

# Parenting Views Among Chinese and Japanese Mothers: A Comparative Study Using Structural Equation Modeling

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**Abstract**

Given the increasing diversity of family structures and the ongoing challenge of declining birth rates, a comprehensive understanding of parenting views is essential for both academic research and practical applications. This study aims to identify and compare the parenting views of Chinese and Japanese mothers with children under the age of three, examining the underlying factors contributing to these differences. A questionnaire survey was conducted, and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed to analyze the internal structure of parenting views. The findings reveal that parenting views are multifaceted and interconnected. Notably, perceptions of children serve as the foundation for parenting practices, shaping both caregiving approaches and expectations for children's future development. Furthermore, parenting views are influenced by a range of factors, including cultural norms, social contexts, and educational backgrounds, which significantly impact how parents perceive their roles and responsibilities in child-rearing. These findings underscore the importance of culturally adaptive parenting support policies that consider the diverse backgrounds of families. Policymakers and practitioners should develop targeted support systems that accommodate cultural variations in parenting perspectives to foster effective child-rearing practices in an increasingly globalized society.

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## 1. Introduction

The concept of parenting views encompasses a range of definitions and interpretations that reflect the beliefs, attitudes, and practices of parents in relation to their children. A comprehensive understanding of parenting views is essential for both academic research and practical applications in fields such as psychology, education, and social work. In this study, we define parenting views as caregivers' perspective on their own children (Naito et al., 1998) and the content of their parenting practice (Kalil et al., 2020). Especially for preschool children, the parenting views of the mothers, as the primary caregivers, have a significant impact on children's development (Pang & Li, 1993; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). In recent years, both China and Japan which are part of the Asian region, have been facing severe challenge of declining birth rates.

Compared to the quantity of children, enhancing the quality of Children's development has become a top priority.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics of China, the working-age population (ages 15–59) peaked in 2011 and has since been in decline. In response to this demographic shift, the "one-child policy" was officially abolished in January 2016, replaced by the "two-child policy," and in 2021, families were permitted to have a third child. However, the low birth rate trend persists, highlighting the increasing importance of appropriate parenting support. Policies such as the *Outline for Children's Development in China*, the *Outline for Women's Development in China*, and the *Family Education Guidance Plan* have underscored the relationship between family education, parenting views, and the comprehensive development of children. The *Family Education Promotion Law of the People's Republic of China*, enacted in 2021, emphasizes that "parents are the primary persons responsible for family education, and caregivers should be supported to adopt more scientific parenting views." This reflects the growing recognition of the need for child-rearing support based on parenting views.

Meanwhile, Japan is also grappling with declining birth rates, and research on the importance of family has been actively pursued (Yoneyama, 2018; Nukaga et al., 2021; Omote, 2015). The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) (1998) stated, "Education within the family should fundamentally be entrusted to the family itself and carried out based on individual values and styles," acknowledging the role of parenting views. Furthermore, the *Comprehensive Measures for Addressing the Declining Birth Rate* (2015) emphasized "individual values," recognizing the influence of parenting views on children and child-rearing practices.

As the process of declining birth rates accelerates, social environment changes have also taken place. It has become increasingly evident that caregivers may struggle to raise children relying solely on their own resources, highlighting the necessity of external support. However, the prerequisite for providing appropriate support is a deeper understanding of caregivers, particularly mothers. Although China and Japan differ in terms of social environment and economic development, they share many similarities rooted in traditional culture as part of the Asian cultural sphere (Sheng, 2023). Furthermore, the author's personal experiences in both countries provided the foundation and opportunity for conducting this study.

The purpose of this study is to identify the differences in parenting views between Chinese and Japanese mothers through a questionnaire survey and to explore the underlying reasons behind these differences. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was applied to analyze the complex relationships among variables, providing a robust framework for understanding the factors influencing parenting views and their implications for child-rearing support.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.2 Comparative Studies on Parenting Views Between China and Japan**

The author found out there are 15 studies on parenting views in China and Japan and all of these studies divided into four categories by the research subjects: caregivers (7 studies), university students (6 studies), child-rearing women with experience (1 study), and studies focusing on literature reviews (1 study). Almost all of studies utilized quantitative methods, specifically questionnaire surveys.

