

# The Effects of Children's Gender and Urban-rural Categorical Differences on Parents' Parenting Views

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**Abstract:** With the opening up of the three-child policy, society is paying more and more attention to child rearing. Do parents nowadays have different parenting views towards boys and girls? Does the difference between urban and rural categorization affect parents' views on parenting? This paper utilizes a sample of parents of children aged 0-16 years from the 2020 China Family Tracking Survey Database (CFPS2020), with the independent variables being the gender of the children and the urban-rural classification of the study participants, and the dependent variable being the parenting view. The study found that Chinese parents' traditional views of parenting are still retained, with parents taking a great deal of responsibility for their children's lives and studies, and most of them tending to sacrifice their self-interests for the sake of their children; parents are gradually treating their children equally in terms of their education, and they have high expectations for them regardless of gender. Compared with urban parents, rural parents tend to be more self-sacrificing and responsible for their children.

**Keywords:** Parenting Views; Children's Gender; Urban-Rural Differences; Family Education.

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## 1. Introduction

With the official implementation of the three-child policy in 2021, the increase in the number of newborns has made the state pay more attention to family education. The introduction of the Five-Year Plan on Guiding the Promotion of Family Education (2021-2025) has, to a certain extent, promoted the high-quality development of family education during the Fourteenth Five-Year Plan period. As the family is an important place for children to grow up, a scientific view of parenting is very helpful in creating a harmonious family atmosphere and enhancing the well-being of parents and children. It also guides parents' parenting of their children and relieves to some extent the pressure on family parenting. Parenting concepts have a significant impact on children's social development, self-concept, personality development and mental health. Children's self-esteem and sense of security can only be formed with the encouragement and support of their parents and the warmth of the home environment. Parents' views on parenting have a lifelong impact on their children, and even on the parenting of the next generation of children. Using quantitative research, this paper examines the impact of children's gender on parenting attitudes and the impact of rural-urban categorization on parenting attitudes.

## 2. Literature Review

Domestic scholars define parenting concept as "child development concept, early education concept, parental responsibility concept, achievement expectation concept" or as the sum of reproductive and educational concepts. Fan Junqing found that the differences in parenting concepts are extremely significant depending on the educational level and occupation of the parents of young children. Liao Jun et al. showed that breastfeeding, monthly family income, mother's education and the number of children are the main factors influencing the parenting styles of rural mothers of infants and toddlers.

For parenting views in foreign studies, American scholars have concluded that education level, occupational class, gender, race, ethnicity and birth cohort, continue to play a significant influence. Religious factors also play an important secondary role. Comparing two countries, the United States and Russia, scholars such as Jonathan R.H. Tudge found that fathers cared more about spoiling their children than mothers did. Beate Schwarz found that Korean and German mothers did not differ in their love and acceptance of their children, but that Korean mothers were more controlling and strict with their children. Although there are many different factors that influence the way parents at home and abroad view parenting, it is undeniable that parents at home and abroad share the same love for their children and the same importance they place on their children's upbringing.

In China and even in the West, there has always been the idea of "favoring sons over daughters". Chen Xi found that parents invested differently in their children's education according to their gender, and expected more from boys, favoring the traditional view of parenting. In contrast to the previous belief that girls are favored over boys, Liang Wenyan and other scholars have found that boys receive less parenting input than girls. Although there is a greater expectation of boys, Haiying and others have shown that more mothers want to have girls, and that having a boy is no longer the first choice of Chinese parents. There is no significant difference between the parenting attitudes of boys' parents and those of girls' parents in general, and boys and girls are gradually treated equally.

Is there a difference between urban and rural parents' views on child rearing? Liu Shuang found that urban and rural parents showed some "convergence" in consumer behavior and parenting concepts of child rearing and education. Zhang Wenxin's study found more urban parents than rural parents in terms of punishment and excessive interference with their children. As well as urban and rural parents, there is a difference in parenting styles with respect to the gender of their children.

In terms of family education, most scholars focus on the

influence of parents' gender differences on children's parenting. Few scholars have focused on the impact of children's gender on parents' views of parenting. This empirical study of the relevant content through the CFPS research platform can fill this gap.

