Parental Performance and its Relationship to Online Game Addiction Among Middle School Students

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Abstract:

This study aims to determine the relationship between parental performance and online game addiction among middle school students. It also aims to identify the differences between males and females in the study sample on the parental performance scale (father image and mother image) and the online game addiction scale. The study sample was randomly selected from 72 male and female middle school students. The results of this study proved the existence of an inverse and statistically significant relationship between parental performance (father image) and (mother image) and online game addiction among middle school students at a significance level of 0.01. The results confirmed the presence of statistically significant differences at a significance level of 0.01 between the males and females of the study sample on the parental performance scale (father image) in favor of males. The results also confirmed the absence of significant differences between the males and females of the study sample on the parental performance scale (mother image). The study also showed the presence of statistically significant differences at a significance level of 0.01 between the males and females of the study sample on the online game addiction scale in favor of males.

Keywords:

Parental performance - Online game addiction - Middle school students

Introduction:

Family is the safety valve that maintains the safety, progress, and advancement of society. Family-related factors such as social upbringing, parental treatment methods, and the family climate play an important role in shaping the adolescent's personality. A mother who is characterized by contradictions in her behavior makes it difficult for her son to develop familiarity and harmony with her (Abdul Rahman, 1998, p. 324). This is because family plays an important and serious role at this stage, due to the importance of the psychological climate in the life of the adolescent. The social behavior of the adolescent is greatly influenced by his family's trends (Zahran, 2003, p. 356). The good effects of the democratic climate in the family help the adolescent grow friendship and proper social behavior. However, the bad effects of parental control, bullying, neglect, and rejection become clear in the life of the teenagers and affect their social behavior, attitudes, and values (Zahran, 2003, p. 356).

The results of the study by Boyd (2025) indicated that parental neglect was an indicator of adolescent aggression, which makes them more susceptible to showing aggressive behaviors as well as poor adaptation. The results of Al-Jasser's study (2024) also showed that the low quality of parents' relationships with their children can lead to problems related to their children's mental health, such as difficulty in emotional regulation and flexibility. She emphasized that reflective parental functioning is an ability that helps parents be more attuned to their children's needs, which enhances emotional security and safety. It is also linked to positive outcomes in their children's development.

This is confirmed by the results of Ahmed's study (2021), which found there is a positive relationship between the dimensions of dysfunction in family functioning and anxiety disorders. The results also showed that there are statistically significant differences between males and females in stagnation in favor of males, chaos in favor of females, and flexibility in favor of males. They also found statistically significant differences on all dimensions of anxiety disorders in favor of females, referring to the fact that family functioning has predictive power for anxiety disorders.

Furthermore, Ko et al. (2015) indicated that the conflict between parents and separation from parents predict their children's addiction to online games. Therefore, there is a need for parental monitoring and self-regulation to limit the timing and duration of using electronic games on the Internet to overcome the harmful effects of using the Internet and electronic gaming on academic achievement (Islam et al., 2020).

Electronic games are just games, like other games, with their advantages and disadvantages. The ongoing controversy that arises about the impact of electronic games on children and adolescents and their users in general, such as addiction, aggression, and psychological and medical effects, is notable. It is certain that they have a significant impact when used in education (Griffiths, 2004, p. 48).

The teenagers have their own virtual world, an alternative to their community and family, which is the first social field in which the teenagers grow and gain the social experiences (Kirsh, 2003, p.p. 378-379). Teenagers are considered more vulnerable to the negative consequences associated with playing violent electronic games because this age stage is associated with many changes that occur in all aspects of the teenager's personality.

With the rapid development of smartphones and wireless networks, playing online games anytime and anywhere has become one of the main forms of entertainment for children and teenagers. However, convenient access to online games has also led to an increase in the number of people who have become addicted to them. Online gaming becomes pathological when used excessively, and this may result in Internet gaming disorder. Teenagers have reached the stage of addiction to electronic games, causing many behavioral and psychological problems (Williams, Consaivo, Coplan & Yee, 2009).

