

Impacts of Mothers' Occupation Status and Parenting Styles on Levels of Self-Control, Addiction to Computer Games, and Educational Progress of Adolescents

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Abstract

Background: Addiction to computer (video) games in adolescents and its relationship with educational progress has recently attracted the attention of rearing and education experts as well as organizations and institutes involved in physical and mental health. The current research attempted to propose a structural model of the relationships between parenting styles, mothers' occupation status, and addiction to computer games, self-control, and educational progress of secondary school students.

Methods: Using multistage cluster random sampling, 500 female and male secondary school students in Kerman (Iran) were selected and studied. The research tools included self-control, parenting styles, and addiction to computer games questionnaires and a self-made questionnaire containing demographic details. The data was analyzed using exploratory factor analysis, Cronbach's alpha coefficient and route analysis (in LISREL).

Findings: We found self-control to have a linking role in the relationship between four parenting styles and educational progress. Mothers' occupation status was directly and significantly correlated with addiction to computer games. Although four parenting styles directly and significantly affected addiction to computer games, the findings did not support the linking role of addiction to computer games in the relationship between four parenting styles and educational progress.

Conclusion: In agreement with previous studies, the current research reflected the impact of four parenting styles on self-control, addiction to computer games, and educational progress of students. Among the parenting styles, authoritative style can affect the severity of addiction to computer games through self-control development. It can thus indirectly influence the educational progress of students. Parents are recommended to use authoritative parenting style to help both self-management and psychological health of their children. The employed mothers are also recommended to have more supervision and control on the degree and type of computer games selected by their children.

Keywords: Self control, Parenting styles, Addiction to video games, Mothers' occupation, Academic achievements

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Introduction

Parenting style is a set of attitudes towards the child. These attitudes altogether form a sensational atmosphere based on which the parents exhibit their behaviors in establishing a relationship with the child.¹ Parenting styles are discussed based on two dimensions called demanding degree (expectation) and responsiveness.² Accordingly, various parenting styles have been defined. In authoritarian (totalitarian) parenting, parents are very demanding but less responsive to their children. They emphasize on unconditional obedience of children and lack warmth, intimacy and support. This style is highly strict and disciplined. In authoritative parenting, parents are both demanding and responsive. The rules are clear and transparent and logical and reasonable methods are used for convincing the children. Parents are supportive and sympathize with the children. In permissive parenting, parents are too responsive and are seldom demanding. They do not impose many rules on their children and have no control on their behaviors.³ Recently, neglectful parenting style has been added to the three former styles. Neglectful parents are neither demanding nor responsive. They have no specific rules, lack warmth, support and intimacy, and have no supervision and control on their children's behaviors.⁴

Research suggests that each style is followed by particular effects, results, and consequences. In fact, parenting styles affect children and adolescents' ego, independence, self-control, and ways of coping with entanglements.^{4,5} They would thus impact on their other behaviors including educational performance and incompatible and troublesome acts.⁶⁻⁸ In other words, authoritative styles contribute to the flourishing of ego, self-control, self-adjustment, independence, and happiness and avoidance of delinquent, incompatible, and dangerous behaviors in children. These variables in turn affect their educational performance and progress.⁵

On the other hand, dependence on computer (video) games is a problematic behavior that can endanger a child's health and personal and social compatibility. Since it can also affect educational performance of students, it has received great deal of attention. Little research has been carried out on the relationship between parenting styles and

dependence on computer games as a troublesome behavior.^{9,10} The findings of these studies have been suggestive of significant negative relationships between authoritarian and authoritative styles and addiction to computer games and significant positive relationships between permissive and neglectful parenting styles and addiction to computer games.^{9,10} However, no research has been conducted in Iran or other countries to analyze the causal relationships between parenting styles, mothers' occupation status, addiction to computer games, and educational progress of adolescents in the frame of a structural model. Previous foreign studies in this field have separately investigated the relationship of parenting style with drugs and alcohol dependence,¹¹ educational performance and social skills,⁸ or mental health and delinquency.¹² Available Iranian research has also mainly focused on the relationships of dependence on computer games with either students' mental health and educational performance¹³ or adolescents' social skills.^{14,15}

