

# Factors Associated With Mothers' Responsive Parenting and Childrearing Confidence as Predictors of Children's Well-Being During COVID-19 Pandemic

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## (1) Purpose of this Study

### Suggestions from Previous Studies

Previous studies have shown that children's mental health has been negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, a threatening factor to their well-being. We conducted an international comparative survey among eight Asian countries to find solutions to ensure children's well-being even under challenging circumstances such as this pandemic. **Our previous analysis confirmed that mothers' "responsive parenting attitude" and "childrearing confidence" predict children's well-being.**

### Purpose of this Study

Therefore, **the purpose of this study is to verify factors that predict mothers' "responsive parenting attitude" and "childrearing confidence"** based on the results of our international collaborative survey in eight Asian countries, including country-specific results.

### Research Questions

-What are the factors predicting mothers' "responsive parenting attitudes"?  
 -What are the factors predicting mothers' "childrearing confidence"?  
 This study will show trends in Asian countries as a whole, and by each country, with regard to the research questions above.

## (2) Brief Description of the Survey

### Questionnaire Survey

-Conducted from August to November 2021, using common question items.  
 -Targeted 1,973 mothers of 5-year-olds in 8 Asian countries. (Japan, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand)  
 -Since there was a data defect in Malaysia, analysis was conducted with data from seven countries, excluding Malaysia.

### Scales and Items used for the Evaluation of Variables

The dependent variables, Mothers' "responsive parenting" and "childrearing confidence", were generated using the method introduced in Table 1. Referring to previous studies, the independent variables were set as the following five variables regarding support for mothers and two demographic variables (Table 1).

Table1: Scales and items used for the evaluation of variables

Dependent Variables	Mothers' responsive parenting attitude	A synthetic variable of seven items extracted as "mothers' responsive parenting attitude" as a result of a factor analysis out of the ten items regarding mothers' parenting attitudes.
	Mothers' childrearing confidence	One of the six single items relating to mothers' childrearing perceptions.
Independent Variables	Fathers' support	Two factors were extracted from the factor analysis of nine items regarding spousal support. Both were set as synthetic variables; one as "Fathers' support for wives", and the other as the "Fathers' support for childrearing".
	For wives For childrearing	
	Support from childcare facilities	A synthetic variable of five items combined into one factor from a factor analysis on the five items regarding the involvement of childcare facilities (caregivers/teachers) with children and mothers and the support provided.
Division with other family members	Share of childrearing	An item asking about the proportion of sharing childrearing tasks with family members (including father, grandparents living together, domestic helper, etc.).
	Share of housework	An item asking about the proportion of sharing household chores with family members (including father, grandparents living together, domestic helper, etc.).
Demographic variables	Mothers' academic background	An item asking about the mothers' academic background (highest education).
	Household income	An item asking about the total annual household income in 2020, the year prior to the administered survey.

### Analysis

A multiple regression analysis was conducted on the aggregated seven-countries data and individual country data using IBM SPSS Statistics 24, with the above dependent variables and independent variables.

## (3) Results

### Dependent Variable: Mothers' Responsive Parenting Attitude

Table2: Analysis Results for Mothers' Responsive Parenting Attitude as a Dependent Variable (5-year-olds, overall data of 7 countries)

		R <sup>2</sup>
		.140***
		B
Independent Variables	Fathers' support for wives	.178***
	Fathers' support for childrearing	.071*
	Support from childcare facilities	.234***
	Mothers' share of childrearing	.056+
	Mothers' share of housework	N.S.
	Mothers' academic background	.061*
	Household Income	-.067*

+p < .10. \*p < .05. \*\*p < .01. \*\*\*p < .001

Table3: Analysis Results for Mothers' Responsive Parenting Attitude as a Dependent variable (5-year-olds, by country)

	JPN	CHN	PHL	TWN	IDN	SGP	THA	
	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup>
	.149***	.002	.049*	.053*	.175***	.120*	.099**	
	β	β	β	β	β	β	β	
Independent Variables	Fathers' support for wives	.240*	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	.206**	.346*	N.S.
	Fathers' support for childrearing	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	.219*	.163*	N.S.	N.S.
	Support from childcare facilities	.172*	N.S.	.287***	.124+	.251***	.246*	.142+
	Mothers' share of childrearing	.307**	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.
	Mothers' share of housework	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	.169*	N.S.	N.S.
	Mothers' academic background	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	.211**
	Household Income	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.

+p < .10. \*p < .05. \*\*p < .01. \*\*\*p < .001

### Dependent Variable: Mothers' Childrearing Confidence

Table4: Analysis Results for Mothers' Childrearing Confidence as a Dependent Variable (5-year-olds, overall data of 7 countries)

		R <sup>2</sup>
		.142***
		β
Independent Variables	Fathers' support for wives	.153***
	Fathers' support for childrearing	.143***
	Support from childcare facilities	.182***
	Mothers' share of childrearing	.146***
	Mothers' share of housework	-.113***
	Mothers' academic background	N.S.
	Household Income	-.091**

+p < .10. \*p < .05. \*\*p < .01. \*\*\*p < .001

Table5: Analysis Results for Mothers' Childrearing Confidence as a Dependent Variable (5-year-olds, by country)

	JPN	CHN	PHL	TWN	IDN	SGP	THA	
	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup>
	.019	.050*	-.009	.007	.129***	.192**	.166***	
	β	β	β	β	β	β	β	
Independent Variables	Fathers' support for wives	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	.156*	.418**	N.S.
	Fathers' support for childrearing	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	.249***	N.S.	N.S.
	Support from childcare facilities	N.S.	N.S.	.137+	N.S.	.143*	N.S.	.235**
	Mothers' share of childrearing	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	.242+	.326**
	Mothers' share of housework	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.
	Mothers' academic background	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.
	Household Income	N.S.	.139*	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.

+p < .10. \*p < .05. \*\*p < .01. \*\*\*p < .001

## (4) Findings, Conclusion and Implications

### Findings

- The factor of "support from childcare facilities" showed the strongest association with both mothers' "responsive parenting attitude" and "childrearing confidence". This was the strongest predicting factor for the dependent variables (i.e. responsive parenting and childrearing confidence). (Tables 2-4)
- The aggregated data analysis indicated a positive association between "mothers' share of childrearing division" and both dependent variables. In contrast, "mothers' share of housework division" was negatively associated with their "childrearing confidence". (Tables 2 & 4)
- The individual country data analysis indicated that significant variables for responsive parenting attitude and childrearing confidence differ by country, which reflects the different situations in each country. (Tables 3 & 5)

### Conclusion and Implications

This study indicated that the factor of "support from childcare facilities" (a synthetic variable consisting of ECEC teachers' interaction with children and support for mothers) shows the strongest association with mothers' responsive parenting attitude and childrearing confidence. **This result emphasizes the importance of ECEC teachers' support for children and mothers during the pandemic.** Based on the aggregated data, mothers' higher share of housework was associated with lower confidence in childrearing, which suggests that **securing support for mothers in their housework would promote mothers' confidence in childrearing.** It should be noted, however, that the specific situation may be different among countries although they are geographically located within Asia. Therefore, to gain deeper insight, we need to consider each country's social and cultural background.

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