Qadi (2018) indicated that the phenomenon of electronic games has become a global phenomenon that is spreading among children and adolescents on an ongoing basis, whether at home or in Internet cafes. The Information and Decision Support Center of the Council of Ministers (2023) issued a report on electronic games, which explained the increasing spread of electronic games. The number of its users has exceeded about 3.09 billion people around the world, with a market value estimated at about 197.11 billion dollars, as it is one of the most prominent forms of entertainment due to the progress of the technology used in its production and its ability to simulate reality. The report indicated that these games have negative effects on physical health, including sleep disorders, dehydration, and malnutrition. They also have negative effects on mental health, as they cause aggression and poor emotional self-regulation.

With the rapid spread of the Internet, online gaming addiction has become one of the problems that causes enormous damage to the physical and mental development as well as the academic performance of adolescents (Qinxue, 2011).

Tsai and Lin (2003) reported a series of studies related to adolescents' addiction to online gaming in Taiwan by analyzing the results of several measures. The results revealed that most of the adolescents showed symptoms of internet addiction, including compulsive use, withdrawal, and many problems related to school, health, family, and money and time management. On the same note, Islam et al. (2020) aimed to study the relationship between Internet use, electronic gaming, and academic performance on weekdays and weekends for Australian children. The results showed that Internet users during the week are less likely to obtain high scores in academic achievement compared to Internet users during the weekends. Therefore, staying away from modern means of technology and the Internet is vital (Koh, 2007).

Based on reviewing the literature, it is clear that parental performance affects children positively and negatively according to the nature of their performance. With the weakness of this performance and its negative consequences, it may lead adolescents to become addicted to online games. The problem of the study can be addressed with the following question: "What is the relationship between parental performance and online game addiction among middle school students?"

Study Objectives:

This study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1- Determine the nature of the relationship between parental performance and online game addiction among middle school students.
2- Determine the differences between males and females in the study sample on the parental performance scale and online game addiction scale.
3- Identify indicators for the role of the social worker to improve parental performance and reduce the severity of online game addiction.

Study concepts:

1. Parental performance

Parental performance is defined as "the parents investing a wide range of services and capabilities towards their children, including the endless supply of affection and affection that has a direct impact on the child's affairs and conditions, such as providing education, taking care of the children's interests, educational discipline, emotional support, and providing food, housing, toys, and stimulating elements. Intellectually, and providing the necessary financial resources to achieve all of this" (Barber, 2000, p. 14).

It is also known as one of the most challenging responsibilities, as it is considered one of the longest tasks entrusted to any individual. It is an active and continuous process that requires individuals to use the greatest possible amount of skills, experience, and knowledge within a series of continuous interactions between parents and their children throughout their lives (D'Souza & D'Souza, 2008, p. 57).

Parental performance is also defined as the ability of each parent to provide their Sons with the rights of care and protection to enable them to grow, prosper, enjoy life, and realize their individual potential (Weamouth, 2012, p. 83).

Parental performance is theoretically defined as a set of roles and responsibilities that parents carry out towards their sons in terms of providing the necessary protection, support and control over their behavior, which provides them with the appropriate family climate to raise them in a safe and healthy upbringing.

Parental performance is measured procedurally by the degree that a student obtains in the preparatory stage in terms of the dimensions on the parental performance scale as follows: "parental knowledge, parental expectations, parental monitoring, parental discipline, parental psychological control, and satisfaction with parental control".

2. Online game addiction:

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th edition (DSM-5) defined Internet gaming disorder (IGD) as "a pattern of prolonged and excessive Internet gaming that results in a cluster of behavioral and cognitive symptoms, including withdrawal, tolerance, and progressive loss of control over gaming." (American Psychiatric Association, 2013), with symptoms that are comparable to those of substance use disorders (Chew, P. K., & Wong, C. M., 2022).

Online game addiction is defined as excessive and compulsive use of electronic games, which leads to social or emotional problems. Despite these problems, the player cannot control this excessive use (Lemmens et al, 2009, p. 78).

