Influence Of Violent Video Games On Cognitive Development Decline

Cognitive development is essential for a child's development because it outlines how the child will conceive thoughts and make decisions for the rest of their lives. In sociocultural theory, executive functioning is essential with regards to cognition. Executive functioning touches upon three major ideas: inhibiting, enhancing network memory, and cognitive flexibility. The quality of executive functioning allows a child to make appropriate decisions as well as benefit them with regards to academic achievement and future endeavours. Higher executive functioning also allows for better cognitive flexibility. Being cognitively flexible allows a child to function better than others, as they understand more concepts and ideas than others. There are many factors that contribute to better cognitive functioning and development. One topic that has been highly controversial is if whether or not video games benefit cognitive development. Video games have been highly influential on children in recent years. Studies have shown that children spend an average of 7 hours a week playing video games (Gentile et. al, 2004). While playing video games have their educational or beneficial aspects, video games do not benefit cognitive development. Video games contain many violent conditions that a child will inhibit in future situations. Violent thoughts as well as trait hostility will be displayed when a child is triggered with something they do not agree with. This is not beneficial for the child's cognitive functioning in the future because it shows trait hostility that was learned from playing these video games. Video games also desensitizes children's moral cognitions, justifying their immoral actions as something "moral" and "right". This aspect increases their egocentric tendencies and hold no regards for others feelings and thoughts. Though other studies have shown that video games contain many educational functions, in the longer run it is not beneficial for children.

Executive functioning is a very important factor in a child's cognitive functioning and development. It details how one maintains their thoughts in order to reach their goal (Ziegler, Robert S. et. al, 2017). This is extremely significant for growing children, especially during sensitive periods. Inhibiting unfavourable behaviour is one of the characteristics of executive functioning. An example of this would be refraining from doing certain activities such as playing video games in order to do homework. The hours spent playing video games displaces the time intended for doing homework. This displacement hypothesis is supported by research studies. Children who spend more hours playing video games than doing homework have been performing poorly academically (Gentile et. al, 2004). As amount of video game play increases, academic performance decreases (Wright, 2011). They are displacing the time that could be used to expand their knowledge on video games that constant negative effects for their brains. Children have also been functioning poorly on social activities. This is due to their poor executive functioning caused by video games as it proves to be displacing and inhibiting the time that is intended for better activities that benefits their cognitive development. Influential and prosocial learning is affected to some extent, but can easily be reversed as long as children's behaviours are mediated.

Plenty of video games manufactured contain negative and violent content. Video games with violent content is shown to be more favourable to children than video games with little to no violent content (Gentile et. al, 2004). This is not fitting for a child's cognitive development. Violent content in video games increases a child's aggressive behaviour and trait hostility.

Children who have previously showed signs of aggression have a higher chance of being more aggressive the more they are exposed to these conditions. They are also more aroused when playing video games. Using the General Aggression Model, exposure to violent video game play was tested in relation to aggression, cognition, and behaviour (Gentile et. al, 2004). When tested for mood arousal before and after playing non-violent and violent video games, results showed a significant difference. Before playing violent video games, heart rates were shown to be relatively normal, but after playing, heart rates significantly increased, displaying compelling mood arousal and increased in aggression state (Fleming and Rickwood, 2001). Although there is a difference when tested for boys and girls separately, the outcome always came out the same. Even though boys preferred video games with violent content more than girls, they both came out to be highly aggressive. The short term result for this is that children's aggressive tendencies arise when they are provoked, but maintain a calm state when they are not playing. The long term result, however, is that even without being exposed to video games or provocation, aggressive tendencies naturally arise due to constant exposure (Fleming and Rickwood, 2001). Future aggressive outlook, antisocial behaviour, and biased attitudes are also part of the long term effects of violent video games. Due to this fact, evidence from studies show that children become more hostile in school environments and get into arguments with teachers more than other children who are not exposed to violent video games. This trait hostility is positively correlated with exposure to violent video games (Gentile et. al, 2004). Children become more egotistical in their attitudes and their language due to the learned behaviour from playing these games.