proliferation of violent video games has sparked considerable debate regarding their potential impact on behavior, particularly in younger audiences. While much of the research has traditionally concentrated on male gamers, recent studies suggest that the effects of these games may also be significant for young female players. Violent video games, characterized by explicit depictions of aggression, combat, and conflict, have been scrutinized for their influence on aggressive behaviors and attitudes. Despite a growing body of evidence linking violent video game exposure to increased aggression, the majority of these studies have focused on male populations, leaving a critical gap in understanding how these effects might manifest in young females.

Young females, like their male counterparts, are exposed to these games and may experience unique

psychological and behavioral outcomes. Research has shown that aggression can be influenced by various factors, including game content, frequency of exposure, and individual differences such as personality traits and social influences. For young female gamers, the impact of violent video games may intersect with societal expectations and gender norms, potentially influencing both the intensity and nature of aggressive responses. This study aims to fill the gap by specifically investigating how violent video games affect aggression in young female gamers. By examining behavioral patterns, psychological responses, and contextual factors, this research seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of the relationship between video game violence and aggression among young women. The findings of this study have the potential to inform parents, educators, and policymakers about the broader implications of violent video game exposure and contribute to more effective strategies for managing its impact on youth.

METHOD

To investigate the impact of violent video games on aggression in young female gamers, a mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative assessments to provide a comprehensive analysis of the issue. The study targeted a sample of 200 female gamers aged 12 to 18, selected through stratified random sampling from online gaming communities and local high schools. Participants were grouped based on their reported frequency of playing violent video games and their preferred genres.

The primary data collection tool was a structured questionnaire designed to assess exposure to violent video games, levels of aggression, and related psychological variables. The questionnaire comprised three sections: a demographic profile, a detailed gaming habits inventory, and validated scales measuring aggression (such as the Aggression Questionnaire) and emotional responses. To ensure reliability and validity, the questionnaire was pre-tested with a pilot group of 30 participants, and adjustments were made based on feedback.

In addition to the survey, participants underwent a series of behavioral assessments in a controlled laboratory setting. This included standardized tasks designed to measure aggression, such as the "Competitive Reaction Time Task," which involves opportunities to deliver feedback to a peer in a competitive environment. Observations and recordings were made to analyze the intensity and frequency of aggressive responses during these tasks.

Qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with a subset of 30 participants, selected based on their survey responses and behavioral assessments. The interviews aimed to explore personal experiences, perceptions of aggression, and the impact of violent video game content. These interviews were transcribed and analyzed thematically to identify common patterns and insights related to the effects of violent video games on aggression.

Additionally, the study considered moderating variables such as personality traits (measured using the Big Five Inventory), social influences, and the role of parental supervision. Statistical analyses, including correlation and regression techniques, were used to determine the relationships between violent video game exposure and aggression while controlling for these variables.

The research adhered to ethical standards, ensuring informed consent from all participants and their

guardians. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the study, and data were anonymized before analysis. The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods provided a robust framework for understanding the nuanced impact of violent video games on aggression in young female gamers, contributing valuable insights to the ongoing discourse on video game violence and its effects.

RESULTS

The analysis of the data revealed a significant association between exposure to violent video games and increased levels of aggression in young female gamers. Participants who reported frequent engagement with violent video games exhibited higher scores on aggression scales compared to those with lower exposure. The quantitative data demonstrated a positive correlation between the amount of time spent playing violent games and the intensity of aggressive behaviors, as measured by both self-reported surveys and behavioral assessments. Specifically, participants who played violent video games for more than 10 hours per week showed a marked increase in aggressive tendencies, including higher incidences of irritability and hostile reactions during competitive tasks.

Qualitative insights from the semi-structured interviews further elucidated these findings, revealing that many young female gamers felt a heightened sense of frustration and anger following gameplay, which they attributed to the violent content. Interviewees frequently described experiencing an increased tolerance for aggressive behavior and a desensitization to violence, which they felt influenced their interactions with peers and family members.

Moreover, the study identified several moderating factors that influenced the relationship between video game violence and aggression. Higher levels of trait impulsivity and lower empathy scores were associated with a stronger impact of violent video games on aggression. Social influences, such as peer pressure and online community norms, also played a role in shaping participants' responses to violent content. Interestingly, parental supervision was found to mitigate some of the adverse effects, with participants who reported active parental engagement showing lower aggression levels despite high exposure to violent games.

Overall, the results suggest that while violent video games do contribute to increased aggression in young female gamers, the extent of this impact is moderated by individual psychological traits and social factors. These findings highlight the need for targeted interventions and informed discussions about the potential risks associated with violent video game exposure and its implications for young female gamers.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study underscore a notable relationship between violent video games and increased aggression in young female gamers, contributing to the broader discourse on video game violence and its psychological impacts. The significant association between high exposure to violent video games and elevated aggression levels aligns with existing research on male gamers, yet it highlights an important and often overlooked aspect of female gaming experiences. The observed increase in aggressive behaviors among participants who frequently engage with violent video games suggests that the content and context of these games can have tangible effects on emotional and behavioral responses, irrespective of gender.

The qualitative findings offer deeper insights into how violent video games influence aggression. Many young female gamers reported feeling more irritable and desensitized to aggression after gameplay, reflecting a possible shift in emotional tolerance and behavioral norms. These insights are consistent with theories suggesting that repeated exposure to violent content can alter emotional responses and increase acceptance of aggressive behavior. The role of moderating factors, such as personality traits and social influences, further emphasizes the complexity of this relationship. Traits like impulsivity and low empathy, along with peer dynamics, appeared to exacerbate the effects of violent game exposure, suggesting that individual differences and social contexts play a crucial role in mediating aggression outcomes.

The protective role of parental supervision highlights the importance of active engagement in mitigating the negative impacts of violent video games. This finding suggests that while violent video games can influence aggression, the presence of supportive and monitoring parental figures can buffer against these effects. It underscores the need for parental awareness and involvement in managing children's gaming habits and setting appropriate boundaries.

Overall, this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how violent video games affect young female gamers and emphasizes the need for continued research in this area. By addressing the gender-specific impacts and identifying moderating factors, the findings advocate for targeted strategies to address and mitigate the potential adverse effects of violent video games. Future research should explore long-term impacts and consider additional variables, such as cultural influences and game content variations, to provide a more comprehensive perspective on this issue.

CONCLUSION

This study provides compelling evidence that exposure to violent video games is associated with increased aggression in young female gamers. The findings confirm that, similar to their male counterparts, young females who engage with violent video games are likely to exhibit higher levels of aggressive behavior and emotional responses. The quantitative data demonstrated a clear link between the frequency of playing violent games and elevated aggression scores, while qualitative insights revealed personal experiences of heightened irritability and desensitization to violence.

Importantly, the study identified several moderating factors, including personality traits such as impulsivity and empathy, as well as social influences like peer pressure and parental supervision. These factors influence the extent to which violent video games impact aggression, suggesting that while exposure to violent content can increase aggression, individual differences and contextual variables play a significant role in shaping these outcomes. The protective effect of parental supervision highlights the critical role of active parental involvement in managing gaming habits and mitigating potential negative effects.

Overall, the study underscores the need for a nuanced approach to understanding the impact of violent video games on young female gamers. It calls for greater awareness among parents, educators, and policymakers about the potential risks associated with violent video game exposure and the importance of considering individual and social factors. Further research is needed to explore long-term effects and additional variables that may influence the relationship between violent video games and aggression. By addressing these issues, we can better understand and manage the complex dynamics of video game

violence and its implications for young female gamers.

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