

Connection between aggressive player tendencies and the aesthetics/gameplay of a video game

by Bryan Consuegra

Abstract Id: 183 Submitted: **February 10, 2017** Event: **Conference for Undergraduate Research at FIU 2017** Topic: **Psychology**

Amidst a myriad of controversy revolving around the correlation between violent video games and the violent behavior exhibited by some players, a study was conducted to determine the potential connection between aggressive player tendencies and the aesthetics/gameplay of a video game. A sample population of 30 high school students were tasked with playing one of two video games for 10 minutes: *Super Smash Bros for Wii U* or *Mario Kart 8*. Both games sport a family-friendly cartoon-like aesthetic, yet both feature radically different forms of gameplay. While the former game is a competitive fighting game depicting numerous acts of slapstick, the latter is a kart racing that places a heavier emphasis on reaching the goal in the shortest time possible, despite allowing players to hinder the progress of other racers through brief but mild slapstick. The two games were chosen under the assumption that since the two shared the same aesthetic but had different gameplay styles, if participants displayed increased aggression over one game than the other, then gameplay has a greater influence in player aggression than aesthetics. Conversely, if both groups of players exhibited similar changes in aggression, then aesthetics has a greater influence on player aggression. Before and after play, participants were asked to fill out the State Hostility Scale, a survey used to approximate one's aggression levels. Once the data was compiled, it was found that *Mario Kart 8* had generated a greater change in aggression than did *Super Smash Bros for Wii U*. Thus, it was determined that gameplay had a greater influence on player aggression than aesthetics.