Firstly, studies have revealed differences in parenting views and emotional responses between China and Japan. For example, Japanese female university students demonstrated higher intentions to raise children compared to their Chinese counterparts, but they expressed concerns about balancing work and parenting responsibilities (Kikuchi et al., 2009). Similarly, Japanese

mothers were found to lack confidence in managing both work and parenting simultaneously (Okamoto, 2002; Song et al., 2010; Cui et al., 2017; Zhang, 2019). This lack of confidence can be attributed to the enduring influence of the "three-year-old myth" and traditional gender roles, which contributed to lower positive emotional responses toward parenting among Japanese mothers (Okamoto, 2002). In contrast, Chinese mothers have increasingly embraced shared parenting due to the promotion of gender equality following the post-war era. However, some studies indicate that male university students in China disapprove of women continuing their careers after childbirth (Cui et al., 2017), suggesting that the promotion of gender equality remains a critical issue in the Chinese context.

Secondly, differences in expectations for children are evident between Chinese and Japanese mothers. Japanese mothers tend to prioritize individuality and personal development over academic achievements (Zhou et al., 2006). In contrast, Chinese mothers, shaped by the "one-child policy," often set higher expectations for their children, projecting their own dreams and ambitions onto them (Xu et al., 2007). Additionally, some Chinese mothers view child-rearing as a means of preparing for old age, further elevating their expectations for their children (Zhang, 2019). The introduction of the "three-child policy" in 2021 may have implications for these expectations, highlighting the need for further comparative research on this topic.

At last, parenting practices also differ significantly between the two countries. For example, Chinese parents emphasize fostering creativity and imagination in their children, while Japanese parents prioritize the development of perseverance (Kanazaki, 1997). In terms of academic performance, Chinese parents exhibit a greater focus on achievement due to their higher expectations (Uemura et al., 2019). Regarding discipline, Chinese parents are more likely to use verbal correction, whereas Japanese parents tend to scold their children (Kanazaki, 1997).

While existing comparative studies between China and Japan have provided valuable insights, there remains a notable lack of research conducted after the implementation of China's "three-child policy." Given the global emphasis on early childhood education, particularly during the critical first 1000 days after birth (Doan & Wang, (2010); Draper et al., 2024), it is imperative to focus on mothers raising children under the age of three. Additionally, due to geographic proximity, the number of Chinese immigrants residing in Japan has steadily increased in recent years. These individuals are shaped by the social and cultural backgrounds of both countries, and their unique perspectives and values should also be considered in comparative research.

## **2.2 Structural Equation Modeling in Cross-Cultural Research**

In terms of methodology, questionnaire surveys remain an effective approach to understanding the current state of specific issues, particularly when large samples are required. Furthermore, the application of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) enables researchers to examine complex relationships between variables, providing a clearer and more nuanced understanding of the results. SEM is particularly well-suited for cross-cultural studies, as it allows for the simultaneous analysis of direct and indirect effects, offering a robust framework for investigating the multifaceted influences on parenting views.

For example, Chen-Bouck & Patterson (2015) utilized SEM to investigate perceptions of parental control among Chinese youth, focusing on the influence of cultural values and norms. Their findings revealed that parental control was perceived negatively when it conflicted with the development of individual identity, highlighting the importance of cultural context in shaping parenting practices. Similarly, Huang & Lamb (2014) analyzed parenting practices among first-generation Chinese immigrants in the United Kingdom, demonstrating that acculturation led

to significant shifts in parenting styles, transitioning from traditional authoritarian approaches to more authoritative styles reflective of the dominant culture. These findings illustrate SEM's capacity to capture the influence of cultural adaptation on parenting over time.

In another study, Smetana et al. (2013) examined cultural differences in American and Chinese children's evaluations of personal domain events and their resistance to parental authority. The results highlighted significant variations in children's perceptions of autonomy and authority across cultural contexts, demonstrating the effectiveness of SEM in analyzing complex relationships and capturing nuanced cross-cultural differences in child development. Peng (2023) extended this approach by using SEM to explore cross-cultural perspectives on parental care among Chinese and Japanese university students. This research identified shared themes, such as a lack of trust in external caregiving and the emphasis on parent-child interactions, showcasing SEM's potential in analyzing both shared and divergent cultural attitudes toward parenting.

SEM has also been used in Japanese research. Wakimizu & Wang (2022) explored factors contributing to parenting stress among Chinese mothers living in Japan. Their findings revealed that cultural differences and the availability of social support significantly influenced stress levels, highlighting the importance of providing culturally sensitive support systems for immigrant families. Similarly, Takagi & Saito (2013) examined the impact of family support on the morale of older parents in Japan, considering the traditional belief in filial piety. Their analysis revealed that adherence to cultural norms positively influenced parental morale, demonstrating SEM's ability to analyze the interplay between cultural values and family dynamics.