Furthermore, researchers believe that impacts of parenting styles on behavior and personality of children can be analyzed by considering contextual parameters such as culture and socioeconomic status. Therefore, demographic details such as occupation status of mothers are specifically significant.⁴ Evidence implies that mothers' occupation has positive effects on both mothers and their children, especially girls. Employed mothers are more content with themselves than unemployed mothers.^{16,17} In addition, children of employed mothers are more self-sufficient and less dependent on adults. They are also more sociable than children with unemployed mothers.¹⁸ Previous Iranian investigations about the impact of mothers' occupation on behavioral and educational performance of children are not homogenous.¹⁹ Students with employed mothers are more socially compatible compared to those with unemployed mothers. There also exists a positive correlation between occupational consent of mothers and social compatibility of children and hence a negative correlation between mothers' occupational tensions and educational progress of their children.¹⁸

Research results are suggestive of a negative correlation between mothers' occupation and social compatibility and educational

performance of students.¹⁹ However, due to inhomogeneous results of domestic research in this respect, it seems that analysis of the relationship between mothers' occupation and children's educational progress depends on other contextual and personal variables such as age, gender, and satisfaction levels of mothers and their children.

Students' self-control is one of the personal variables that can be affected by mothers' job and their preferred parenting styles. Self-control can in turn influence the educational progress of children. In fact, educational progress of high-school students can be predicted by parameters like self-control and addiction to computer games.²⁰ Accordingly, the current research attempted to investigate the relationship between mothers' occupation, addiction to computer games, self-control, and educational progress of male and female secondary school students in the frame of a structural model (Figure 1).

Methods

The statistical population of the current non-experimental, correlation research consisted of all male and female senior students in secondary schools of Kerman (Iran) during the academic year 2010-11. Multistage cluster random sampling was used to select the participants. First, five secondary schools for girls and five

secondary schools for boys were randomly selected from schools in Kerman (Iran). Three classes were then selected from each school and all students of these classes were studied. Consequently, 600 secondary school students (300 girls and 300 boys) were selected as the sample group of the research. To obtain parents' consent for their children's participation in the study, school principals sent them a letter asking for their declaration of agreement/disagreement. The students who had their parents' consent could participate in the research. They filled out the questionnaires. Questionnaires with incomplete or chaotic information were eliminated from the research process. Finally, information from 500 questionnaires (from 254 boys and 246 girls) was analyzed. The mean age of girls and boys was 14.60 and 14.73 years, respectively. Among these participants, 270 persons had employed mothers (130 girls and 140 boys) and mothers of the rest were unemployed. Route analysis using LISREL for Windows was used to analyze the collected data.

The following tools were employed to measure the research variables:

Demographic information questionnaire: This questionnaire was designed by the authors and assessed variables such as age, gender, education level, and occupation status of students' mothers.