The World Health Organization defines it as "a pattern of gaming behavior characterized by impaired control over gaming, increasing priority given to gaming over other activities to the extent that gaming takes precedence over other interests and daily activities, and continuation or escalation of gaming despite the occurrence of negative consequences" (World Health Organization, 2020). The player has weak control over his game play and an increased priority for gaming, which results in a number of behavioral, psychological, academic, cognitive, and social problems (Pontes et al, 2021, p. 510).

It is also defined as an uncontrollable passion, often accompanied by a lack of control and denial of the negative impact resulting from the behavior (Aziz et al, 2021, p. 8).

Online game addiction is theoretically defined as a student's habit of playing online games and his strong commitment to them, which affects his academic, behavioral, psychological and cognitive development.

Online game addiction is measured procedurally by the score obtained by middle school students on the scale of addiction to online games.

Theoretical Background:

1- Behavioural theory

Behaviorism has been regarded as one of the main viewpoints in modern psychology for many decades. It is considered a trend in psychology in general, as it focuses on observable behaviors that are no less important in scientific theory. Historically, behaviorism represented a move away from the methods of deduction and the method of psychoanalysis of Freud (Cloninger, 2013, p. 185).

Behavioral practitioners are characterized by a lack of interest in the client's internal mental processes and their focus on objective, observable behavior. Behavioral practice is also characterized by a commitment to the traditional principles of the scientific method to help clients get rid of undesirable behaviors or acquire desirable behaviors, Some behavioral scientists refuse to put mental processes into theory because of their distrust of any abstract concepts as explanations for thoughts, feelings, or behavior. Behavioral practitioners are always interested in empirical evidence (Walsh, J., 2006, p. 107).

2- Cognitive theory

Cognitive theory is based on the concept that there is a mutual interaction between what a person thinks, feels, and how a person behaves. An individual's thoughts determine his feelings and then determine his behavior (Cooper & Lesser, 2008, p. 140).

Cognitive theory includes ideas, knowledge, beliefs, assumptions, expectations, trends, and perceptions. Our ideas can reflect what is happening in the outside world, but they may even be distorted to the point that we can misunderstand what is happening around us, as most of life's problems are the result of cognitive misunderstandings or beliefs that are supported by external evidence. Therefore, cognitive interventions help clients gain awareness in order to defeat misconceptions that contribute to solving problems and replace them with beliefs and behaviors, leading to improved performance (Walsh, 2006, p. 18).

Methodology:

This study belongs to the descriptive studies pattern, with the aim of determining the nature of the relationship between parental performance and online game addiction among middle school

students. This study relied on the social survey method, using the random sample method.

Study hypotheses:

The first hypothesis: "There is a statistically significant inverse relationship between parental performance and online game addiction among middle school students."

The second hypothesis: "There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of males and females in the study sample on the parental performance scale (the father image)."

The third hypothesis: "There are statistically significant differences between the average scores of males and females in the study sample on the parental performance scale (mother image)."

The fourth hypothesis: "There are statistically significant differences between the average scores of males and females in the study sample on the online game addiction scale."

> **Sample**: The sample frame consists of 1485 middle school students. The study sample consisted of 72 middle school students, representing 5% of the sample, who were randomly selected according to the following conditions:
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> 1. The student must be enrolled in a middle school.
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> 2. The student must live in a nuclear family consisting of a father, a mother, and siblings.
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> 3. The student must have given consent to participate in the study.

Tools:

1- The Parental Performance Scale was prepared by Abdel Wahab (2015).

Scale Description: The scale consists of (40) statements that measure six dimensions, which are: (1) parental knowledge (images of the father and images of the mother), (2)parental expectations in both forms (the father's image and the mother's image), (3) paternal and maternal monitoring, (4) paternal discipline and maternal discipline, (5) paternal psychological control and maternal psychological control, (6) satisfaction with parental control (the father's image is the mother'simage).

Validity of the scale: The scale was validated using the arbitrators' validity to verify the validity of the tool, as it relied on the opinions of 10 arbitrators from psychology and mental health professors. There was complete agreement on the items included in the scale.