The literature demonstrates that SEM is good for investigating parenting views and practices across cultural contexts. Its application extends beyond descriptive analysis, offering insights into the mechanisms underlying cultural influences on parenting behaviors. For this study, SEM is employed to analyze the relationships among perceptions of children, parenting content, and expectations for children, providing a clearer understanding of the factors that shape parenting views in China and Japan.

### **2.3 Linking Perceptions to Parenting Practices and Aspirations: A Theoretical Basis**

In the 1990s, research on parenting views in China primarily focused on defining internal relationships. In Yu & Xin (1995) study, he pointed out the parenting views include the perception of child, parent-child relationship, cognition of children's development and expectations for child. Based on this content, Yu discussed how the perception of children is high likely to influence parenting practice and expectations. Li et al., (1997) used a questionnaire to explore internal structure of parenting views. They found out that incorrect parental cognition about children could lead to inappropriate educational methods and approaches. Xu & Pang (2001) summarized the content of parenting views based on the existing studies. They argued the perception of child forms the foundation of parenting behaviors and expectation. They emphasized that all parents should establish an accurate cognition, recognizing that every child has unique characteristics. Parents should adopt suitable approaches to education while setting appropriate goals.

The researches overseas also discussed the structure of parenting views. A conclusion is well-known for caregiving cognitions engender caregiving practices and children's development and adjustment (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; De Houwer, 1999; Goodnow, 2002; Holden & Buck, 2002; Sigel & McGillicuddy-De Lisi, 2002). One foundational study by Bornstein et al. (2017) discussed the model we talked above through an eight-year longitudinal study involving 317 participants, which suggests that how parents perceive their children can significantly influence their parenting styles and behavioral outcomes. Besides, some studies used specific case proving

the relationship in parenting views. For example, Earnesty et al. (2019) explored how parental views on dietary quality and physical activity levels reflect broader parenting styles and goals. They argued that these perceptions are influenced by cultural and socioeconomic factors, which in turn affect how parents educate their children about health and nutrition. This indicates that parents' beliefs about their children's needs and capabilities can directly shape the educational content like health and wellness. Chen's (2024) study on parenting stress and children's behaviors further illustrated that parents' perceptions of their children's prosocial behaviors can influence their educational expectations and stress levels. This dynamic suggested that how parents view their children's social capabilities can shape the educational content they prioritize, particularly in social and emotional learning.

In summary, the literature consistently demonstrates that parental perceptions of their children significantly influence educational content and practices. These perceptions shape not only the expectations parents hold for their children but also the educational environments and curricula that children experience, ultimately impacting their academic success and social development.

Based on the above theoretical discussions, this study constructs a conceptual model (Figure 1) linking perceptions of children to parenting practices and expectations. This model hypothesizes that parental perceptions significantly influence parenting content, which in turn affects their aspirations and goals for their children.