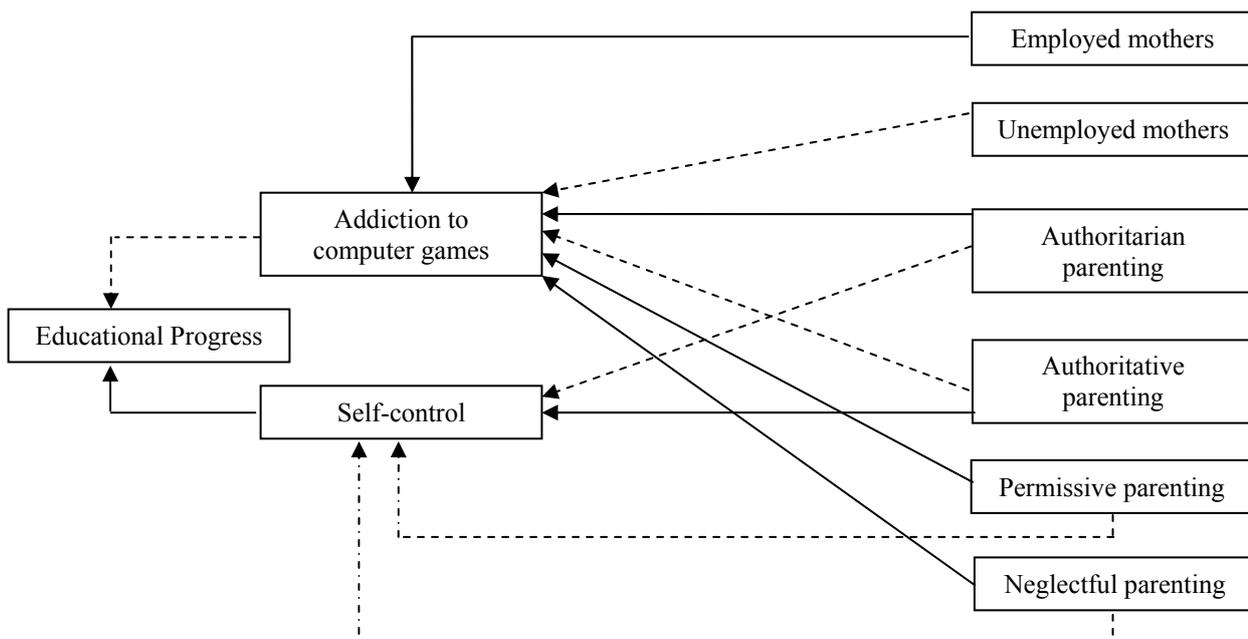


Figure 1. Conceptual model of the causal relationships between research parameters (solid arrows signify positive relationships and dotted arrows represent negative relationships)

Parenting styles questionnaire:²¹ This questionnaire comprises four parenting styles (authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, and neglectful). It contains 40 questions which are scored based on a five-point Likert scale (5: Always, 4: Frequently, 3: Occasionally, 2: Seldom, and 1: Never). Validity indices of this questionnaire for the styles mentioned above have been calculated as 0.68, 0.82, 0.72, and 0.85, respectively.⁹ Exploratory factor analysis techniques were used in the present study to evaluate the validity of the questionnaire. The results were indicative of four factors which respectively accounted for 13.78%, 12.41%, 8.89%, and 7.75% of total test variance and collectively depicted 42.83% of total test variance. It must be also noted that three questions were omitted due to having factor load below 0.4 and pertinence to several factors. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was also measured as an index of internal identicalness of the questionnaire to verify its reliability. The obtained values were 0.78 for the whole test and 0.75, 0.84, 0.70, and 0.85 for the four subscales mentioned above.

Questionnaire of addiction to computer games:⁹

This 20-item questionnaire was translated by two professors of Department of Psychology (University of Isfahan, Iran) and then revised and reviewed. All items of this questionnaire are scored according to a five-point Likert scale (5: Always, 4: Frequently, 3: Occasionally, 2: Seldom, and 1: Never). The instructions suggested by the designer of the questionnaire⁹ were deployed to determine the students' degrees of addiction to computer games. Hence, the mean [$M = (1+2+3+4+5)/5 = 3$] and standard deviation of scores ($SD = 5-1/3 = 1.33$) of the students were initially calculated. In fact, the lowest score was subtracted from the highest score and then divided to the domain of scores. The scores of 1-2.33, 2.34-3.66, and 3.67-5 were categorized as low, moderate, and high levels of dependence on computer games, respectively. Apparent validity of this questionnaire has been reported by another researcher.¹³ Its reliability has also been reported (Cronbach's alpha coefficient = 0.85).¹⁴ In the present research, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated as 0.82.

Self-control questionnaire:²¹ The 36 items of this questionnaire are scored from "Very often"

to "Never" based on a five-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was developed by Tangney et al. after reviewing and combining previous similar tools. It evaluates four factors including general self-control, self-discipline, appropriate and safe habits, self-adjustment, and reliability. Both reliability and validity of this questionnaire have been reported to be 0.89.

Results

The current research intended to analyze the relationships between mothers' occupation and addiction to computer games, self-control, and educational progress of male and female secondary school students in Kerman (Iran) in the frame of a structural model.

As observed in table 1, the largest and lowest correlation levels were observed between authoritarian parenting style and addiction to computer games ($P = 0.01$ and $r = 0.51$) and authoritative parenting style and addiction to computer games ($P = 0.05$ and $r = 0.24$). It was also seen that among the four parenting styles, authoritarian parenting style had the maximal negative correlation level with self-control ($P = 0.01$ and $r = -0.42$) and permissive and neglectful parenting styles exhibited the minimal correlation level with this variable ($P = 0.05$ and $r = -0.29$).

