

EDUCATIONAL VIDEO GAMES IN THE MIDDLE: PARENTS, PSYCHOLOGISTS, GAMERS. A PILOT STUDY

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Abstract

The main purpose of educational video games is education through entertainment. Nevertheless, they are surrounded by negative and positive stereotypes related to video games in general, including addiction, social isolation, health problems, but also getting smarter, gaining IT skills or becoming a keen observer. Our paper aims to identify whether the "educational" claim is also supported by those directly involved in educational activities related to video gaming: parents, psychologists, and gamers. In this respect, we used four samples of participants, including a control group, in order to evaluate their perception of video games' contribution to the intellectual and emotional development of children, the content of educational video games, their level of violence, the tasks required from the players, benefits and risks of playing educational video games, the level of parent involvement in playing together with the child, and attitudes of video games selling policies. The results reflect some polarized attitudes towards educational video games, with rather favorable perspectives from gamers and parents, and negative from psychologists. As expected, the control group was neutral. The research emphasizes the need to approach the educational video games from multiple perspectives and to go beyond considering EVG as "good" or "bad". Although promising, the results should be treated with caution given the non-random sampling and the relatively small number of participants.

Keywords: educational video games; risks and benefits; multiple perspectives

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