### 3. Theoretical Analysis and Hypotheses

In the theoretical model, the two factors of children's gender and urban-rural classification serve as the independent variables of the model; self-sacrificing parents and fully responsible parents are the dependent variables of the model; and the years of education of fathers and mothers are the control variables of the model.

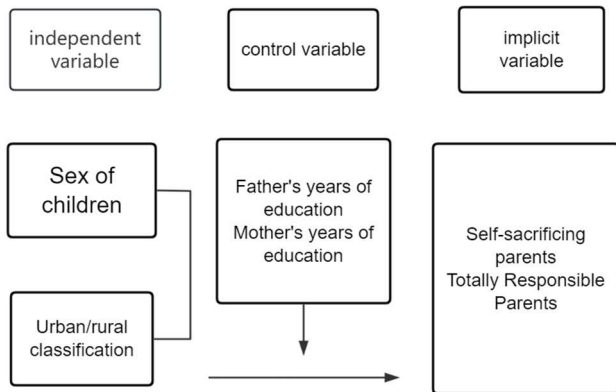


Figure 1. theoretical model

Based on the model the following hypotheses are formulated.

- (1) there is a significant difference between parents' views on child rearing in terms of gender.
- (2) there is a significant difference between parents' views

Table 1. Variable Description

	variant	element	Variable type
implicit variable	Self-sacrificing parents	You shouldn't get divorced even if you're unhappy for the sake of your children.	1=Strongly disagree. 2=Disagree. 3=neither agree nor disagree. 4=Agree. 5=Strongly agree.
		Should scrimp and save to pay for education	
	Fully responsible parents	Parents are responsible for good grades and bad grades.	
		Economic self-sufficiency is the responsibility of parents	
		Parents are responsible for the harmony of their children's families	
		Parents are responsible for emotional well-being	
	Parents are responsible for car accidents		
Independent variables (core variables)	Sex of children	0=Female, 1=Male	categorization
	Urban and rural classification	0 = rural, 1 = urban	
control variable	Father's years of education	0=illiterate/semi-illiterate 6 = elementary school, 9=lower secondary school 12 =upper secondary school 15 = university college, 16 = bachelor's degree, 19 = master's degree, 22 = doctoral degree	categorization
	Mother's years of education		

on child rearing in terms of urban and rural categorization.

### 4. Research Design and Process

This study adopts quantitative research, using the operations of mean comparison and ordered regression in SPSS to organize and analyze the survey data. Describe the current status of Chinese parents' parenting views and whether there are significant differences between the two factors and parenting view variables.

The data source of this study is:CFPS2020 database. For the selection of variables, the variable of children's gender this study takes the biological sex of male and female (0 is female, 1 is male). For the variable of urban-rural classification, this study adopts the urban-rural classification (hereinafter referred to as urban-rural classification) based on the classification of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), which is divided into villages and towns (0 for villages and 1 for towns). The number of years of schooling and the highest level of education corresponded to the number of years of parental education according to the official CFPS standard. Zhang Qiuji used the term "how responsible parents are for their children" to explain parents' parenting perceptions. In this study, parents were categorized into "self-sacrificing parents" and "fully responsible parents" in order to observe the extent to which they were responsible for their children's education and life. The lower the score, the less likely one is to agree with this viewpoint, with values of "5 as strongly agree", "4 as agree", "3 as neither agree nor disagree", "2 as disagree" and "1 is strongly disagree". Therefore, this paper draws on this categorization, together with the factors affecting parents' views of parenting as measured by the CFPS2020, to compile the following variables, which are shown in the table below (Table 1):

## 5. Results and Analysis

### 5.1. Descriptive Statistics

**Table 2.** Description of the share of independent variables

	form	sample size	percentage
Sex of children	female	2674	46.4
	male	3089	53.6
Urban and rural classification	Urban	2947	51.1
	rural	2816	48.9
Father's years of education	illiterate/semi-illiterate	335	5.8
	elementary school	905	15.7
	lower secondary school	2275	39.5
	upper secondary school	1133	19.7
	university college	585	10.2
	bachelor's degree	477	8.3
	master's degree	49	0.9
	doctoral degree	4	0.1
Mother's years of education	illiterate/semi-illiterate	606	10.5
	elementary school	815	14.1
	lower secondary school	2272	39.4
	upper secondary school	978	17.0
	university college	569	9.9
	bachelor's degree	488	8.5
	master's degree	35	0.6
doctoral degree	-	-	

As can be seen in Table 2, the independent variable gender of children is 46.4% girls and 53.6% boys. The independent variable urban-rural categorization is 51.1% rural and 48.9% urban. The distribution of the different categories is relatively even in both variables. Most of the parents' education in the sample is concentrated below bachelor's degree, less master's degree and almost no doctorate.