Scale reliability: Reliability was calculated in two ways:

The reapplication method: the tool was applied twice with a time interval of two weeks, on a group of 100 male and female students from the second year of middle school, and the correlation coefficient between the scores was calculated as 0.750.

The Cronbach method: the scale was applied to a group of 100 male and female students from the second year of middle school, where the reliability coefficient "alpha" was 0.841.

Correction method: It consists of three levels: agree (3), somewhat agree (2), and disagree (1), except for some statements that were reverse-corrected.

The two researchers of this study have re-conducted the validity and reliability as follows:

Scale validity: i.e., internal consistency validity. The two researchers applied the tool to a sample of 20 middle school students not from the basic research sample, and it had the same characteristics.

Table (1) The internal consistency between the dimensions Parental Performance scale and the degree of the scale as a whole (N=20)

Dimensions	Correlation coefficient	Level of significance
Parental knowledge	.709	**
Parental expectation practices	.715	**
Parental monitoring practices	.577	**
Parental discipline practices	.653	**
Parental psychological control	.723	**
Satisfaction with parental control	.694	**

*Significant at (0.05)   **Significant at (0.01)

Table 1 shows that all correlation coefficients are significant, which indicates the validity of the scale for use in what it was designed for.

Scale reliability: It was calculated in two ways:

Cronbach's alpha method, where the reliability coefficient was alpha (.763), which is a high coefficient.

The split-half method: The correlation coefficients between the scores of the individual statements and the scores of the paired statements were calculated, and the correlation coefficient reached (.842).

After using the Spearman-Brown equation to correct this coefficient, the reliability reached (.914), which is a high coefficient indicating that the scale has an appropriate degree of reliability and that its results can be relied upon.

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The second scale: Online game addiction scale, prepared by Mohamed (2008).

Description of the scale: The scale consists of (34) statements that measure students' online game addiction.

Validity of the scale: The scale was presented to 10 arbitrators specialized in educational psychology, teaching curricula and methods, and mental health. The items agreed upon by the arbitrators were accepted at a percentage of (90%) or more, and the scale now consists of (34) phrases.

Scale reliability: Internal consistency was used to calculate the correlation coefficient between each item of the scale and the total score of the scale. The correlation coefficients showed that all statements were statistically significant at a significance level of (0.01), with the exception of (6) statements that did not achieve any statistical significance. The scale in its final form consisted of (34) statements.

Correction method: The gradation of the scale has been modified from a five-point scale to a three-point scale as follows: agree (3), somewhat agree (2), disagree (1), except for some phrases that are reverse corrected.

The two researchers have re-conducted the validity and reliability as follows:

Scale validity: i.e., Internal consistency validity: The two researchers applied the tool to a sample of 20 middle school students not from the basic research sample, and it has the same characteristics.

Table (2) The internal consistency between the scores of each item and the score of the scale as a whole (N=20)

Item	Correlation coefficient	item	Correlation coefficient	Item	Correlation coefficient
1	.577**	13	.471*	25	.771**
2	.681**	14	.516*	26	.349
3	.627**	15	.695**	27	.532*
4	.575**	16	.557**	28	.703**
5	.473*	17	.492*	29	.665**
6	.306	18	.588**	30	.791**
7	.008	19	.564**	31	.687**
8	.522*	20	.700**	32	.715**
9	.116	21	.620**	33	.415
10	.734**	22	.539*	34	.566**
11	.299	23	.419		
12	.570**	24	.644**		

*Significant at (0.05)   **Significant at (0.01)

Table 2 demonstrates a correlation between statements and the total score of the scale. (20) statements were found to be correlated with the total score at (0.01), (7) significant statements were found at (0.05), and (7) insignificant statements were found. All statements that did not achieve a correlation significance of at least (0.05) with the total score of the scale were excluded. The scale now has (27) statements with high values, indicating the validity of the scale and, therefore, it is valid.

