How video games affect todays youth argumentative essay examples

Video games have remained to be a subject of great debate between parents, experts, game fans and game developers since the time of its inception sometime around the 70s. The reason for such arguments is the perception that video games have the capacity to impact the growth of the youth. On one side of the argument, some groups argue that video games are an effective medium to entice positive development in young gamers; physically, mentally and socially given today's advanced gaming platforms and titles to improve the gaming experience. On the other side of the argument, there are groups arguing that the impact of these video games to the youth are dangerous as it has the capacity to entice physical, mental and social deterioration and present further complications to their futures. While the argument continues to grow and as video games continue to improve the gaming experience, video games, especially violent video games, have the capacity to distort the minds of today's youth, fostering negative behaviors, habits and perceptions to develop and change their future.

Since the 1990s, video games have become one of the most favorite pastimes of children, especially in the United States. According to Gentile et al (2004), sales of video gaming consoles and games have grown consistently around the globe from $7. 5 billion in 1999 to a staggering $20 billion in 2000. The influx of new video gaming consoles add to the dominating video gaming industry as almost 100 million Gameboys and 75 million Playstations have been sold alongside these video games since 2000. Given this massive influx of these sales, gamers both young and old are now allotting almost 7 hours for gameplay, especially the younger gamers. Some gamers even average much more than 7 hours a week depending on their

addiction and gaming preferences. The rising addiction of young gamers to video games causes much controversy and concerns from the public due to the visible changes these gamers acquire from these games. For the past 25 years, studies have looked for the common effects of video games on young gamers and noticed that while not all gamers are the same, the impact it has in younger gamers, especially violent video games can distort their overall growth .

Today's youth gamers are affected by video games in three major areas: physical, behavioral and psychosocial aspects. In a physical aspect, Gunter (1998) identified that physical development and growth is stunted for young gamers each time they play these games nonstop. Studies in the 1990s revealed that physical incapacities and injuries can be developed by young gamers as they develop longer hours of gameplay. Cases of young gamers developing joint and muscle injuries have been reported by medical practitioners around the globe, especially with hardcore gamers. Medical practitioners and Rheumatologists call these video game induced skin, joint and muscle injury ' Nintendinitis', caused by continuous button pressing or hitting for long periods of time. ' Nintendinitis' tends to develop mostly on the player's thumb, which may paralyze the entire hand. Aside from Nintendinitis, young gamers were also reported to develop calluses, sore tendons or muscles (mostly concentrated in the wrist and joints), and severe numbness. Numbness is attributed to gamers continuously playing for long hours without taking a break, causing the muscles and joints to lose sensations or feeling that may produce prickling sensations throughout the body. In addition to numbness, hardcore and young gamers also develop

severe wrist, neck, and elbow pain because of staying in one position for a long period. Tenosynovitis is another reported physical impact of video games to the youth, which pertains to the inflammation of the tendon or joint that may induce intense pain and stress. For the worst cases, young gamers develop peripheral neuropathy (incapacity of the peripheral nerves to transmit information to the brain and back), enuresis (uncontrolled wetting), and epileptic seizures (abnormal neuronal activity in the brain that causes convulsions). RSI or Repetitive Strain Injury in player's wrists and joints are also reported, especially in children who still on their development stage .

In addition to these physical incapacities, obesity is also developed through video gaming; further influencing one's physical development. In a study done by Vandewater, Shim and Caplovitz (2003), video gaming tends to impact child gamers in terms of how they eat and exercise. In the study, they discovered that children with higher weight is due to the fact they spend long hours in front of the screen to play games while those who do not touch or mildly play video games record lower weight. While it is possible that television use can also be attributed to higher weight gain in children, the study showed that video game play tends to cause children to favor these games rather than engage in physically demanding activities or sedentary activities like board games because it catches the attention of children. While they play these video games, young gamers tend to show high signs of increased calorie intake through high-fat foods or snacks. Video games may also induce lack of sleep, which may also affect the growth, body intake and weight of the young gamers . Psychosocial behavior is also affected by video games especially in today's youth as video games changes

their perception towards others and their surroundings. Video gaming addiction mostly causes psychosocial behavioral changes in young gamers according to the report presented by Khan (2007) for the Annual Meeting of the American Medical Association. In the report, it is stated that video gaming addiction causes gamers, both young and old to develop poor social relationships in real life as compared to their success on making new relationships through the virtual community. The amount of time used by these gamers causes these gamers to become socially dysfunctional, especially in the minor gamers. Dependency is also developed by the gamers as they now depend on the games to fulfill their happiness and social relationships, showing much irritation to family and school disruptions. It is unclear if withdrawal can also be attributed to video gaming, however, it is visible that many young gamers who have been hooked through gaming would withdraw from the society in favor of these games and the relationships they have created .

Video games also tend to influence today's youth to become distracted towards their school performance and how important it is for their future. Gentile et al (2004) cited that studies have supported this argument as high school and college students reported to play long hours report poor grades in their classes and spend more on video gaming rather than their school needs. While there are available educational video games students can use to stimulate learning, it may present poorer results on actual school performance. Other studies argue, on the other hand, that no matter what type of video gaming is used by the gamer, there is a high possibility that it would cause the student to develop problems in displacing their time allotted

to school work and to gameplay. This would then result to them further issues in their social interactions with their family and peers . In another article done by Anderson and Carnagey (2009), video games foster violent competition to ensue between friends or family depending on the genre played by the gamers. In the study, games such as sports games like Major League Baseball Slugfest and action games also poses high rates of competition and aggression. The competitive factor of these games tend to also increase the aggressive tendencies of the gamers, making the game between gamers volatile. Some young gamers may take their loss seriously, becoming bitter towards the one who had defeated them or become disagreeable. A few would even exhibit mean tendencies and consider the other gamer their rival .