As figure 2 shows, self-control had a linking role in the relationship between four parenting styles and educational progress of students. However, addiction to computer games lacked a linking role in the mentioned relations. In addition, we did not find addiction to computer games to have a linking role in the relationship between mothers' occupation status and students' educational progress. In other words, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful parenting styles directly, positively, and significantly affected addiction to computer games. They also had direct, negative, and significant effects on self-control. Moreover, authoritative parenting style had direct, negative, and significant impacts on addiction to computer games. It also had direct, positive, and significant impacts on self-control in students. It is also evident that self-control directly, positively, and significantly affects the educational progress of students. Meanwhile, the impact of addiction to computer games on educational progress was direct, negative and insignificant.

Table 1. Correlation coefficients between research variables

Variables	Educational progress	Self-control	Addiction to computer games	Mothers' employment	Mothers' unemployment	Authoritarian style	Authoritative style	Permissive style	Neglectful style
Educational progress	1.00								
Self-control	0.58**	1.00							
Addiction to computer games	-0.12	-0.36*	1.00						
Mothers' employment	-0.13	0.26*	0.39*	1.00					
Mothers' unemployment	0.30*	0.17	0.28*	0.00	1.00				
Authoritarian style	0.33*	0.42**	0.51**	0.18	0.19	1.00			
Authoritative style	0.27*	0.40**	0.24*	0.26	0.24*	0.01	1.00		
Permissive style	0.08	0.29*	0.32*	0.18	0.17	0.04	0.07	1.00	
Neglectful style	0.37*	0.29*	0.40**	0.16	0.14	0.13	0.05	0.28*	1.00

* P < 0.05; ** P < 0.01

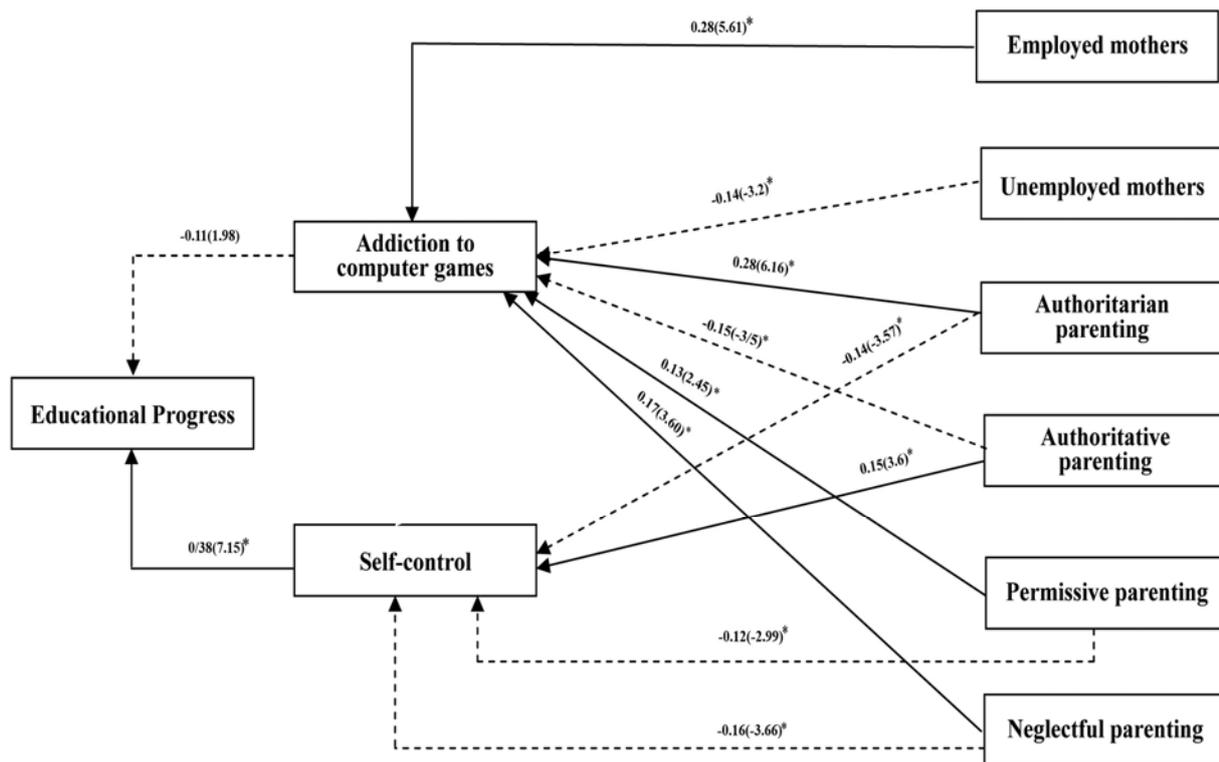


Figure 2. Conceptual model of the causal relationships between research parameters; solid arrows signify positive relationships and dotted arrows represent negative relationships (root mean square error of approximation = 0.05, P = 0.101, DF = 12, $\chi^2 = 18.51$)

