

Informative essay on violent video games

[Entertainment](#), [Video Games](#)



In the past 20 years society has fallen victim to mass murders perpetrated by children, even though overall crime is down. In order to better understand this; social scientists are conducting studies on whether violent video games contribute to this cycle of violence or are they just a tragic coincidence. In “ violent Video Games: Dogma, Fear, and Pseudoscience” Christopher Ferguson argues that there is no significant contribution to video game violence and the up-tick in youth violence seen today.

However, David Grossmann in “ Trained to kill (children who kill)” argues that video game violence not only contributes, but also trains children how to successfully carry out violent fantasies. Both Psychologists find little common ground. Ferguson states that “ we understand little about the psychology of the young men who carry out such horrific crimes”. He feels that in society’s zeal to control this phenomenon social scientists are “ masking the language of fear and irrationality, in the language of science”.

In contrast Grossman demonstrates a strong correlation between video game violence and the alarming level of violence in today’s youth. He argues that the methodology used by our military and law enforcement during training, is being employed by the media and video game industries whose primary consumer is our children. Ferguson counters this by charging that violent video games are not the root cause because of inconsistencies in studies. He further states that “ the gap between social science and reality has led to a moral panic regarding the effects of violent video games on youths”.

He states that society is repeating the same media-based panics of the past; when Greeks plays, Bible translations, Rock, and rap among others were blamed for violence in the youth of it's time. Grossman approaches the subject by dissecting the predisposition of violent behavior and looks at how desensitizing children to violence at an early age can have devastating effects. He uses his experience and expertise in this field to gather data to support this claim.

While Fergusson accepts the hypothesis that violent video games increase aggression and violent behavior, he feels that it is just that, a hypothesis. He does not believe the data supports its claim; stating there is a “tenuous connection between survey questionnaires or consensual aggression games in the laboratory and mass shooting incidents or the phenomenon of youth violence more generally in real life”. Grossman does not rely on other studies to arrive at his conclusions. He compares the data on how military and law enforcement are trained to cope and properly function in a violent environment. He then compares this with how the media and video game industries mimic this formula.

Grossman puts forth the four recognized steps to desensitization towards killing; “Brutalization”, “Classical Conditioning”, “Operant conditioning” and finally supplying a “role model”. Comparing this with how the media and video game industries market their products. What is found is a duplication of these four steps by the media in their marketing strategies. On the other hand Ferguson states his own studies and that of Colwell, Olson and Kutner “find no such effect”. In his study, he finds little correlation

between how the video and media entertainment industries affect the violent tendencies in adolescents or adults.

Both scientists bring forth valid points to this debate, however while scientists continue to debate this issue, children continue to suffer. Both sides of the argument agree that emotionally disturbed, depressed, socially isolated and rage filled children are at a greater risk of carrying out these horrific crimes; however this is where their views part ways. While Ferguson sees validity to the hypothesis he does not believe video game violence is a contributor. Grossmann on the other hand, sees it as a serious contributing factor.

This subject has turned from a disagreement in dissenting views to an all out debate between social scientists. What we do know regardless of which side you fall on in this debate is that parents must take an active role in their children's lives, and ask the tough questions as well as monitor their children's extra curricular activities. Whether it is pseudoscience or not you must answer that question. For now social scientists continue to debate this and as long as they do our children will continue to fall prey to this tragic cycle.