Violent video games also cause psychosocial behavior changes to today's youth, which distorts how they see the world. According to Carnagey, Anderson, and Bushman (2006), desensitization to violence is often developed through video gaming, causing numbness to violence in real life. In the study, young players who showcase desensitization from video gaming would often show no remorse for violence victims if placed in such scenario. Some players would even support the use of violence. In addition to the study's observations, it is also notable that these gamers would provide another perspective when it comes to their understanding or sentiment about crime, punishment and law. The reasoning used by these gamers would reflect the sentiments sometimes presented in video games that violence is not a reason for harsh punishment or a factor to determine guilt. Young or old gamers would also show instances wherein even they could not

determine their guilt on the actions they may enact. Others would even show pure ignorance to the gravity of events happening in their community or in other regions. The study cited the dangers of being desensitized in the 1964 murder of Kitty Genovese in New York who was stabbed to death near her home. In the event, no one immediately stepped forward to aid Genovese or speak about the murder. In a study on violent video game players who were asked to play games for 20 hours showed desensitization to real violence .

Out of the three areas where video games affect today's youth, it is the behavioral aspect that presents both concern and risk to the gamers involved especially when it comes to violent video gaming. According to Bushman and Huesmann (2006), the human mind tend to act as a network stimulating one's mind to imitate what they observe. Children often present these mirroring acts as they develop their thinking and understanding, thereby it is crucial as to what they are allowed to watch and play as they have the capacity to imitate these scenes. Both Bushman and Huesmann state that given the developing capacity of these young gamers, the more vulnerable they become are in developing aggression as they play these games. It is discovered by various studies that video games, especially the violent titles, have the capacity to increase the youth's aggressive behavior towards the scenarios presented to them throughout their gameplay. It is argued that as these youth partakes to these games, the high-tension sequences arouses the youth to the ideas presented by the game and would develop the belief as to how they should react to these violent scenes. Children and adolescent gamers would also be unaware that the scenes or activities they are trying to imitate are bad and dangerous. In addition to the

observed violence video games present to gamers, it would serve as a trigger to young gamers to expose their aggressive tendencies and become more aggressive towards others and to the things they are doing. This particular transfer of aggression to activities is what they call excitation transfer . The impact of video games to incite aggression and violence to today's youth varies depending on their ethnicity. Anderson, et al (2010), young gamers coming from Eastern regions may not show the same level of aggression as displayed by those from the Western countries. In their observation, the researchers identified that the gamers coming from industrialized countries like the United States and Europe present high aggression rates. In the case of the Eastern countries like Japan, they present low tendencies on aggression as their environment mostly fosters peaceful ideologies and collective thinking. The video gaming preferences of players from either region also attribute to the aggression rates. Western gamers tend to prefer action and sports games while Eastern gamers prefer role-playing games .

The inclination to perform violence is also attributed to violent video gaming, aiding these young gamers to use the video game as a simulator before doing the scene in real life. According to Block (2007), violent video games distorts the thinking of gamers as they become more attuned to the video gaming reality than offline reality. Slowly, these gamers become accustomed to killing and killing their opponents and incorporate this thinking towards their real life. Given the interactivity of new games today enables the gamer to enter to the personality of their game characters, adding to the capacity of developing these aggressive or negative behaviors. With the desensitizing

capability of these video games to change the thinking capability of these young gamers, they slowly see the possibility of reenacting their games and their characters in real life. With video games requiring gamers to do specific activities to pass a level, they slowly develop aggressive techniques to bypass challenges posed by real-life situations.

Lieutenant Colonel David Grossman stated in a 1999 interview about his sentiment on video games and the recent video game related crimes that violent video games had pushed the perpetrators of the Health High School Kentucky Killings in 1997 and the Columbine High School Tragedy in 1999 to perform violence as they used these video games to satiate their desire to see more of their games in real life. In the 1997 killing, the young suspect had killed three students and had practiced his skills through the use of video gaming. In the Columbine killing, the two suspects killed twelve students and one teachers, hurting twenty-three others. Authorities discovered that both Erik Harris and Dylan Klebold, the suspects of the killing, are both fans of known violent first person shooter game fans of Doom and Wolfenstein 3D, even creating a mockup of Columbine as one of their customizable levels in these two titles. Both had already been apprehended in 1998 due to a case of theft, punished through the banning computer use. It is said that both Klebold and Harris did not take this punishment lightly and their piling aggression that had been developed through their gaming caused them to turn to the real world to vent this anger. The gratification, according to study, presented by reenacting these video games would give them satisfaction and thrill similar to their video gaming experience .

While many would like to ban video games from the market due to their possible dangers, video games are here to stay. As it continues to develop into a more realistic and active format, it is crucial that people are made aware as to the capacity of these games to present dangers to gamers, especially for the youth as they would still need guidance on their gaming preferences. With today's youth mostly inclined to support these video games, there is a high possibility that would be drawn to develop negative behaviors and undergo changes that may ultimately change their perception of life, their future and behavior to others and to themselves. It is crucial that people do not take these concerns lightly due to the possible violence and damages it can produce. Video games, either violent or non-violent, if not regulated, can produce negative consequences to their physical, behavioral and psychosocial capabilities that may be difficult to treat if it goes further.

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