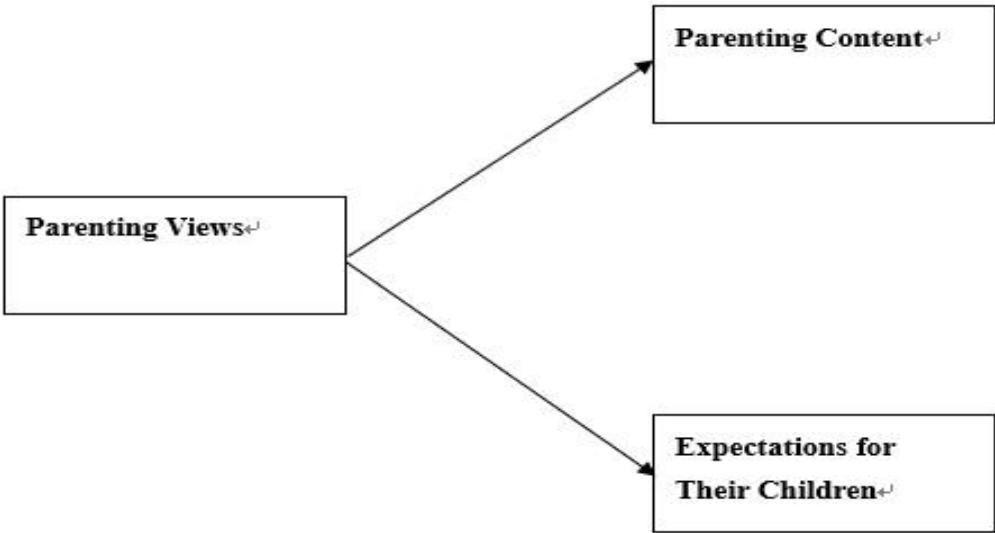


Figure 1: The conceptual model in this study

3. Methodology and Procedures

3.1 Participants and Procedures

The sample of this study was draw from Chinese mothers(n=300) in Shanghai, Chinese mothers(n=174) in Japan and Japanese mothers(n=307) in Osaka, Japan. And all of mothers have children under the age of three. This project received ethical approval from the Osaka University of Comprehensive Children Education (JI-HO-KEN-086). The survey was conducted from July 1 to July 31, 2023.

For Chinese mothers, a QR code linked to the online questionnaire along with a request letter was shared in WeChat groups, a popular social media application in China, allowing participants to complete the questionnaire voluntarily. The request letter explicitly stated the eligibility criteria, i.e., "raising children under the age of three," and the questionnaire included a question asking for

the child's age to ensure that data not meeting the criteria would be automatically excluded. To identify Chinese mothers residing in Japan, a question on the participants' residential location was also included.

For Japanese mothers, the questionnaire was distributed at daycare centers, certified childcare centers, and child-rearing support centers in Japan. The author personally explained the research objectives to the facility directors both verbally and in writing, and clarified that submission of the completed questionnaire would be regarded as consent. The facility directors then distributed the questionnaires directly to the participants. All completed questionnaires were collected via Google Forms.

### 3.2 Questionnaire Content

The questionnaire consisted of two main sections: the basic attributes of the respondents, and their parenting views.

The scale for assessing mothers' parenting views was adapted, with permission, from the survey conducted by Benesse Corporation titled *The 2018 International Survey on Family Education in Early Childhood: A Study Targeting Parents in Four Countries (Japan, China, Indonesia, and Finland)*. This survey comprises three subscales:

**Perception of the child** (9 items),

**Parenting policies** (areas of focus in raising the child) (15 items),

**Expectations for the child's future** (10 items).

The subscales were developed based on items used in previous surveys, such as the *1995 Survey on Preschool Children's Lives* (domestic and international surveys). These items were modified to reflect changes in target populations and societal contexts, and the subscales were refined in collaboration with researchers. Consequently, the scale is considered well-established and reliable.

For this study, the scale was borrowed in its entirety, and response options for the scale ranged from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 4 (Strongly agree).

### 3.3 Statistical analyses

The statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS Version 26 and AMOS Version 26. Descriptive statistics were performed to examine the basic attributes of the mothers, and their parenting views. Prior to conducting factor analysis, ceiling and floor effects were checked for all items to ensure suitability for further analysis.

Since the factor analysis results of the parenting views scale from Benesse Corporation were not disclosed, the author combined data from all respondents and conducted an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using the principal factor method with direct oblimin rotation. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test and Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated to assess sampling adequacy and reliability, respectively. This approach allowed the extraction of a common factor structure applicable across the three groups (Harman, 1976; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993; Cheung & Rensvold, 2002).

Based on the results of the factor analysis, correlation analyses were performed to explore the relationships between the identified factors. Subsequently, structural equation modeling (SEM) using AMOS was employed to illustrate the differences in parenting views and child-rearing support among the three groups. This method provided a comprehensive understanding of the group-specific variations.

## 4. Results and Discussion

## 4.1 Result

### (1) Descriptive Statistics

The ages of all mothers were predominantly concentrated in their 20s to 40s. Regarding educational background, the majority of mothers were university graduates. In terms of family structure, while nuclear families were the most common across the three groups, 30% of Chinese mothers lived with grandparents.

As for employment status within the household, Japanese mothers and Chinese mothers in Japan commonly had dual-income households, although 30% of these families had only the father employed. In contrast, among Chinese mothers, dual-income households were the predominant family type.

The number of children being raised also showed notable differences: among Japanese mothers, nearly 60% had one child, while around 30% had two. For Chinese mothers in Japan, nearly 80% had one child, with less than 20% having two children. Similarly, 80% of Chinese mothers had one child, and fewer than 20% had two.

