

# Ninth Family Research Network (FRN) Forum

*“Nurturing Our Young –  
Parenting in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”*

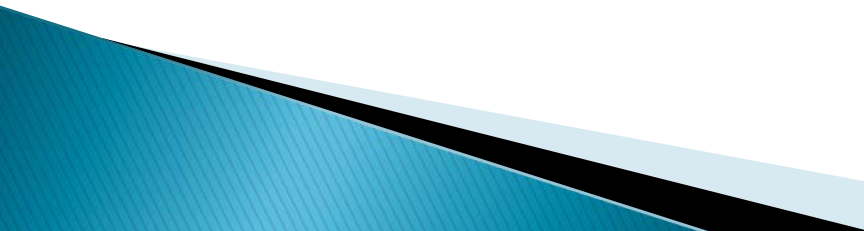
Tuesday, 5 February 2013

MND Auditorium, Annexe A - Level 2, MND Building

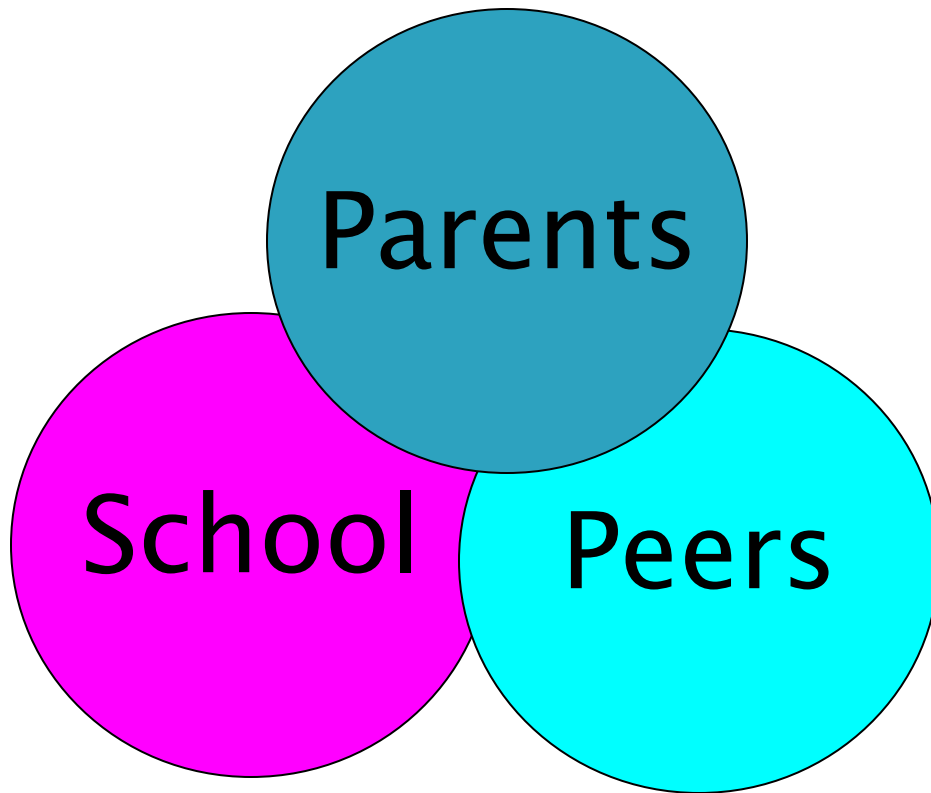
# Integrating Etic and Emic Perspectives in the Study of Parenting in Singapore

