



# Reinventing the Warm Family: Family of Origin Stress Education and Conceptual Game Design

Xinyue Zhang<sup>1,\*</sup>, Jingyang Liu<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Leeds, Leeds, UK.

<sup>2</sup>Chengdu Neusoft University, Chengdu, Sichuan, China.

**How to cite this paper:** Xinyue Zhang, Jingyang Liu. (2024) Reinventing the Warm Family: Family of Origin Stress Education and Conceptual Game Design. *Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Science*, 8(4), 981-986.  
DOI: 10.26855/jhass.2024.04.029

**Received:** March 31, 2024

**Accepted:** April 30, 2024

**Published:** May 29, 2024

\***Corresponding author:** Xinyue Zhang, University of Leeds, Leeds, UK.

## Abstract

In the conventional paradigm of family education, "other people's children" are often used as a benchmark to evaluate the growth of one's own children, to assess their progress and development. This practice often involves constantly comparing children and forcibly separating them from their biological families, which has significant effects on the development of children's characters, their self-assurance, and their social interaction abilities. This paper focuses on the aforementioned phenomenon and attempts to provide a theoretical game design suggestion through visual communication. Its goal is to encourage people who have been subjected to suppression to make changes in the way they approach self-study and self-recognition. The envisioned game serves three essential purposes: boosting users' capacities to recognize and stimulate self-research, facilitating the exchange of emotional and sentimental signals, and promoting higher levels of self-assurance in players. This study will focus on instilling confidence, empathic sharing, and emotional stimuli.

## Keywords

Family of origin, repression, building self-confidence, empathy, sharing, emotional reminders

## 1. Introduction

"Family of origin" pertains to the natal parentage of an individual before establishing a subsequent family unit, which typically comprises the individual's father or siblings (Chen, 2020; Hui, 2020). Throughout their education, their deeds, words, demeanour, and emotions profoundly and subtly impacted the researchers' future development (Chen, 2013; Cano & Hofmeister, 2023). The parenting style referred to as "suppressive" education involves physical punishment by the parents, irrespective of the child's progress, as a means of protecting the child from becoming complacent and "for your good" (Chen, 2020).

Numerous households in China adhere to the traditional repressive mode of family education due to the traditions' influence. Presently, repressive education in Chinese households consists primarily of the following: cynical proserlytizing, agitated insults, sudden violent outbursts, and physical reprimands (Chen, 2019; Givens & Ison, 2023). Long-term exposure to an environment filled with derision, sarcasm, and degradation increases the likelihood that children will develop low self-esteem, lack of self-confidence, emotional anxiety, and other undesirable traits, according to research by psychologist John Goldman (Barbe, 1996).

This study aims to examine the personality effects of traditional Chinese repressive education. Due to the researcher's upbringing in a traditional Chinese family, her parents frequently compared her to "other people's children" and stifled her self-assurance in the researcher's path "for the good of the researcher" rather than encouraging it; as a result, her personality bore the stain of a lack of self-assurance. Because of this, the researcher's character has been

imbued with a pall of insecurity. In recent years, the plight of numerous PUA parents has shed light on the tragic consequences and societal repercussions of education suppression. This has led the research to recognize that many individuals are in a similar situation. Through this project, the research hopes to raise more awareness of the detrimental effects of "suppression of sex education" and that WARM HOME can, to some degree, protect those affected by this issue. Additionally, there is some optimism that WARM HOME may partially assist in the liberation of those impacted by this vortex.

## **2. Background of the study**

According to Zhixue's family systems theory was developed based on two variables and a single fundamental concept (Chen, 2001). The two variables under consideration are self-study differentiation and chronic anxiety. The family triangle theory, as proposed by Chen (2001), serves as the central concept. In contrast to the notion of family group, self-study differentiation is frequently employed to denote the progression through which an individual transitions from relying on external environmental factors to cultivating distinctive psychological characteristics (Chen, 2001). According to Feng (2020), assessing effective self-study differentiation requires the learner to develop a consistent pattern of positive emotional and behavioural interactions with others while retaining independence (Chen, 2001). Exhibits the capacity to consider and act autonomously, in addition to maintaining an independent sense of self-study unaffected by the opinions of others. Individuals who lack independence in their behaviour and sense of self-research and are more susceptible to the emotions of the family than their self-research may be impacted by the emotions of specific family members and even influence the emotions of other family members in a poorly differentiated family (Lu, 2011). Prolonged exposure to negative emotions within a family will result in the development of chronic anxiety, depression, and additional adverse consequences for every member (Faber, 2010).