### (2) Analysis of the Structure of Parenting Views

To examine the structure of parenting views, exploratory factor analyses (EFA) were conducted for the following three scales: **Perception of the Child**, **Parenting Content**, and **Expectations for the Child's Future**. No items with floor effects were identified. For items exhibiting ceiling effects, decisions to retain them were made based on factor loadings.

#### ① Perception of the Child

The EFA results for this scale are presented in **Table 1**. After excluding items with factor loadings below 0.4, six items were retained, and two factors were extracted. The cumulative contribution rate for the two factors was 74.475%, with a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of 0.790 and a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.822, confirming internal consistency and sample adequacy.

**Factor 1**, consisting of three items such as "a being to entrust my dreams to" and "a being who will care for me in the future," reflects traditional views and was labeled "**Traditional Being**."

**Factor 2**, also comprising three items, includes statements such as "a being associated with many worries or hardships" and was labeled "**Negative Being**."

Table 1: Factor Analysis Results for Perception of the Child as a Being

Items	Factor 1	Factor 2	Cronbach's Alpha
A being to entrust my dreams to	0.96	-0.128	0.858
A being who will care for me in the future	0.753	0.034	
A being who continues the family lineage	0.755	0.082	
A being associated with many worries or hardships	-0.07	0.815	0.746
A financially burdensome being	0.02	0.679	
A being who restricts my freedom	0.412	0.487	

Note. Factor Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring

Rotation Method: Oblimin Rotation with Kaiser Normalization

## ②Parenting Content

The EFA results for this scale are shown in **Table 2**. After excluding items with factor loadings below 0.4, 15 items were retained, and three factors were extracted. The cumulative contribution rate for these factors was 65.842%, with a KMO value of 0.940 and a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.927, indicating strong internal consistency.

**Factor 1**, labeled "**Social Content**," consisted of six items, such as "teaching social manners and rules" and "fostering empathy for others."

**Factor 2**, labeled "**Learning Content**," comprised five items, including "developing artistic talent" and "learning foreign languages."

**Factor 3**, labeled "**Recreational Content**," included four items, such as "playing outdoors" and "interacting with nature."

Table 2: Factor Analysis Results for Parenting Content

Items	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Cronbach's Alpha
Teaching social manners and rules	0.799	-0.102	-0.098	0.877
Fostering empathy for others	0.748	-0.006	0.021	
Developing basic life habits	0.716	0.004	0.08	
Expressing one's feelings and thoughts	0.698	0.007	0.089	
Doing tasks independently	0.468	-0.229	0.089	
Building physical strength	0.423	-0.126	0.276	
Developing artistic talent	0.032	-0.794	0.069	0.870
Learning foreign languages	-0.006	-0.732	0.061	
Valuing traditions and culture	-0.025	-0.704	0.113	
Learning numbers and letters	0.253	-0.671	-0.168	
Playing with friends	0.043	-0.473	0.308	
Playing outdoors	-0.03	-0.211	0.665	0.825
Interacting with nature	-0.003	-0.227	0.661	
Expanding interests and curiosity	0.205	-0.02	0.555	
Frequent parent-child interaction	0.306	0.102	0.533	

Note. Factor Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring

Rotation Method: Oblimin Rotation with Kaiser Normalization

## ③Expectations for the Child's Future

The EFA results for this scale are presented in **Table 3**. After excluding items with factor



loadings below 0.4, seven items were retained, and two factors were extracted. The cumulative contribution rate was 68.354%, with a KMO value of 0.828 and a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.835, confirming sample adequacy and reliability.

**Factor 1**, labeled "**Social Expectations**," comprised five items, including "becoming a person with leadership skills" and "performing well in their job."

**Factor 2**, labeled "**Personal Expectations**," consisted of three items, such as "valuing their own family" and "caring for friends."

Table 3: Factor Analysis Results for Expectations for the Child's Future

Items	Factor 1	Factor 2	Cronbach's Alpha
Becoming a person with leadership skills	0.829	-0.1	0.850
Performing well in their job	0.769	0.063	
Being respected by others	0.758	0.078	
Contributing to society	0.694	-0.053	
Becoming financially affluent	0.598	0.087	
Valuing their own family	0.007	0.822	0.740
Caring for friends	0.012	0.706	

Note. Factor Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring

Rotation Method: Oblimin Rotation with Kaiser Normalization

### (3) Internal Structure of Parenting Views

#### ① Correlation Analysis of Parenting Views Across Three Groups

The results of the exploratory factor analyses (EFA) provided a framework for understanding the structure of parenting views. To further explore the relationships among these constructs, a correlation analysis was conducted across the three groups: Japanese mothers, Chinese mothers in Japan, and Chinese mothers.