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# Overview of Presentation

- ▶ Importance of parenting
  - ▶ Contemporary perspectives of parenting
    - Western vs Asian
    - Research issues
  - ▶ Objectives of presentation
  - ▶ Study 1 key findings & implications
  - ▶ Study 2A key findings & implications
  - ▶ Study 2B key findings & implications
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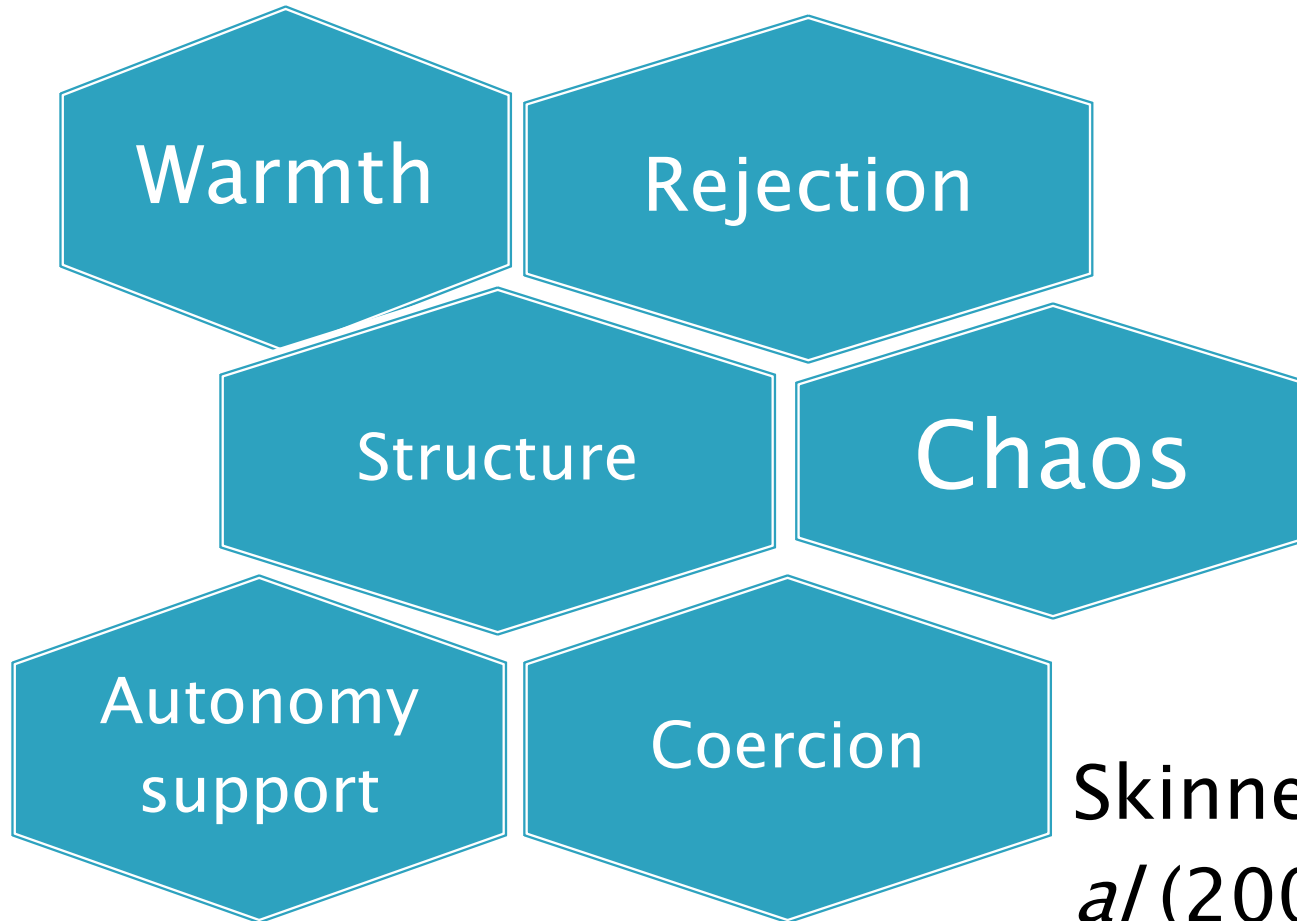
# Importance of Parenting in Development of Children



## Greatest influence: Importance of parents

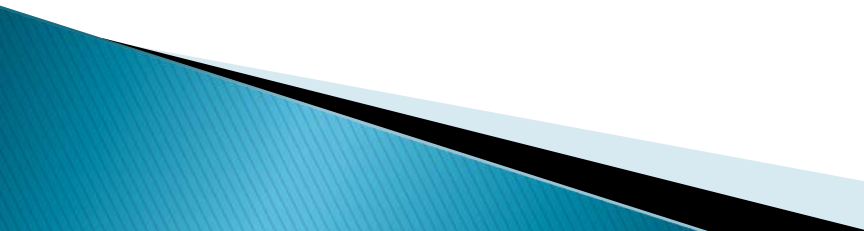
- close emotional bonds
- proximity of access
- gatekeepers

# Mainstream (Western) Parenting Research



Skinner *et al* (2005)

# Asian Parenting Research

- Etic – Using Western notions
    - *But Asian & Western cultures differ*
  - Emic – Using indigenous notions
    - Academic achievement, protection, maternal involvement, indulgence, shame, modesty, suppression of aggression & sex, training
    - *But there is no coherent theoretical paradigm*
  - Mixed approach
    - Affirming cultural underpinnings of Asian societies, yet recognizing impact of modernization
    - Little empirical research on Singapore parenting
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# Objectives of Presentation

- ▶ Share findings on parenting dimensions in Singapore via two studies
- ▶ Study 1
  - parenting as reported by 291 Pri 6 students
- ▶ Study 2
  - (A) moral values reported by 253 Chinese Pri 5/6 students
  - (B) parenting reported by 284 Chinese parents
- ▶ Analysis – Rasch Analysis, t-tests, ANOVA