Murray Bowen, a highly regarded American psychotherapist, undertook an experiment in psychotherapy. During the experiment, the subjects readily formed emotional bonds with other family members, particularly their parents (Faber, 2010). Following an extensive series of specimen experiments, he concluded that when the family is considered during family activities, each individual's emotions are influenced by those of the other family members (Faber, 2010). Murray Bowen proposed the family systems theory, which viewed the family as a fundamental systemic unit with each member functioning as a molecular component of the system (without treating family members as isolated individuals). Bowen emphasized that the emotions and behaviours of each family member impact the system as a whole and that these behaviours and emotions also interact with those of other family members. Therefore, it can be argued that an individual's progress is intrinsically tied to the circumstances of his or her family (Faber, 2010; Wang, 2001).

## **3. Conceptualising the game design**

### **3.1 Conceptualising the design of WARM HOME**

The project uses a lightweight game-like app to give visual communication alternatives. The research group developed a lightweight application called WARM HOME, which progressively became a chapter catalogue. The application comprises six chapters divided into three sections: Conveying Confidence, Empathizing and Sharing, and Emotional Tips. Interactive components and illustrations were integrated into the game to generate novel user experiences.

### **3.2 Functional Design of WARM HOME**

**Instilling Confidence:** This segment was designed as a four-chapter game to promote self-awareness among users and instruct them on strategies to cultivate confidence. The entirety of this segment is extracted from the interview data of the research, given that the predominant form of suppression encountered by most users is verbal antagonism. As a result, verbal aggression was selected as the scenario exhibit to illustrate the educational value of suppression and establish a foundation for subsequent episodes. This research aims to illustrate the concept of self-encouragement and self-identification, which contributes to the development of confidence.

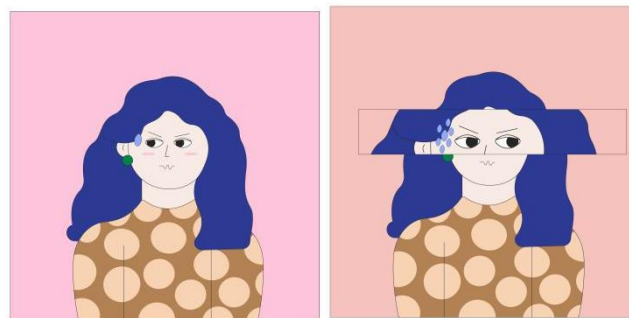
**Empathic Sharing:** Following the game's conclusion, this segment enables participants to enhance communication and generate novel self-study perspectives. Upon completion of the game, users will be directed to this section, where they will be matched with others who have had comparable experiences. Within this section, users will have the

opportunity to engage in empathetic communication and exchange thoughts. It is anticipated that some participants will encounter social anxiety as a result of their family's repressive upbringing during this anonymous session. Additionally, it is anticipated that through engaging in dialogue with users who have undergone diverse experiences, users will be able to develop greater empathy and mitigate the issue of the repressive education of the family of origin becoming indistinct.

**Emotional stimuli:** This concludes the segment. By organising and documenting the user's use of the emotion record function, their emotional shifts can be remembered. The goal is to progressively teach users how to organise and control their emotions to lessen the impact of negative emotions on themselves and others by increasing their awareness of emotional changes and thereby enabling them to recognise the consequences of suppressive education-induced negative emotion spread.

### 3.3 Visual Design of WARM HOME

The entire plot is derived from the interviews conducted for the study, which aims to demonstrate how to inspire and motivate individuals to develop self-assurance. The narrative structure of the initial chapter, which depicts the protagonist's parents repressing him, was inspired by the firsthand experiences of the users interviewed. The research reconstructed the entire narrative and utilised it as the introductory chapter to captivate the reader. The subsequent chapter provides an account of the protagonist's formative years, shedding light on the consequences of his family's repressive upbringing on his character. A portion of the principal character's unnatural expressions and conduct during the roadside interviewer's questioning was derived from the interviewee's conduct (Fig. 1): averting his eyes, stuttering in his speech, and so forth. These particulars are captured in the study and incorporated into the second chapter. The third chapter assumes a prominent position within the entirety of the narrative, featuring the creation of some poignant and exquisite scenes. The protagonist's mother took him kite-flying with his parents on her bicycle during childhood. Incorporating warm scenes into the overload continues the motif of a cosy household. It provides an unexpected way to evoke beautiful scenes while emphasising that the issue at hand extends beyond mere suppression of education and warmth within the home (Fig 2). The fourth chapter of the narrative is a consequence of the change in tone from the first: the protagonist's confidence in subsequent character development would have been greater if the parents had consistently offered encouragement and recognition rather than harsh words.



