

Public Abstract

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Title:Japanese and U.S. Mothers Concerns and Experts Advice: Content Analyses of Mothers Questions on Online Message Boards and Experts Advice in Parenting Magazines

The purpose of this cross-cultural study was to compare (a) maternal concerns related to childrearing through analyses of online message boards, (b) childrearing strategies suggested by experts in recent parenting magazines in the U.S. and Japan. A total of 241 messages posted in 2007 by mothers of 0- to 2-year-olds on two U.S. and two Japanese parenting magazine websites were content analyzed. All messages pertained to one or more of six domains of childrearing: feeding/eating, toilet-training, sleep, development, discipline, and mother-child relationships. Every issue of the four U.S. and four Japanese best selling parenting magazines published in the years 2005 and 2006 (a total of 181 magazines) were also content analyzed to examine advice given to parents of 0- to 2-year-olds in the six domains. The results suggested that mothers childrearing concerns in the two countries were similar in some areas but also differed markedly in others. For example, U.S. mothers seemed to worry more about children not sleeping alone than did Japanese mothers. Childrearing strategies suggested by the U.S. and Japanese experts were also similar in many ways, which implies a globalization of childrearing practice. Both countries are importing advice from other cultures. In Japan, the promotion of autonomy, based on Western child development theory, seems to be infused with Japanese traditional parenting ideologies.