# Rasch Analysis

- ▶ Rating scale calibrated using Rasch Analysis
  - Address problems of scaling, non-linearity of raw responses
  - Put all respondents onto common scale of measurement
  - Enable meaningful comparisons between different individuals
- ▶ Six steps
  - Category functioning
  - Residual-based principal components analysis (PCA)
  - Differential item functioning (DIF) analysis
  - Misfitting items & persons
  - Anchoring on item difficulty
  - Wright Maps



# Study 1 Key Findings from Child-reported Parenting

## Western literature

- Warmth
- Rejection
- Structure
- Chaos
- Autonomy support
- Coercion

## Study 1 sample

- Warmth
- **Structure-warmth**
- **Structure-control**
- Autonomy support
- Chaos
- **Negative parenting**

# Implications

- ▶ Asian parents use both ‘positive’ & ‘negative’ parenting as & when required
- ▶ Warmth, structure–warmth, structure–control as dimensions
  - *Are Asian parents paternalistic?*
- ▶ Negative parenting dimension (comprising rejection, chaos, & coercion items)
  - *Do Asian parents differentiate amongst these different aspects?*
- ▶ Is there a more culturally meaningful way to understand Asian parenting?
  - *Study 2A (child–reported moral values) & Study 2B (parent self–reports of parenting)*

# Study 2A Key Findings–Children’s Moral Values (124 boys, 129 girls)

- ▶ “...when the *personal* life is cultivated, the *family* will be regulated; when the *family* is regulated, the *state* will be in order; and when the *state* is in order, there will be peace throughout the *world...*”  
(*The Great Learning*)
- ▶ Different levels of morality
  - Personal
  - Family
  - Community

# Study 2A Key Findings

Personal  
morality

- Moral needs
- Perfectibility
- Intrinsic self-cultivation
- Shame

Morality  
toward family

- Filiality

Morality  
toward  
community

- Prosocial behaviors
- Eschewing negative behaviors
- Cardinal relations

# Study 2A Findings & Implications

- ▶ High level of overall agreement on items
  - *Confucian moral values were highly relevant to sample*
  - Affirms government emphasis on Confucian values (family as basic unit of society, CME)
  - Not all traditional values are displaced by modern values (Yang, 1998)


# Study 2A Findings & Implications

- ▶ Children endorsed filiality items most
  - Loving parents, caring for elderly parents, grateful to parents, respecting parents
  - *Implications for aging society (parent maintenance)*
- ▶ Children found it difficult to meet parents' expectations
  - *Parents & teachers to share on filiality?*

# Study 2A Findings & Implications

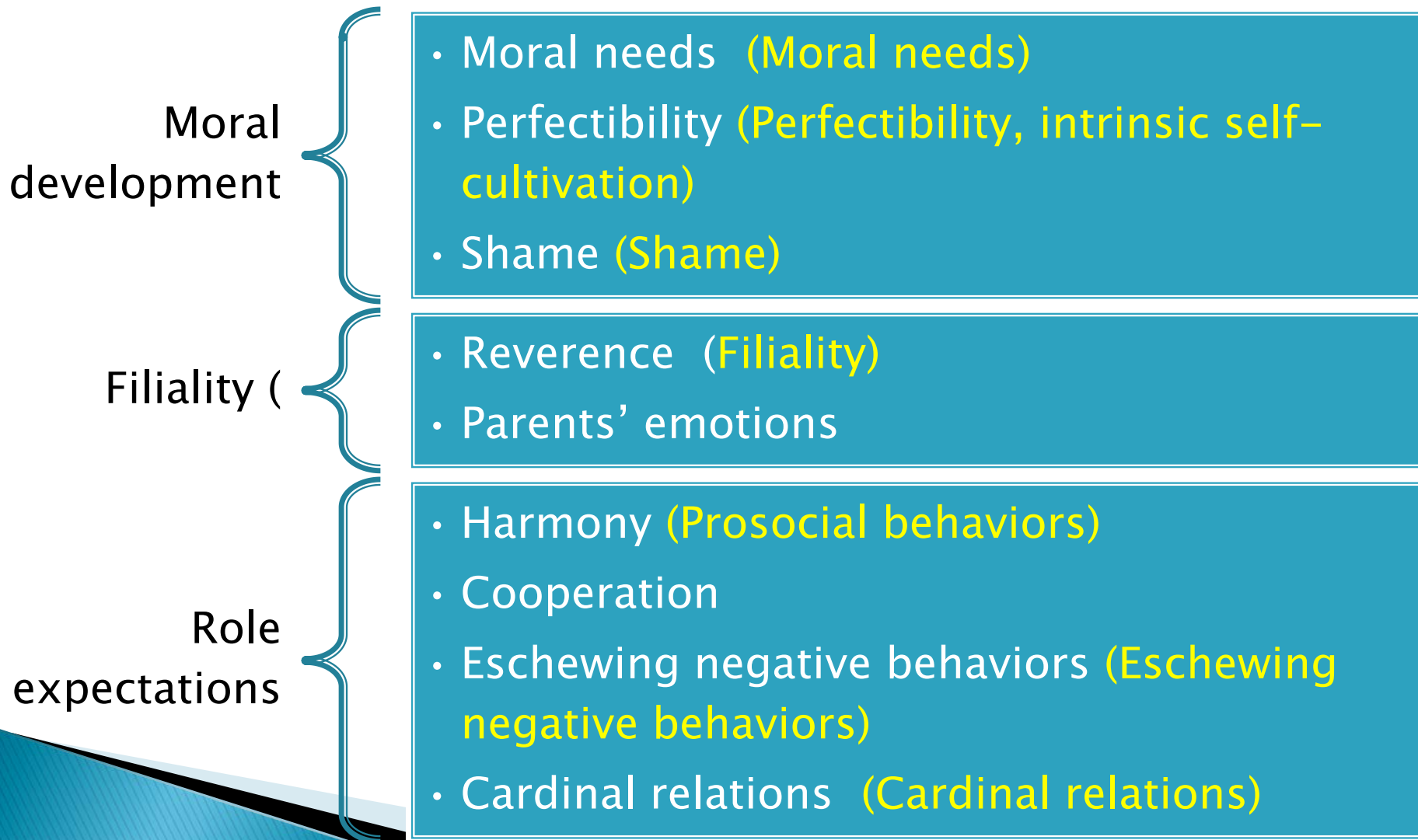
- ▶ Children found it hardest to agree to moral needs
  - *If children did not see need to be moral, how are they going to meet family & community obligations? Socio-emotional learning?*
- ▶ Children agreed on need to respect authority & older individuals, but not for caring of younger individuals
  - *Did small family sizes compromise children's opportunities to interact with other children?*
  - *How to create more opportunities beyond schools?*
- ▶ Children did not find shame relevant
  - *What are alternative ways to sanction desirable behaviors?*

