

Parenting Identity in Chinese Parents of Young Children

*Zhenqiao Yang, Yan Xia, **Wayne Babchuck

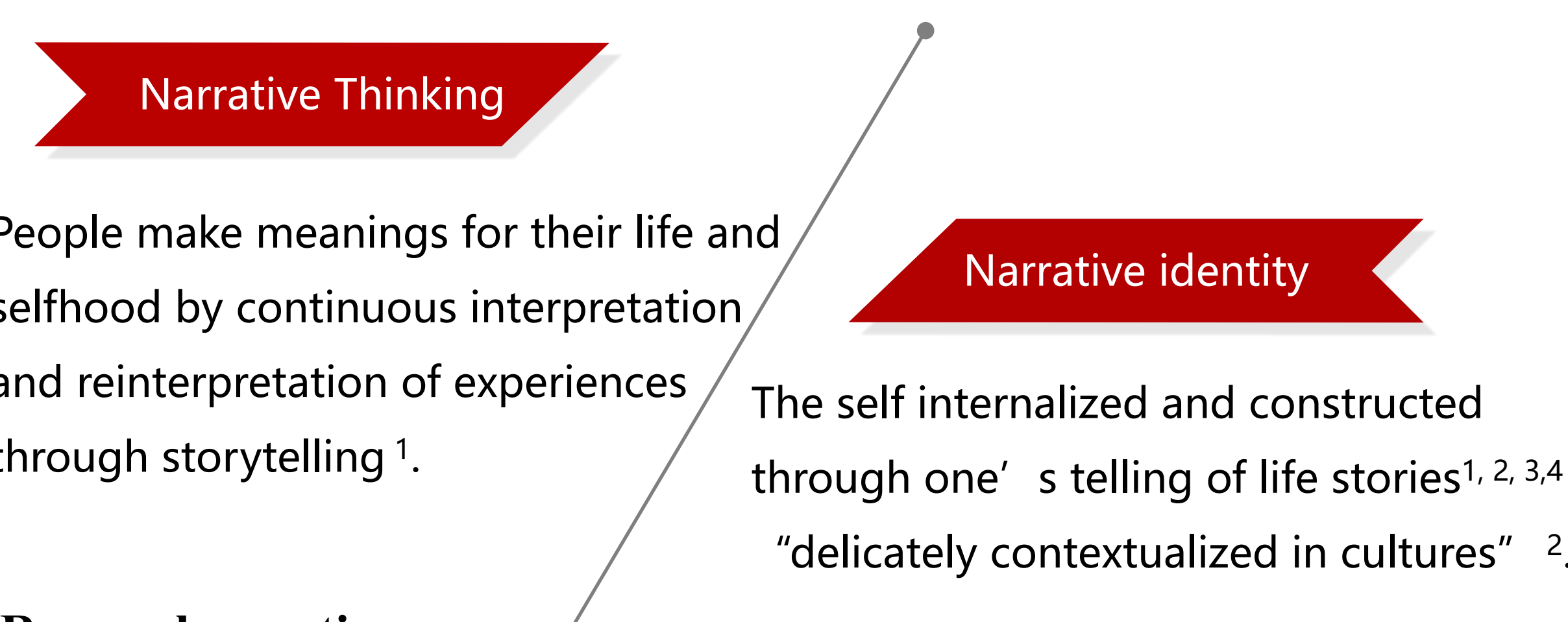
*Child, Youth & Family Studies
**Educational Psychology



Goal and Method

Goal:

This study intended to explore parents’ own perception, under the narrative perspective, on both the content and influencers on parenting identity to inform operationalization.



Research questions

- How parenting identity was defined by individual parents in China?
- What factors influenced the understanding of parenting identity?

Method

- Recruitment criteria
 - primary caregiving parents
 - the eldest children aged three to five
 - living with the target children in mainland China
- Analytic plan: Inductive narrative approach

Parent	Parent age	Child age (gender)	Parent employment	Education	Marital status
working mom	33	3 (girl)	college teacher	master degree	married
working dad	33	3 (boy)	government worker	master degree	married
stay-home mom	38	4 (boy)	unemployed	bachelor degree	married
stay-home dad	46	4 (twin boy & girl)	retired	bachelor degree	married



Four Stories and Key Findings

There were four distinctive stories:

Working mom: motherhood underperformed

Working dad: father and educator for my son

Stay-home mom: grow with my child.

Stay-home dad: explore fatherhood with my children

Key findings:

- Participants’ parenting identity was predominantly related to domains of parenting.

Examples: emotional support, daily care, child social skills, responsibility and division with co-parents, parenting competence, challenges in parenting and efforts on right ways to parent
- Parenting identity was bound to self-evaluation on parenting performance.

Examples: didn’t live up to expectations, extremely careful and bold, self-evaluation on parenting competence, and being patriarchal.
- Being a parent motivated growth in a more general self.

Examples: grow with the child & self growth
- Working parents’ parenting was restricted by work demands, which in turn affected their self-evaluation.