The primary aim of this analysis was to examine the extent in these three dimensions are interconnected within each group and to identify potential differences in these associations. By doing this, we aimed to reveal what factors shape the interplay between **perceptions of children**, **parenting content**, and **expectations for the child's future**.

A key shared tendency across all three groups is the significant positive correlation between **traditional being** and **learning content**. For Japanese mothers, the correlation coefficient was  $r=.419$ ,  $p<.01$ , while for Chinese mothers in Japan and Chinese mothers, the coefficients were  $r=.278$ ,  $p<.01$  and  $r=.248$ ,  $p<.01$ , respectively.

Another commonality is the strong positive correlation between **traditional being** and **negative being**, observed in all three groups. The correlation coefficients were  $r=.399$ ,  $p<.01$ , for Japanese mothers,  $r=.439$ ,  $p<.01$ , for Chinese mothers in Japan, and  $r=.406$ ,  $p<.01$ , for Chinese mothers.

Despite these shared patterns, distinct differences were observed in how traditional perceptions relate to other parenting dimensions.

For Japanese mothers, **traditional being** were positively correlated with **social content** ( $r=.245$ ,  $p<.01$ ) and **recreational content** ( $r=.247$ ,  $p<.01$ ). Moreover, a significant positive correlation was

found between **traditional being** and **social expectations** ( $r=.404, p<.01$ ). For Chinese mothers in Japan, **traditional being** were strongly correlated with **social expectations** ( $r=.284, p<.01$ ) and **learning content** ( $r=.278, p<.01$ ). For Chinese mothers, **traditional being** showed a contrasting pattern. A significant negative correlation was observed with **social content** ( $r=-.398, p<.01$ ) and **recreational content** ( $r=-.170, p<.01$ ).

## ②Structural Equation Modeling of Parenting Views

The correlation analysis provided insights into the relationships between **traditional being**, **parenting content**, and **expectations for the child’s future**. However, these correlations do not reveal the causal pathways or the simultaneous influences of multiple variables. To address this limitation, structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed to explore the intricate relationships within the hypothesized framework. And the structural equation model (**Figure 2**) showed a very good fit to the data,  $\chi^2=37.005, p=0.05$ , CFI= 0.985, TLI=0.974; RMSEA=0.037 (90% CI:0.020,0.054).