**Table 3.** Statistics on Sacrificial Parenting Variables

	You shouldn't get divorced even if you're unhappy for the sake of your children.		Should scrimp and save to pay for education	
	frequency	Percentage %	frequency	Percentage %
1	204	3.5	29	0.5
2	2452	42.5	604	10.5
3	135	2.3	47	0.8
4	2590	44.9	4445	77.1
5	382	6.6	638	11.1
aggregate	5763	100.0	5763	100.0

Note: 5 is strongly agree, 4 is agree, 3 is neither agree nor disagree, 2 is disagree and 1 is strongly disagree.

Parents are legally obligated to raise their children, but parents themselves, as independent individuals, have the power to pursue their own happiness and improve their quality of life. So will parents give up some of their own power for the sake of their children? By analyzing the data, we can see that 51.5% of the parents in Table 4 agree or strongly agree with the view that "divorce should not be granted even if the child is unhappy", and 88.2% of the parents agree or strongly agree with the view that "education expenses should be paid through scrimping and saving".

**Table 4.** Statistics on the Fully Responsible Parenthood Variable

	Parents are responsible for good grades and bad grades.		Economic self-sufficiency is the responsibility of parents		Parents are responsible for the harmony of their children's families		Parents are responsible for emotional well-being		Parents are responsible for auto accidents	
	frequency	Percentage (%)	frequency	Percentage (%)	frequency	Percentage (%)	frequency	Percentage (%)	frequency	Percentage (%)
1	41	0.7	50	0.9	71	1.2	74	1.3	258	4.5
2	698	12.1	1691	29.3	2148	37.3	2761	47.9	3249	56.4
3	110	1.9	102	1.8	122	2.1	156	2.7	135	2.3
4	4379	76.0	3577	62.1	3136	54.4	2545	44.2	1939	33.6
5	535	9.3	343	6.0	286	5.0	227	3.9	182	3.2
aggregate	5763	100.0	5763	100.0	5763	100.0	5763	100.0	5763	100.0

Note: 5 is strongly agree, 4 is agree, 3 is neither agree nor disagree, 2 is disagree and 1 is strongly disagree.

Children, as minors, are the responsibility of their parents in terms of their education and protection. Do parents bear a great deal of responsibility for the financial and emotional well-being of their children in adulthood? The percentage of parents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the three points of view that "parents are responsible for their children's good or bad grades", "parents are responsible for their children's economic independence" and "parents are responsible for their children's family harmony" are 85.3%, 68.1%, 68.1%, 85.3%, 68.1%, 68.1%, 68.1%, 68.1% and 68.1% respectively. The proportions of parents agreeing or strongly agreeing with these three views were 85.3%, 68.1% and 59.4% respectively.

In the first three views, parents agreed or strongly agreed more frequently. In the last two views, the percentage of parents who agree (agree and strongly agree) and disagree (disagree and strongly disagree) with the statement "Parents are responsible for emotional well-being" is almost the same. "Sixty percent of parents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the view that parents are responsible for car accidents.

**Table 5.** Sacrificial self type dimension total score and Total score for the Fully Responsible dimension

total score	frequency	percentage	total score	frequency	percentage
2	15	0.3	5	6	0.1
3	44	0.8	6	2	0.0
4	414	7.2	7	3	0.1
5	129	2.2	8	20	0.3
6	2074	36.0	9	26	0.5
7	259	4.5	10	318	5.5
8	2247	39.0	11	85	1.5
9	375	6.5	12	698	12.1
10	206	3.6	13	138	2.4
percentage	5763	100.0	14	838	14.5
			15	136	2.4
			16	735	12.8
			17	159	2.8
			18	1002	17.4
			19	176	3.1
			20	1054	18.3
			21	154	2.7
			22	82	1.4
			23	41	0.7
			24	36	0.6
			25	54	0.9
			percentage	5763	100.0

As shown in Table 5, the two variables "should not divorce for the sake of their children's unhappiness" and "should scrimp and save to pay for their education" are added together to get a total score, and the lower the score, the less parents agree with these two views, and the less self-interest parents will sacrifice. However, we can see that most parents tend to sacrifice self-interest for their children.