The impact of mothers' employment on addiction to computer games was direct, positive, and significant. It was actually observed that the students whose mothers were employed and followed authoritarian, permissive, or neglectful parenting styles exhibited more addiction to computer games and less self-control compared to those with unemployed mothers who applied authoritative parenting styles. On the other hand, while addiction to computer games could not significantly predict the educational progress of students, self-control was a significant predictor for students' educational progress.

Goodness-of-fit indices are reported in table 2. All goodness-of-fit indices of the model suggested its excellent fit with research data because the ratio of chi-squared to degree

of freedom $\frac{\chi^2}{df}$ was less than three and in the acceptable range. Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) was also acceptable because its smaller values (nearer to zero) correspond better fitting of the model. Additionally, the value of goodness-of-fit index (GFI) was in a high and favorable range. The values of adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI) and root mean square residual (RMR) were also reflective of excellent fit of the model. Overall, 37% of variance of addiction to computer games was explained by mothers' occupation status and four parenting styles. Furthermore, in this model, 39% of self-control variance was explained by the four parenting styles. The variables of addiction to computer games and self-control accounted for 29% of variance of educational progress.

Table 2. Goodness-of-fit indices for the structural model of impact of mothers' occupation status and parenting styles on children's addiction to computer games, self-control, and educational progress

RMR	AGFI	GFI	RMSEA	P	DF	χ^2	χ^2/DF
0.02	0.94	0.97	0.05	0.101	12	18.51	1.54

RMR: Root mean square residual; AGFI: Adjusted goodness-of-fit index; GFI: Goodness-of-fit index; RMSEA: Root mean square error of approximation; DF: Degree of freedom; χ^2 : Chi squared

Discussion

Our findings indicated the linking role of self-control in the relationship between four parenting styles and educational progress of students. In other words, there existed a direct, positive, and significant correlation between authoritative parenting style and self-control. However, the relationship between authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful parenting styles and self-control was direct, negative, and significant. Besides, self-control and educational progress were directly, positively and significantly correlated. This indicates the linking role of this variable in the relationship between parenting styles and educational progress. These results are in agreement with those obtained in previous research.^{21,22}

Other studies have also shown that parenting styles affect the level of independence and self-control in children and adolescents. Parents with authoritative parenting styles contribute to development of self-control in their children. On the other hand, parents having authoritarian parenting styles strongly reduced their children's self-control compared to permissive and neglectful styles.¹⁰ In addition, the indirect impacts of parenting styles on educational performance, educational failure, and incompatible behaviors of children and adolescents have been reported.²³ In other words, parenting styles indirectly affect the educational performance of children through influencing their ego and self-control.

Our findings also implied that addiction to computer games has no linking role in the relationship between four parenting styles and educational progress of students. In fact, authoritative parenting style had a negative, direct, and significant effect on addiction to computer games. The impact of the other three parenting styles (authoritarian, permissive and neglectful) on addiction to computer games was positive, direct, and significant. However, the relationship between addiction to computer games and educational progress was weak and insignificant. Another research indicated negative significant correlations between authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles and dependence on computer games and positive significant correlations between permissive and neglectful parenting styles and

dependence on computer games.²⁴

While previous research has reported a negative relationship between addiction to computer games and educational progress,¹³⁻¹⁵ We failed to establish a significant relationship between addiction to computer games and educational progress. These researchers could not find a significant correlation between these two variables.

The last finding of this research was a direct, positive, and significant correlation between mothers' employment and children's addiction to computer games. A direct, negative, and significant correlation was also found between mothers' unemployment and children's addiction to computer games. In other words, the students with employed mothers were more addicted to computer games than those with unemployed mothers. To our knowledge, no relevant domestic or international studies have been performed. Therefore, further research is required to confirm or reject the findings of the current study. Future studies are thus recommended to investigate the causal relations between mothers' occupation status and children's addiction to computer games and educational progress while considering addiction to computer games as the second linking variable in the structural model. The model might reflect the fact that parenting styles directly affect self-control which in turn influences addiction to computer games. However, the effects of addiction to computer games on educational progress need to be further evaluated by future studies.