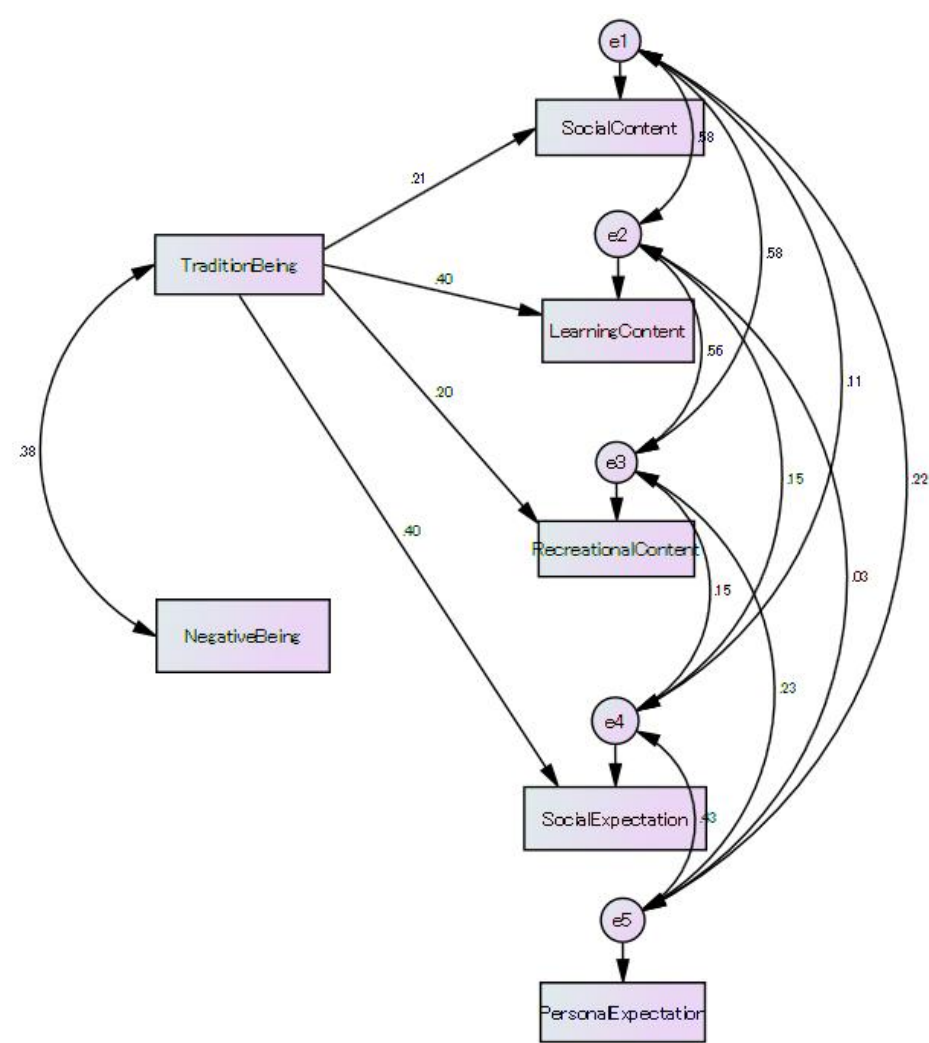


Figure 2. The structural equation model about parenting views among Chinese and Japanese mothers

This standardized path coefficients obtained from SEM analysis are shown in **Table 4**. The path from **Traditional being** to **Social Content** was significant for Japanese mothers but not significant for Chinese mothers in Japan. In contrast, for Chinese mothers in Shanghai, this path

was significantly negative.

The path from **Traditional being** to **Learning Content** was significant for all three groups: Japanese mothers, Chinese mothers in Japan and Chinese mothers in Shanghai.

The path from **Traditional being** to **Recreational Content** was significant for Japanese mothers and marginally significant for Chinese mothers in Shanghai. For Chinese mothers in Japan, this path was not significant.

The path from **Traditional being** to **Social Expectations** was significant among Japanese mothers and Chinese mothers in Japan. However, this path was not significant among Chinese mothers in Shanghai.

Table 4: Path Coefficients of Parenting Views: SEM Results by Group

Path	Group	B	$\beta$	SE	p
Traditional Being → Social Content	Japanese Mothers	0.156	0.211	0.040	***
	Chinese Mothers in Japan	0.24	0.054	0.030	0.416
	Chinese Mothers in Shanghai	-0.118	-0.403	0.015	***
Traditional Being → Learning Content	Japanese Mothers	0.366	0.400	0.048	***
	Chinese Mothers in Japan	0.184	0.263	0.046	***
	Chinese Mothers in Shanghai	0.102	0.242	0.023	***
Traditional Being → Recreational Content	Japanese Mothers	0.155	0.200	0.042	***
	Chinese Mothers in Japan	-0.029	-0.054	0.036	0.429
	Chinese Mothers in Shanghai	-0.058	-0.174	0.018	**
Traditional Being → Social Expectations	Japanese Mothers	0.289	0.397	0.035	***
	Chinese Mothers in Japan	0.133	0.229	0.037	***
	Chinese Mothers in Shanghai	-0.017	-0.039	0.025	0.481

Based on the correlation analysis and SEM, the differences in parent views among Chinese and Japanese mothers were cleared.

## 4.2 Discussion

### (1) Over view of Participants

Based on these descriptive statistics, it is evident that the characteristics of mothers in the three groups reflect their respective sociocultural contexts and policy influences. For instance, the age distribution and high proportion of highly educated Chinese mothers in Japan may be attributed to their educational pursuits and professional advancement opportunities, which likely impacted their timing of marriage and childbirth. Additionally, the high proportion of dual-income households among Chinese mothers highlights the long-standing implementation of gender equality policies in China. These policies have promoted women's economic independence and expanded their roles, with female workforce participation serving as a critical indicator of regional socio-economic development. In Shanghai, for example, over 70% of women aged 18-64

are employed (Fourth National Survey on the Social Status of Women, 2020), aligning with the findings of this study.

Regarding the number of children, the results indicate that Chinese mothers and Chinese mothers in Japan are more likely to have only one child. This pattern may be influenced by the fact that most of the mothers in this study were born during the "One-Child Policy" era, which may have shaped their views and decisions on family size.

