

## The Impact of Perspective Taking and Gender Differences on the Encouragement of Social Competence for the Next Generation: The Evidence From Chinese Parents

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**Abstract :** Background: For the development of children, it is important for parents to encourage children not only on academic competence but also on children's social competence. In the western cultural context, parents emphasize more heavily on female children's social-behavioral development. However, whether the conclusion is correct in eastern culture and whether the parent's gender affects such an emphasis remains unclear. And, more valuably, from the perspective of intervention, except for the nature factors - child's gender and parent's gender, it is also worth to probe whether the improvable factors, such as parent's perspective taking, influence parent's emphasis on child's social competence. Aim: This study was aimed to investigate the impact of parent's gender, child's gender, and parent's perspective-taking on parent's attitudes of encouragement of the child's social competence under the Chinese cultural context. Method: 461 Chinese parents whose children were in the first year of middle school during the research time participated in this study. Among all participants, there were 155 fathers and 306 mothers. The research adopted the self-report of perspective-taking, which is the sub-scale of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index and the self-report of the encouragement on a child's social communication, which is the sub-scale of the Chinese version of The Children Rearing Practice Report. In this study, 291 parents reported regarding male children, and 170 parents reported regarding female children. Results: Contrary to the traditional western theory, which usually suggests parent puts more attention on social development and competence to girl the instead of the boy, in the Chinese context, parent emphasizes social competence more on the male child. Analogically, in China, compared to mother, father underscores the child's social competence more heavily. By constructing the hierarchical regression model, the result indicated that after controlling the variables of the gender of child and the gender of parent, parent's perspective-taking still explains for the variance of parent's encouragement on child's social competence, which means, parent's perspective-taking predicts parent's encouragement on child's social competence after excluding the impact of the gender of parent and child. Conclusion: For Chinese parents, the ability of perspective-taking is beneficial to enhance their awareness of encouraging children's social competence.

**Keywords :** parent; child, gender differences, perspective-taking, social development

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