# Study 2B -Parenting (82 fathers, 202 mothers)

- ▶ Using same theoretical framework in *The Great Learning*
  - ▶ Parenting corresponding to different levels of morality
    - Moral development (personal morality)
    - Filiality (morality toward family)
    - Role expectations (morality toward community)
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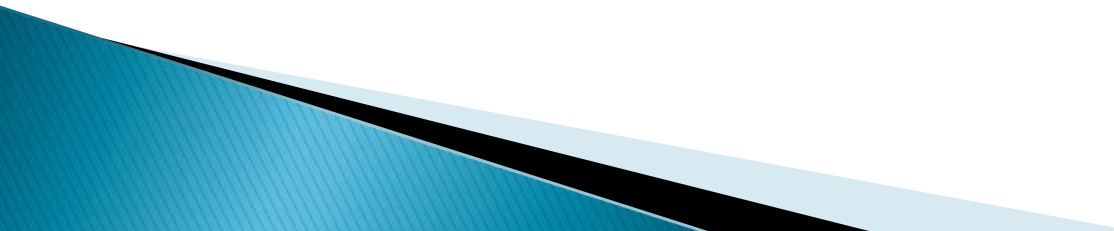
# Study 2B Key Findings–Parenting (82 fathers, 202 mothers)



# Study 2B Findings & Implications

- ▶ Parenting dimensions corresponded to Confucian conceptualization
  - *Contemporary parenting is still influenced by Confucian values*
- ▶ Parents endorsed moral development & role expectations more than filiality
  - *What is the impact on efficacy of social policies promoting family cohesion and parent-child bonding?*

# Study 2B Findings & Implications

- ▶ Parents emphasized need for morality, & for their children to respect authority & seniority
  - ▶ Parents put less attention on shame, & had lower filial expectations
    - Did not expect children to fulfill their wishes, meet their expectations, or delight them
    - Would prospective parents benefit from sharing on how to manage children's expectations?
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# Strengths

- ▶ Theory
  - Theoretical framework – Confucianism
  - Integrated approach – Western & Asian parenting
  - Moral values & parenting
- ▶ Method
  - Children & parents' perceptions
  - Rasch Analysis

# Limitations

- ▶ Other value systems influencing parenting?
- ▶ Homogeneous sample of Pri 5/6 students, parents
  - How about younger & older children?

# Conclusion

- ▶ **Asian parenting is a complex phenomenon**
  - Differed from Western dimensions in some ways
    - E.g., parents used warmth both to teach, & show affection
- ▶ **Asian nuances (premised on Confucian values)**
- ▶ **Final questions...**
  - How should schools & parents teach morality (without using notion of shame)?
  - Parents had lower expectations of filial piety, but children endorsed filial piety highly. Children also found it difficult to meet parents' expectations.
    - How do schools and parents work together to promote family cohesion?

**The End**