Selection of sample group from secondary school students was among the limitations of the present research. Consequently, the results cannot be extended to other education levels. Future research should hence use sample groups from students of all education levels.

Conflict of Interest: The Authors have no conflict of interest.

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تأثیر وضعیت اشتغال مادران و سبک‌های فرزندپروری بر میزان خودکنترلی، اعتیاد به بازی‌های رایانه‌ای و پیشرفت تحصیلی نوجوانان

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چکیده

مقدمه: اعتیاد به بازی‌های رایانه‌ای در نوجوانان و ارتباط آن با پیشرفت تحصیلی از جمله موضوعاتی است که در دهه اخیر مورد توجه متخصصان تعلیم و تربیت و سازمان‌ها و نهادهای مرتبط با سلامت جسمی و روانی قرار گرفته است. پژوهش حاضر تلاش دارد مدلی ساختاری از ارتباط بین سبک‌های فرزندپروری، وضعیت اشتغال مادران، اعتیاد به بازی‌های رایانه‌ای، خودکنترلی و پیشرفت تحصیلی را در دانش‌آموزان مقطع راهنمایی ارائه نماید.

روش‌ها: تعداد ۵۰۰ نفر از دانش‌آموزان دختر و پسر مقطع راهنمایی شهر کرمان با استفاده از روش نمونه‌گیری خوشه‌ای چندمرحله‌ای انتخاب و مورد مطالعه قرار گرفتند. ابزارهای مورد استفاده شامل پرسش‌نامه‌های خودکنترلی Tanjny و همکاران، پرسش‌نامه سبک‌های فرزندپروری و اعتیاد به بازی‌های رایانه‌ای Anita verne و پرسش‌نامه محقق‌ساخته حاوی اطلاعات جمعیت‌شناختی گروه نمونه بود. داده‌ها با استفاده از روش‌های آماری تحلیل عامل اکتشافی، ضریب Cronbach's alpha و تحلیل مسیر مورد تجزیه و تحلیل قرار گرفت.

یافته‌ها: یافته‌ها نشان دهنده نقش واسطه‌ای خودکنترلی در ارتباط بین سبک‌های چهارگانه فرزندپروری و پیشرفت تحصیلی بود. همچنین مشاهده شد که وضعیت اشتغال مادران با اعتیاد به بازی‌های رایانه‌ای رابطه مستقیم و معنی‌داری دارد. اگر چه سبک‌های چهارگانه فرزندپروری اثر مستقیم و معنی‌داری روی اعتیاد به بازی‌های رایانه‌ای داشت، با این حال یافته‌ها از نقش واسطه‌ای اعتیاد به بازی‌های رایانه‌ای در ارتباط بین سبک‌های چهارگانه فرزندپروری و پیشرفت تحصیلی حمایت نمی‌کرد.

نتیجه‌گیری: نتایج این تحقیق در راستای سایر پژوهش‌های انجام شده نشان دهنده تأثیر سبک‌های چهارگانه فرزندپروری بر خودکنترلی، اعتیاد به بازی‌های رایانه‌ای و همچنین پیشرفت تحصیلی دانش‌آموزان بود و از میان سبک‌های چهارگانه فرزندپروری، سبک قاطعانه از طریق توسعه خودکنترلی در کودکان و نوجوانان شدت اعتیاد به بازی‌ها را تحت تأثیر قرار داده و به طور غیر مستقیم بر پیشرفت تحصیلی دانش‌آموزان تأثیرگذار می‌باشد. توصیه می‌شود که والدین از سبک‌های فرزندپروری قاطعانه استفاده کرده تا هم به خودمدیریتی و هم بر سلامت روان‌شناختی فرزندان خود کمک نمایند. همچنین پیشنهاد می‌شود، مادران شاغل با تخصیص زمان بیشتر به فرزندان خود بر میزان و نوع رایانه انتخابی توسط آن‌ها نظارت و کنترل بیشتری داشته باشند و در انتخاب بازی‌های رایانه‌ای به فرزندان خود کمک کنند.

واژگان کلیدی: خودکنترلی، سبک‌های والدینی، اعتیاد به بازی، اشتغال مادران، پیشرفت تحصیلی

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