Good Student- Correlational Study

PSYCH 2301 MWF 10:00

Professor Hutchinson

“Video Game Playing and Academic Performance in College Students”

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Introduction:

In past years, video games have gained much popularity. Nearly half of the video gamer population is comprised of individuals ranging from ages 18-49. Video games captivate certain audiences because they contain age-based content and require the use of strategy and analysis. Although the reported time spent playing video games is small in comparison to the average time spent watching television, video games are much more involved and intense during their periods of use. (S. Burgess, Stermer, M. Burgess, 2012)

There are many studies relating media usage and scholastic success. Television has received the majority of attention leaving little information regarding video game use and academic performance. An obvious theoretical approach evaluated in this study is the idea that time spent doing one activity detracts from time spent doing another activity. This theory is known as the time-displacement hypothesis, and it implies that time spent playing video games could be substituted for more productive activities, such as studying. Today’s students have grown up with video games and over their lifetime have spent more hours consumed by media than any other generation. (Burgess et. al, 2012)

This study combines several small hypotheses to form their overall purpose for evaluation. The researchers suggested that video game activity, including both participating and watching, would be negatively correlated with academic performance. This negative correlation means that as time spent playing and watching video games increases, academic performance will decrease. It was also proposed that a stronger relation would be present in male students when compared with female students. Another proposal explained that students who played video games often would have the least interest in homework and studies, and as a result, video game enjoyment would be negatively correlated with academic performance. This is a
correlational study due to the fact that different variables were examined to identify a correlation between time spent playing video games and school performance. These variables include college students, time spent engaged in video games, and academic performance. (Burgess et. al, 2012)

Methods:

The study evaluated a total of 671 participants consisting of 391 females and 280 males. The participants fell in the age range of 18 and 31. The demographics of the participants were 80.5% Caucasian, 7.8% Black/African American, 4% Latino, and 7.7% claimed other. The study participants were recruited from their general psychology classes. Prior to completing the survey, participants gave informed consent for their participation in the study. In order to make the survey available to all participants, an online survey and a paper survey were offered. An even number of online surveys and paper surveys were completed, and there were no notable differences between the two surveys used. In order to measure academic success the student participants provided level of education, high school GPA, college GPA, and ACT scores. The time spent engaged in videogames was assessed by asking participants the number of hours per week they played videogames, and the number of hours per week they watched others play video games. To determine video game involvement history the participants provided information on when they first started playing video games. The final category of information collected was how often the students played video games instead of doing homework. 282 of the study participants completed additional questions regarding use of violent video games; however, there were no significant differences in results between the participants asked about violent games and those who were not. (Burgess et. al, 2012)
Discussion:

The results of the study confirmed many of the proposed hypotheses from the researchers. The hypothesis that video game participation and viewing would be related to lowered academic performance was accurate. Students who reported spending more time playing and watching videogames also reported lower high school and college GPA scores as well as lower ACT scores. The researchers were also correct in their prediction that a stronger relationship between hours played and GPA scores would be present in male students compared to female students. Although many female students reported playing video games, the male students reported playing and watching for more hours, as well as having started playing at a younger age, and playing a wider variety of games. Due to this difference in sex, the male and female reports were analyzed separately to show a more accurate correlation in each individual group. Although the hypothesis that students who spend significant time playing video games have a reduced interest in homework does not have much external support by previous studies, it was found to be true in this study. This final hypothesis, however, can be challenged by the idea that video games are just the choice entertainment of that student and if they were not playing video games they would still be filling their time with another form of media rather than studying. There is no way to determine that if the time was not spent playing video games that it would be spent on another productive activity. (Burgess et. al, 2012)

This study is successful in enhancing research regarding relationship between video game usage and academic performance in college students. The research can be applied by educating college students on managing academic and entertainment time. The results can also be used to educate parents on the relationship between childhood video game exposure and high levels of video game usage in those adults. (Burgess et. al, 2012)
Although the study was able to achieve its main purpose, there are limitations to be considered. A major limitation to this research is the use of the one time self-report. It is difficult to estimate time spent on an activity over a long period of time. This could result in inaccurate reports of hours spent studying and doing homework. Another limitation is the use of GPA as an academic measurement for all students. By using multiple methods of measuring academic performance, the accuracy of the results would increase. (Burgess et. al, 2012)

More research in this field can be done to enhance the results of this study and to evaluate other realms of the results of video game indulgence. Increased population size would aid in a more expansive test group. Also, more detailed surveys, or a series of surveys conducted over an extended period of time would be useful in identifying further information on the affects of video game usage. The study could also be conducted at a variety of university campuses with students from different classes in order to diversify and randomize the test population. As a whole, this research is effective in identifying the relationships that video games have with academic success amongst college students. (Burgess et. al, 2012)
Reference