Scale reliability: It was calculated in two ways, including **Cronbach's alpha method**, where the reliability coefficient was alpha (.937), which is a high coefficient, and the **split-half method.** The correlation coefficients between the scores of the individual statements and the scores of the paired statements were calculated, and the correlation coefficient reached (.869). After using the Spearman-Brown equation to correct this coefficient, the reliability reached (.930), which is a high coefficient indicating that the scale has an appropriate degree of reliability and that its results can be relied upon.

The study's hypotheses results

The first hypothesis: "There is a statistically significant inverse relationship between parental performance and online game addiction among middle school students."

Table (3) The relationship between father's parental Performance and online game addiction among middle school students (N = 72)

Dimensions	Father's Parental Performance	
	Online game addiction	Level of significance
Parental knowledge	-.181	Non-Significant
Parental expectation	-.364**	0.01
Parental monitoring	-.243*	0.05
Parental discipline	-.007	Non-Significant
Parental psychological control	-.354**	0.01
Satisfaction with parental control	-.339**	0.01
Parental performance as a whole	-.380**	0.01

*Significant at (0.05)   **Significant at (0.01)

Table 3 shows an inverse relationship between paternal performance and online game addiction among middle school students at a significance level of 0.01. Thus, the first hypothesis is accepted. There is also an inverse relationship at a significance

level of 0.01 in the dimensions of parental expectation, parental psychological control, satisfaction with parental control, and online game addiction. There is also an inverse relationship at a significance level of 0.05 in the dimensions of parental monitoring and online game addiction. However, it was not significant in the dimensions of parental knowledge, parental discipline, and online game addiction.

Table (4) The relationship between mother's parental performance and online game addiction among middle school students (N = 72)

Dimensions	Online Game Addiction	Level of significance
Maternal knowledge	-.450**	0.01
Maternal expectation	-.298*	0.05
Maternal monitoring	-.395**	0.01
Maternal discipline	-.010	Non-Significant
Maternal psychological control	-.390**	0.01
Satisfaction with Maternal Control	-.327**	0.01
Maternal performance as a whole	-.467**	0.01

*Significant at (0.05)   **Significant at (0.01)

Table 4 shows an inverse relationship between maternal parenting quality and online game addiction among middle school students at a significance level of 0.01. Therefore, the first hypothesis is accepted. There is also an inverse relationship at a significance level of 0.01 between the dimensions of maternal knowledge, maternal monitoring, maternal psychological control, and satisfaction with maternal control, and online game addiction. There is an inverse relationship at a significance level of 0.05 between the maternal expectation dimension and online game addiction, and there was no statistically significant relationship between the maternal discipline dimension and online game addiction.

The second hypothesis: "There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of males and females in the study sample on the parental performance scale, the father image."

Table (5) The differences between males and females on a scale of father's parental performance among middle school students (N =72)

Dimension	Number	Mean	S.D	Value of t	Level of significance
Males	40	91.08	11.1	.646	0.01
Females	32	88.81	17.1		

The table above shows that there are statistically significant differences between the average scores of males and females in the study sample on the parental performance scale (father image) in favor of males, which proves the validity of the second hypothesis.

The third hypothesis: "There are statistically significant differences between the average scores of males and females in the study sample on the parental performance scale (mother image). "

Table (6) The differences between males and females on a scale of mother's parental performance among middle school students (N = 72)

Dimension	Number	Mean	S.D	Value of t	Level of significance
Males	40	97.88	9.86	.206	Non-Significant
Females	32	97.31	13.32		

Table 6 shows that there are no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of males and females in the study sample on the parental performance scale (mother image), which proves that the third hypothesis is invalid.

The fourth hypothesis: "There are statistically significant differences between the average scores of males and females in the study sample on the online game addiction scale."

Table (7) The differences between males and females on a scale of online game addiction among middle school students (N = 72)

Dimension	Number	Mean	S.D	Value of t	Level of significance
Males	40	50.85	12.41	2.177	0.01
Females	32	45.34	9.03		

Table 7 shows that there are statistically significant differences between the average scores of males and females in the study sample on the online game addiction scale, which proves the validity of the fourth hypothesis.

