Video Games and Their Effects on Well-Being: A Review

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What effects do different aspects of video games have on well-being?

Aspects examined:
- Presence of violence
- Social interaction
- Physical activity
- Frequency of gaming
Methods

PsychInfo, PsychArticles, Medline, Scopus, and Embase databases

Search terms: ‘video game’ ‘online game’ ‘active game’ ‘MMORPG’ ‘physical’ ‘social’ ‘well-being’ ‘mental health’ and ‘physical health.’

All papers in English concerning video games and some aspect of well-being were included

- Well-being was guided by how each piece of literature individually defined it

Narrative approach
Violent Video Games and Aggression

• Experiments with short-term exposure show increases in aggression (e.g., Barlett, Harris, & Baldasarro, 2007)

• Realistic violence > non-realistic violence > no violence (Barlett & Rodeheffer, 2009)

• Longitudinal demonstrates preferences for and exposure to VVGs at T1 predicted higher aggression at T2 (e.g., Möller & Krahè, 2009)

• Quantity of violence over time increased aggression (Greitemeyer & Sagioglou, 2017)

• In contrast, context and perception of violence influence aggression (Shibuya et al., 2008)
Outlet of Aggression

• Catharsis hypothesis (Feshbach, 1985)
  • Violent video games also shown to be an outlet for anger and frustration (Greitemeyer, 2015)
  • Particularly for adolescent boys (Colwell, 2007)

• Potentially increase rather than curb aggression (Geen, Stonner, & Shope, 1975)
Social Gaming

- Video games with a social component have shown to have positive effects
  - Social skills (Harrington & O’Connell, 2016)
  - Personal relationships (Greitemeyer & Osswald, 2011)

- Potential alternative for in-person socialization, particularly chatrooms
  - In youth (Kowert, Vogelgesang, Destl, & Quandt, 2015; Shen & Williams, 2011)
  - Populations with physical disabilities or remote locations (Odrowska & Masar, 2014)

- Negative influence of VVG on aggression counteracted (Gitter, Ewell, Guadagno, Stillman, & Baumeister, 2013)
  - Prosocial behaviour increases (Greitemeyer & Osswald, 2011)

- Sharing, cooperation, and empathy increases (e.g. Jin & Li, 2014)
Exergames

• Games with physical activity or exercise

• In young and middle-aged adults, increases physical health (i.e. flexibility, heart rate, etc.) (e.g. Nitz et al., 2009)

• In older adults (65+) increases in balance (Lee, Taylor, & Ray, 2014)
  • Decreases rates of falling

• More enjoyable than traditional exercise
  • Potential higher adherence rate (e.g. Bieryla & Dold, 2013)
Excessive Gaming

• Similar to other forms of addiction (Ko, 2014)
  • Stems from obsession with the game (e.g. Lafreniere, Vallerand, Donahue, & Lavigne, 2009)

• Increases in psychological symptoms
  • Anxiety, depression, loneliness (e.g. Schou Andreassen et al., 2016).

• Negative impact on relationships
  • Partners, family, and friends (e.g. Northrup & Shumway, 2014)

• Disruption in daily activities
  • Work and school (e.g. Lafreniere et al., 2009)
Further Research

• Violent video game research to examine aggression at multiple timepoints and exposure participants for longer
  • For both longitudinal and experimental designs

• Social interaction to measure prosocial behaviour, not word tasks
  • Also measure social activity across various groups

• Exergames to include control variables
  • Longitudinal studies to determine adherence rates

• Excessive gaming outcomes measured at multiple timepoints
  • Will help for the comparison of variables
Conclusion

- Violent video games can lead to aggression
  - Also potential outlet
  - Can be counteracted by social components

- Social gaming has positive benefits
  - Social skills
  - Prosocial behaviour
  - Personal relationships
  - Potential alternative

- Exergames can increase aspects of physical health
  - Also more enjoyable

- Excessive gaming negates these positive effects
  - Increase in psychological symptoms
  - Negative impact on relationships
  - Negative impact on work and school life
References


References


References