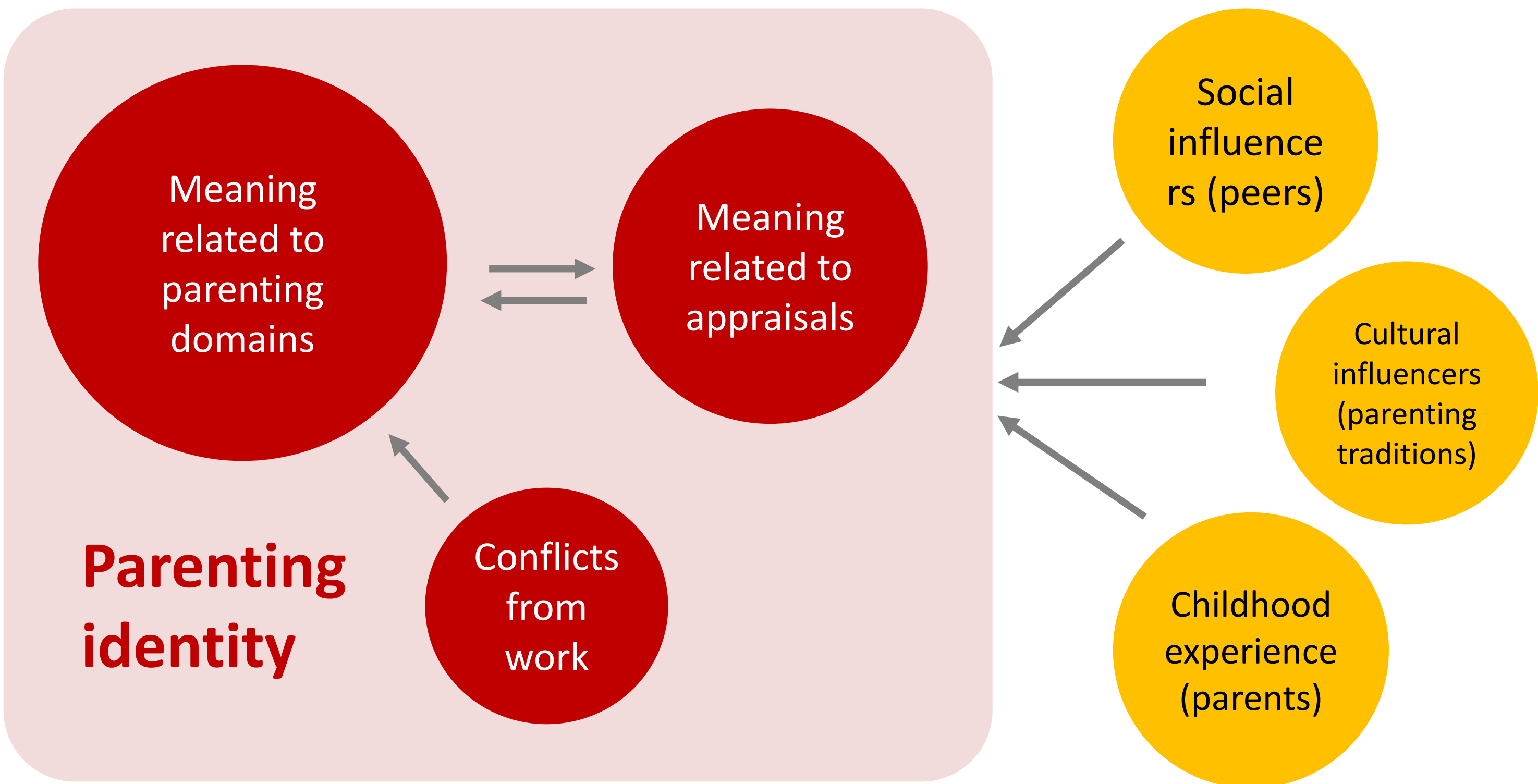
Examples: caught between work and parenting & division of parenting responsibility with co-parents (co-parenting as necessary for the dual-worker family)
- Traditional Chinese parenting values on disciplining children and academic development was explicit in the fathers’ stories

Examples: father as educator & being patriarchal.

Data collection and Analysis

Interview(s)	Purpose	Length (minutes)	Analysis
Round 1	Collect parents’ stories	42 to 83	Content analysis by two independent coders
Round 2	Verify information	31 to 95	Draft stories and analyze themes
Round 3	Verify narrative drafts and themes	35 to 48	Final stories and themes

Indications for parenting identity structure



Implications

Implications for research, education, and intervention:

- Using narratives on parenting identity may help family workers to better understand parents' roles and performance under individuals’ own perspectives and provide more targeted service for parents in need.
- Telling parenting stories might be a helpful way to understand negative outcomes of parenting young children, e.g. parental stress, depression and childcare-work strains, and thus implicates for interventions on parental psychological wellbeing.
- This study also provided in-depth early childhood educators with information to understand parental (especially fathers’) education-oriented expectations on young children’s as well as concerns, which may help improve communication between teachers and parents and quality of school-home connection.
- Our results revealed unique insights about Chinese parents’ beliefs, expectations and practice in raising young children in modern Chinese cultural contexts, which may help U.S. educators and practitioners to understand parenting among new immigrant parents from China and provide culturally appropriate service.

QUESTIONS?

Email: zqyang@huskers.unl.edu

Office: 402-472-8209

You are welcome to contact us by email or a phone call for any questions related to the research.