Gradually becoming all kinds of nervous

**Figure 1. Excerpts from the second chapter's material.**

The study purposely selected some softer colours in the tone choices and went through the tone adjustments to highlight the chapter changes in the before and after chapter changes. For example, the study used a grey-green background for the parents' discourse in the first chapter, but in the fourth chapter, it used a pink background.

### 3.4 Interaction Design of WARM HOME

#### 3.4.1 Interaction Analysis of Game Segment

The study used the above instance to build the game section: Florence. In order to expedite the procedure, WARM HOME uses chapter advancement rather than the typical APP's function-switching manner (Fig. 3). When users initially log in, they must complete chapters 1-5. If the user signs out without finishing chapters 1-5, he or she can resume finishing the last chapter upon coming in again. However, if the user completes chapters 1-5 and then returns

to the APP multiple times, he or she can select from the catalogue and proceed immediately to chapter 6.



Figure 2. Comparative display of chapter plots.



Figure 3. APP Login Screen and display of the Chapter Catalogue.

The research takes the form of illustration + interactive icon design in the game chapters, and users must participate in the interaction with the user icon to complete the page advancement. The page is separated into interactive and plot-driven leap pages (Fig. 4). For the initial occurrence of the interactive behaviour, there are textual prompts beneath the icons and movements on each interactive page. Plot-driven pages have no icons or dialogues and will automatically advance to the next page after the plot is revealed.



Figure 4. Interactive page presentation and plot-driven jump page display.

The study demonstrates the portrayal of emotions using various interactive aspects in the story's design. For

example, in the opening chapter, the protagonist and her mother have a verbal monologue (Fig 5). As the mother and daughter's conversation becomes more passionate, their dialogue boxes change from round to square to point.



Figure 5. An interactive segment of the mother-daughter interaction monologue.

### 3.5 The Importance of a WARM HOME

What Cynthia, the protagonist of WARM HOME, went through is an accurate portrayal of the oppressed's real-life experience. As the study is also one of the many repressed persons who have suffered repressive education in their family of origin, the study expects that the user's real-life story will elicit more empathy from the viewers. The study's goal with WARM HOME is to raise awareness of the detrimental impacts of "repressive education" among those who practise it. It is also believed that through WARM HOME, the oppressed's existing circumstances can be improved to some extent:

- It teaches them to recognise themselves and rebuild their self-confidence through the games in the first chapters.
- It re-establishes their sense of boundaries and ability to empathise with oppressive education through the empathic sharing session, reducing their fear of getting along with others in contemporary society.
- It allows them to control their emotions through the emotional reminder session, reducing their fear of oppressive education.

They can logically regulate their emotions throughout the emotional reminder session, reducing the secondary transmission of unpleasant emotions brought on by suppressive schooling. They can logically control their emotions through the emotional reminder session, reducing the secondary transmission of unpleasant emotions generated by suppressive teaching.

## 4. Conclusion

Family education in the research country is primarily based on suppression education for fear of children's pride due to the effect of traditional education (Pan, 2008; Ge, 2009). Most Chinese parents believe restrictive schooling is logical since children are easily complacent after doing something, and parental praise will discourage them (Le, 2005; Li, 2006). Repressive educators demand rigid standards from their children in a single home education session, dismissing their children's efforts and viewing harshness, rebuke, and criticism as the essence of home education. In the long run, this overburdens the underdeveloped minds of adolescents (Zhang, 2008; Liu, 2006).

As a result, there is little doubt that parents are the primary culprits in suppressing family education (Huang, 2006; Liu, 2005; Leenknecht et al., 2023). However, society and schools impact parents' educational perspectives and how they teach their children. As a result, we may avoid family-of-origin suppression of education or even the phenomena of family education PUA only by properly merging family, school, and societal education.

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