

# The Relationship between Internet-based Entertainment and Self-expectations in Education in Adolescents: The Moderating Effect of Parenting Styles

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**Abstract:** Drawing on personal and household data from the China Family Panel Studies (CFPS) 2020, the study aims to examine the relationship between internet-based entertainment and self-expectations in education in adolescents, as well as analyzing the moderating effects of various parenting styles on this relationship. Its research findings reveal that internet use for entertainment purposes, such as online gaming and short-video viewing, can markedly undermine educational aspirations in adolescents; and that parenting styles have no significant influence on the negative effect of frequent short-video viewing on educational aspirations in this group, whereas tolerant parenting can suppress the negative effect of frequent online gaming, as opposed to neglectful parenting.

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## Research Background and Purpose

INTERNET use has permeated many facets of adolescents' life, posing a profound impact on their growth. There have been numerous studies on the short-term effects of internet use on physical and mental health, as well as academic performance, in adolescents, but with few addressing its long-term impacts. Based on data from the China Family Panel Studies (CFPS) 2020, this study explores the relationship between internet-based entertainment and self-expectations in education in this group, as well as analyzing the moderating effects of various parenting styles on this relationship.

## Research Methodology

### *Variables*

- Adolescent self-expectations in education are the dependent variable, measured by the self-reported "expected level of education" in the questionnaire, which was converted into a quantitative variable representing the expected years of education.
- Internet-based entertainment activities, including online gaming and short video viewing, are the independent variables. Binary categorical variables were established based on the questionnaire items "Do you play online games every day?" and "Do you watch short videos every day?"
- The parenting style is the moderating variable. The 14 indicators from the parenting style scale in the self-reporting questionnaire were converted into binary variables, and latent class analysis was adopted to categorize parenting styles into four types: neglectful, authoritarian, tolerant, and authoritative.
- Control variables include personal characteristics, such as gender, age, urban/rural identity, years of education completed, and academic ranking; family-related characteristics, such as home

location, paternal educational level, and paternal occupational status; and school-related characteristics, such as school location, being in a key school or not, and being in a high-performing class or not.

## ***Analysis Methods***

*Multiple Linear Regression:* To control for the effects of other variables on student self- expectations in education, the study employs multiple linear regression analysis to examine the relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable. The regression models include:

- Model 1 for evaluating the effects of control variables on self- expectations in education in adolescents;
- Models 2 and 3, where the independent variables, online gaming and short-video viewing, are incorporated into Model 1, respectively.

*Moderation Analysis:* To explore how different parenting styles influence the relationship between internet-based entertainment on self-expectations in education in adolescents, Models 4 and 5 incorporate interaction terms of “online gaming on a daily basis” X “the parenting style experienced” and “short-video viewing on a daily basis” X “the parenting style experienced,” respectively.

*Robustness Test:* To verify the robustness of the analysis results, a logit regression is conducted using a binary variable, “anticipating college attendance” vs. “not anticipating college attendance, derived from the variable of “adolescent self-expectations in education.” Additionally, the Bootstrap simulation method is employed to further test the statistical significance of the moderating effect of each parenting style on the negative impact of internet-based entertainment on student educational aspiration.

## ***Research Findings***

- (I) Internet-based entertainment, notably online gaming and short-video viewing, has negative effects on adolescent self-expectations in education.
- (II) Parenting styles can moderate the negative effects of online gaming on adolescent educational aspirations. Specifically, neglectful parenting, characterized by indifference to children’s behavior and attitudes, tends to exacerbate the negative effect of online gaming, as opposed to tolerant parenting, which is effective in mitigating its adverse effect.

(III) The moderating effect of any of the four parenting styles on the negative impacts of short-video viewing is statistically insignificant, and robustness tests also do not show any unstable results, which may be due to the piecemeal and highly viral nature of short videos.

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