## **(2) Japanese Mothers: Continuity of Confucian Values and Family Institution**

For Japanese mothers, the path from **Traditional Being** to **Social Expectations** was positive, reflecting the enduring influence of Confucian ideals and Japan's family-centered cultural system. Japanese culture emphasizes the harmony between individual and the society, which means if you are the only one who is happy, it will attract attention (Uchida, 2022). This leads mothers to contribute to educate children to shoulder social responsibilities and bringing honor to the family. At the same time, Confucian principles of intergenerational responsibility and collective well-being encourage Japanese mothers show high expectations on their children's social value. Additionally, Japan's educational discourse has promoted that cognitive and non-cognitive abilities are important, which fostering a holistic approach to child development. Japanese mothers' focus on comprehensive education reflects the contemporary educational ideals.

## **(3) Chinese Mothers in Shanghai: A Conflict of Tradition and Modernity**

In contrast, Chinese mothers in Shanghai showed a weaker or non-significant relationship between **Traditional Being** and **Social Expectations**, which is inferred to be influenced by the legacy of the one-child policy (Li, 2009). This policy shifted parental priorities toward ensuring children's individual well-being rather than their societal contributions.

While societal expectations may have reduced, the focus on **Learning Content** remains strong, reflecting a modern adaptation of Confucian values. The strong positive correlation between **Traditional Being** and **Learning Content** demonstrates the continued emphasis on academic success. This is further amplified by societal pressures, including intense educational competition. These pressures compel mothers to prioritize academic achievements as a means of securing future success for their children, blending traditional consideration with contemporary challenges.

## **(4) Chinese Mother in Japan: A Unique Cross-Cultural Perspective**

Chinese mothers in Japan exhibited patterns that bridged the cultural norms of both countries, which is consistent with literature review. The significant positive path between **Traditional Being** and **Social Expectations** mirrors the influence of their Japanese counterparts, while their balanced emphasis on both **Learning Content** and **Social Content** reflects the dual impact of Chinese and Japanese cultural values.

This group's results underscore the complexity of navigating dual cultural influences. While they retain traditional Chinese values paying attention to academic success, their exposure to Japan's holistic educational philosophy may lead to a more balanced parenting approach. This unique hybridization of parenting views warrants further exploration, particularly regarding its long-term effects on children's development.

# **5. Conclusion and Suggestion**

## **5.1 Conclusion**

Based on the above analysis, this study explored the internal structure of parenting views among Chinese and Japanese mothers with children under the age of three through SEM. The results of this study suggest that the structure of parenting views is complex and have a tense connection

with each other. Notably, perception of child plays the fundamental role in showing the direction for parenting practice. Therefore, fostering a comprehensive and accurate understanding of children is essential when designing effective parenting support initiatives. The journey of parenting is often fraught with challenges, particularly in understanding the complex processes of child development. Parenting support encompasses a range of resources and services designed to assist parents in navigating these challenges. Research indicates that when parents receive adequate support, they are better equipped to comprehend their children's developmental milestones, leading to more effective parenting practices and improved child outcomes (Pettit & Bates, 1989).

And parenting views is influenced by multiple factors such as culture (Earnesty et al., 2019), social background (Robertson et al., 2016) and educational experience (Aamro et al., 2023). These influences significantly affect how parents perceive their roles and responsibilities in child-rearing, as well as their approaches to various aspects of parenting. Recognizing these influences is essential for developing effective parenting support programs that can help parents navigate their roles and enhance their children's development.

As globalization continues to advance, international migration has become increasingly common, bringing unique challenges to immigrant families. Migrant parents have dual cultural backgrounds and social experiences, which impact their belief and practice. Under the premise of promoting inclusive education, providing parenting support for immigration population is indispensable. Tailored interventions should acknowledge the dual cultural influences on immigrant families, ensuring that support systems are both culturally sensitive and practical for the diverse realities of migrant parents.

## **5.2 Limitation**

Although this study offers valuable insights into the difference and structure of parenting views among Chinese and Japanese mothers, there are still some limitations. Using questionnaire helps us understanding the overview of mothers' views, but fail in getting the reasons behind it. As a result, the findings may not fully reflect the complexity like cultural, societal and other factors that might shape the parenting views.

To make up for this limitation, the author plans to conduct an in-depth interview for mothers live in China and Japan upon the findings of this survey. The purpose of interview is aiming to uncover the underlying causes and processes what contribute to the development of parenting views. By combining qualitative and quantitative methods, future research seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of parenting views. And also provides more targeted and culturally sensitive recommendations for parenting support.

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