

Abstract

The present study examined cross-cultural differences in maternal expectations of developmental milestones. Twenty-seven mothers from Hong Kong, 13 mothers from the United States, and 26 mothers from Beijing were interviewed about their conceptions of thirty-nine developmental milestones acquired by their 24 to 66 months old children. Results showed that U.S. mothers expected earlier mastery of emotions and cognitive abilities as compared to their Hong Kong and Beijing counterparts. Hong Kong mothers' conceptions of emotions and cognitive abilities were selected and further examined using qualitative analyses. Among the six selected milestones, Hong Kong mothers viewed external behavior to be the primary antecedents of emotions, whereas they viewed external verbal stimuli to be antecedents of children's cognitive abilities. The results demonstrated the manifestation of Chinese culture in Hong Kong mothers' belief of children development.