

---

NEWSLETTER

---

## **The Impact of the Parenting Style on Adolescent Empathetic Ability: A Comparative Analysis Based on Data from SSES 2019**

*By Li, Y., Tang, Y., & Huang, Z.*

*Correspondence to: Zhongjing Huang, East China Normal University, China. E-mail: [zjhuang@dedu.ecnu.edu.cn](mailto:zjhuang@dedu.ecnu.edu.cn)*

**D**EVELOPING social and emotional skills in citizens plays a vital role in promoting their democratic participation in societal construction. Currently, there is a dearth of cross-cultural studies on the relationship between adolescent empathy and parenting styles. Drawing on data of American, Canadian, South Korean, and Chinese students from SSES 2019, this article gives overviews of adolescent empathetic ability in two cultural circles, North American (Western) and East Asian (Eastern), and conducts a comparative analysis, using the method of descriptive statistics. It also explores the cultural differences in the relationship between the parenting style and adolescent empathetic ability through linear regression.

### Research Findings:

- In all regions chosen, girls, on average, had higher levels of empathy than boys. There were greater gender differences in empathy ability among North American adolescents than among East Asian ones.
- East Asian adolescents had higher levels of empathy, on average, than their North American counterparts, exhibiting more prominent age differences.
- Understanding-listening parenting had a significantly positive impact on empathy ability of adolescents in both Eastern and Western cultural circles, with the impact from mothers being more significant.
- Harsh-punitive parenting had varied, significant impacts on empathy ability of adolescents from the East Asian cultural circle, but with insignificant impacts on that of North American teenagers.

The research findings highlight the influence of the cultural background on empathetic ability development in adolescents, implying the positive role of the Confucian tradition in the East Asian cultural circle, which has an exceptional emphasis on filial piety, in fostering empathy in adolescents. Therefore, it is important to consider the locally distinctive cultural

features in developing empathy in adolescents, rather than blindly adopting foreign parenting styles.

*Source: Journal of Comparative Education, 2025; 2025(1):100-112.*