

**Use of ICT and Well-being among Mothers of Preschool Children: Focusing on a comparison among Japan, South Korea, United States, and Sweden**

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During the 20th century, there has been significant advancement of and development in information communication technology (ICT). Consequently, nearly every aspect of our life is connected to the Internet and computers. Nowadays, ICT has progressed much, and its impact on an individual's communication and information access is significant. Mobile devices have become an everyday social tool in different spheres, including business, education, and family life. The major impact of ICT on family life is reflected by the changes in the perspectives on child-rearing brought about by the massive diffusion of smartphones and tablets in the 2010s. However, most of the discussions on ICT and child-rearing mainly focus on its negative impact, for instance, how ICT impedes a child's socio-emotional development and encourages mothers to neglect the needs of their children.

With respect to child-rearing, sufficient resources, including social capital, are not available for mothers, particularly Japanese mothers while engaging in child-rearing, Japanese mothers face time and activity constraints. ICT can solve this problem and be beneficial in a supplementary role to both mothers and children. Not many earlier studies have addressed the use of ICT in child-rearing, and it is assumed that there are certain connections among child-rearing norms, resources, and maternal role dysfunctions. Moreover, this study focuses on modern maternal child-rearing environments from the perspective of ICT use.

This study examines how mothers use ICT in their child-rearing practices and how these uses are related to maternal resources, norms, role attainment, and well-being. To understand these factors, a cross-national comparative study was conducted among Japan, South Korea, United States, and Sweden. Accordingly, from 2016 to 2017, data were collected from 20- to 49-year-old mothers having preschool children.

This study conducts a twofold analysis. First, multiple regression analysis is performed to examine factors influencing maternal perceptions regarding the use of ICT in child-rearing, which mainly focuses on the actual use of ICT by children. Second, this study examines how

maternal social networking with parents and friends affects the frequency of ICT use for both mothers and children and the impact of this networking on maternal well-being, including role adjustment and satisfaction in life, using multiple group path analysis. Both analyses are based on the model constructed from previous research on the family system theory, social capital, the diffusion of innovation theory, and related topics.

The results of the analyses are as follows: From the descriptive report, it is noted that the use of ICT in child-rearing by Japanese mothers is relatively low and their fear of children's addiction to the Internet is relatively high compared to mothers in other countries. Among all the countries, practices such as playing games and apps with children and keeping the children occupied by letting them watch video clips using smartphones and tablets have different effects on mothers' fears regarding their children's Internet addiction. It is assumed that playing games and apps with children may decrease the mothers' fear regarding their children's Internet addiction, whereas keeping the children occupied by letting them watch video clips might increase the mothers' sense of guilt and fear regarding their children's Internet addiction. Further, in Japan, the United States, and Sweden, maternal perceptions of traditional gender roles are positively associated with the fear of filial Internet addiction. This may be an indication that maternal perceptions of traditional gender roles and the propensity of mothers to allow their preschool-aged children to use ICT are different values of child-rearing.

In all the countries studied, maternal difficulties were found to increase the frequency of ICT use of both mothers and children. The use of ICT for searching information by mothers and for playing games and watching video clips by children are noted as the representative uses of ICT in child-rearing. The use of ICT by mothers for searching information is a part of a support-seeking process to solve a problem. However, the use of ICT does not significantly affect maternal role adjustment and well-being in all the countries. Fathers' involvement in child-rearing and the establishment of a support network including parents and friends are more important for effective child-rearing than ICT use. In addition, frequent ICT use can be interpreted as an effective support-seeking measure undertaken by mothers to ensure a better child-rearing environment for their children.