As shown in Table 5, the five variables were summed to give a total score. The highest and lowest scores are 25 and 5. The lower the total score is the less responsibility parents bear for their children.

After analyzing the data, it is seen that some other Chinese parents agree with traditional parenting concepts such as the need to overprotect and discipline their children in life. Parents are more likely to sacrifice their self-interest for their children and make their children the center of their lives. Parents take a great deal of responsibility for their children's grades, financial self-sufficiency, and the harmony of their children's families. More parents tend to take complete responsibility for their children. This may be related to the gender of the children and the urban-rural classification, which will be further analyzed below.

## 5.2. Comparison of means

**Table 6.** Gender differences in children's views of parenting

variable name	Sex of children	average value	standard deviation	F	T	P
You shouldn't get divorced even if you're unhappy for the sake of your children.	female	3.09	1.119	3.496	-0.005	0.996
	male	3.09	1.138			
Should scrimp and save to pay for education	female	3.89	0.745	1.956	0.969	0.333
	male	3.87	0.761			
Parents are responsible for good grades and bad grades.	female	3.80	0.792	1.279	-0.715	0.475
	male	3.82	0.788			
Economic self-sufficiency is the responsibility of parents	female	3.44	1.003	0.031	0.448	0.654
	male	3.42	1.001			
Parents are responsible for the harmony of their children's families	female	3.22	1.052	1.433	-1.532	0.126
	male	3.27	1.050			
Parents are responsible for emotional well-being	female	3.05	1.059	0.198	2.542	0.011
	male	2.98	1.065			
Parents are responsible for auto accidents	female	2.74	1.065	2.160	-0.584	0.559
	male	2.75	1.072			

Table 6 shows that only the variable "Parents are responsible for the emotional well-being of their children" has a significant difference between the sexes of the children, and

the mean scores of girls are higher than those of boys, with a significance level of  $P = 0.011 < 0.05$ , which indicates that parents are more inclined to take a great deal of responsibility for the emotional well-being of their girls.

**Table 7.** Rural-urban categorical differences in parenting views

variable name	Urban and rural classification	average value	standard deviation	F	T	P
You shouldn't get divorced even if you're unhappy for the sake of your children.	rural	3.20	1.130	0.058	8.036	<0.001
	urban	2.96	1.116			
Should scrimp and save to pay for education	rural	3.93	0.720	54.554	5.244	<0.001
	urban	3.82	0.784			
Parents are responsible for good grades and bad grades.	rural	3.87	0.756	63.420	5.521	<0.001
	urban	3.75	0.821			
Economic self-sufficiency is the responsibility of parents	rural	3.49	0.970	73.733	4.815	<0.001
	urban	3.36	1.030			
Parents are responsible for the harmony of their children's families	rural	3.35	1.032	57.230	7.628	<0.001
	urban	3.14	1.060			
Parents are responsible for emotional well-being	rural	3.13	1.070	11.211	8.284	<0.001
	urban	2.90	1.042			
Parents are responsible for auto accidents	rural	2.89	1.091	147.376	10.589	<0.001
	urban	2.60	1.023			

The urban-rural categorization is a key factor in influencing parents' views on parenting. Table 7 shows that there is an extremely significant difference between urban and rural parents in terms of their views on child rearing. The mean scores of urban parents are lower than the mean scores of rural parents with a significance level of  $P < 0.05$ , which indicates that there is a significant difference between urban and rural parents' views on parenting. Compared to urban parents, rural parents are more in favor of the need to sacrifice themselves for the sake of their children and to be fully responsible for their children. Rural parents are more in favor of traditional views of parenting.

This may be due to the fact that urban parents are exposed to newer concepts of parenting and are more receptive to newer views of parenting than their rural counterparts. Rural parents may be more susceptible to traditional cultural influences and retain traditional views of parenting due to the

different environment.