Discussion:

The current study found an inverse relationship between parental performance (father and mother images) and addiction to online games. This is consistent with the results of the study by Cuong et al. (2021), which showed a link between lack of parental supervision, lack of discipline, or violent discipline, and gaming disorder in Sons. The results of the study by Han et al. (2012) also indicated that family cohesion may be an important factor in treating Sons' problems with online video game addiction. This is in accordance with Bonnaire and

Phan (2017), who emphasized that conflicts and troubled family relationships can lead to Internet gaming disorder among adolescents.

According to cognitive theory, Sons' false and irrational beliefs and ideas make them play online games as a means of escaping family pressures. Therefore, working to change these negative thoughts and self-talk will reduce the severity of Son's addiction to online games.

According to the behavioral theory, the disturbed behavior of students' online game addiction is a learned behavior as a result of the experiences the student has gone through, such as escaping parental punishment or the pressures and tensions they are exposed to. A conditional association occurs between those experiences and the behavior. The student may also resort to online game addiction because of the praise he receives from players when he wins, which represents a pleasant experience for him that he would like to repeat. This represents reinforcement for him, so he works to repeat the behavior to obtain this approval and a sense of pride. Therefore, the behavioral therapist must work to extinguish the negative learned behaviors and teach positive behaviors and reinforce them to reduce the severity of online video game addiction.

The current study also found significant differences between male and female middle school students in the study sample in parenting performance (father image) in favor of males. The study also found no differences between male and female middle school students in the study sample in parenting performance (mother image). This is consistent with the results of the study of Shuaibi (2011), which indicated the presence of statistically significant differences between males and females in the parental treatment style of the father in favour of males, and the absence of significant differences between males and females in the parental treatment style of the mother. This is also consistent with the study by Shek, D. T. (2000), which demonstrated differences in parenting styles between mothers and fathers, the frequency and associated feelings of communication between parents and adolescents, and the quality of the relationship between them. Paternal parenting was less common than maternal parenting, as fathers were perceived as stricter, less demanding, and less caring than mothers. Adolescents expressed more negative feelings when talking to fathers than to mothers, and communication with fathers was generally less frequent. Compared to the mother-adolescent relationship, they rated the father-adolescent relationship lower. Adolescent girls believed their fathers were less strict and more demanding than men.

Given the different roles of fathers and mothers within the family, parental performance may differ, as may children's perceptions of this performance. Males may perceive fathers as sterner than females. This

is indicated by a study by Sorbring, E., Rödholm-Funnemark, M., & Palmérus, K. (2003), which demonstrated differences in parental performance in favor of males and indicated that fathers may punish men more harshly than females.

The current study found differences between males and females in the study sample in online video game addiction in favor of males. This is consistent with the study of Salem (2022), which showed that there are differences between males and females on the electronic games addiction scale in favor of males. The current study also agreed with the study of Su, W., Han, X., Yu, H., Wu, Y., & Potenza, M. N. (2020), which showed that there are differences between males and females in online game addiction in favor of males, while females tend to be addicted to social media.

Indicators of the role of the social worker in improving parental performance and reducing the severity of online game addiction.

1- **The role of the assistant:** The specialist helps students express their different opinions regarding electronic games on the Internet and their impact on the value system, and gives them information and knowledge that helps them understand the importance of limiting the time spent playing these games.

2- **The role of the planner:** The specialist helps students plan programs and activities that may help them not get carried away with electronic games, so that they do not become addicted.

3- **The role of the mediator:** The social worker works as a link between students and their families to make them aware of the danger of continuing to use these games for a long period of time, and to help families follow correct methods in guiding and raising their children.

4- **The role of the teacher:** The specialist teaches students some skills by urging them to participate in interactive activities at school or at home.

Recommendations for Future Research:

- Parental performance and its relationship to self-esteem among middle school students.

- The effectiveness of a training program in reducing online game addiction among middle school students.

The difficulties faced by researchers during the practical application are as follows:

- Difficulty in obtaining the necessary approvals to conduct the practical application of the study due to lengthy routine procedures.

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