### 5.3. Regression Analysis

Through the parallelism test, we know that the significance level of the urban-rural classification and the variable "fully responsible parents" is  $< 0.001$  using unordered logistic regression (multivariate logistic regression), and the significance level of the urban-rural classification and the variable "self-sacrificing parents" is  $> 0.05$  using ordered logistic regression. For the urban-rural classification and the variable "self-sacrificing parents", an ordered logistic regression was used at a significance level of  $> 0.05$ . Through the results of the previous test, the urban-rural categorization was regressed with the dependent variable parenting views after the non-significant factors affecting parenting views were eliminated.

**Table 8.** Multivariate Logistic Regression Analysis of Rural-Urban Classification and "Fully Responsible Parenthood"

Degree of subjective responsibility	variant	estimation	standard error	Vardø	degrees of freedom	Significance	Exp(B)	Confidence interval for EXPSignificance
irresponsible	intercept	2.746	0.467	34.584	1	$< 0.001$		
	rural	1.017	0.329	9.559	1	0.002	2.766	1.451~5.272
Responsible.	intercept	3.006	0.466	41.557	1	$< 0.001$		
	rural	1.211	0.329	13.570	1	$< 0.001$	3.357	1.763~6.396
Totally responsible	intercept	3.122	0.469	44.293	1	$< 0.001$		
	rural	1.334	0.331	16.254	1	$< 0.001$	3.796	1.985~7.259

Because the variable "fully responsible parents" has more points, it is not easy to analyze, so it is grouped as follows: 5-9 is divided into the "very irresponsible" group; 10-14 is divided into the "irresponsible" group; 15-19 is divided into the "responsible" group; 20-25 is divided into the "very responsible" group. The reference group is the "very irresponsible" group; 10-14 is the "irresponsible" group; 15-19 is the "responsible" group; 20-25 is the "very responsible" group. The reference group is the "very irresponsible" group.

As can be seen in Table 8, the effect of urban-rural categorization on parenting perceptions is significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) and statistically significant, thus indicating that there are significant urban-rural differences in these subgroups. The estimates are all positive, which also indicates a significant positive effect of urban-rural categorization on the variable "fully responsible parenting". Rural parents are more likely to be "fully responsible parents" than urban parents.

**Table 9.** Ordered Logistic Regression Analysis of Rural-Urban Classification and "Self-Sacrificing Parents"

variant	estimation	standard error	Vardø	degrees of freedom	Significance	Confidence interval for EXPSignificance
rural	0.187	0.052	12.789	1	$< 0.001$	0.085~0.290
Urban	0			0		
Sex of children	-0.021	0.049	0.190	1	0.663	-0.116~0.074

The estimation results show that urban-rural categorization has a significant effect on the variable "self-sacrificing parents". The estimates are positive, which is a significant positive effect. Rural parents are more likely to be "self-sacrificing parents" than urban parents.

## 6. Conclusion

This study uses quantitative research method with parents of children aged 0-16 years as the research object, and uses SPSS to analyze the data of CFPS 2020, and draws the following conclusions:

1) As times change, Chinese parents still retain their traditional views on parenting, and most of them tend to sacrifice their self-interest for their children and take great responsibility for their children's lives and studies. However, a small number of parents are slowly changing their attitudes, using the power to pursue happiness while taking responsibility for their children, and disagreeing with the need to take full responsibility for their children.

2) There is no significant difference between parents' views on parenting in terms of the gender of their children. Children are gradually being treated equally in terms of their education, and both men and women recognize the need to take a great deal of responsibility for them and have high expectations of their children. There is a significant positive difference in parenting perceptions between urban and rural categorizations. Rural parents are more inclined to be self-sacrificing and fully responsible for their children than their urban counterparts. Therefore, these differences can be taken into account in the promotion of the family's views on parenting.

Parents are the first teachers of children and influence them to a great extent. Parents should establish a scientific view of parenting and create a good family atmosphere. At the same time, the concept of scientific parenting can be publicized through various channels such as society and schools to popularize scientific parenting methods. Parents and children are independent individuals. Parents should not pay too much

attention to their children, and let them try to do what they can independently.

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