EN   Desired Self-Narratives of Young, Educated Chinese Women – Insights From Valued Products and Services

ES   Autonarrativas deseadas de jóvenes chinas universitarias – Percepciones basadas en productos y servicios valorados

ITA   Autorappresentazioni desiderate da giovani cinesi universitarie – Percezioni basate su prodotti e servizi valorizzati

FRA   Auto récits désirés de jeunes universitaires chinoises - perceptions basées sur des produits et services valorisés.

POR   Autonarrativas desejadas de jovens chinesas universitárias – Percepções baseadas em produtos e serviços valorizados

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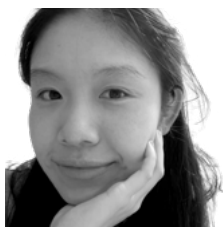
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ABSTRACT (ENG)

This paper reports three studies – autoethnographic, ethnographic and survey-based –investigating the desired self-narratives of young, university educated Chinese women. The outcomes suggest that this generation of women are very self-focussed, emphasising self-care and self-growth. They are ambitious and individualistic, very different from their parents' generation. The role of products and services in understanding and supporting this cohort's desired narratives is discussed.

Keywords: Narrative, Young Chinese Women, Wellbeing, Autoethnography, Jung's archetypes, Products and services

RESUMEN (ES)

Este artículo informa sobre tres estudios – autoetnográfico, etnográfico y basado en estudios – en los que se investiga la autonarrativa de jóvenes chinas universitarias. Los resultados sugieren que, en esta generación, las mujeres son muy centradas en sí mismas, y hacen énfasis en el autocuidado y el autodesarrollo. Son ambiciosas e individualistas, muy diferentes a las de la generación de sus padres. Se discute el papel que desempeñan los productos y servicios en la comprensión y apoyo de las narrativas deseadas de este grupo de estudio.

PALABRAS CLAVE: *narrativa, jóvenes chinas, bienestar, autoetnografía, arquetipos jungianos, productos y servicios*

RIASSUNTI (ITA)

Questo articolo informa su tre studi – auto-etnografico, etnografico e basato su altri sudi – nei quali si esamina l'auto-narrativa di giovani cinesi universitarie. I risultati suggeriscono che nella presente generazione le donne sono centrate su sé stesse e privilegiano la propria cura e il proprio sviluppo. Sono ambiziose e individualiste, in modo molto diverso dalla generazione dei loro genitori. Si discute il ruolo che svolgono i prodotti e i servizi nella comprensione e nell'appoggio delle narrative desiderate da parte del gruppo studiato.

PAROLE CHIAVI: *narrative: giovani cinesi; benessere; auto-etnografia; archetipi junghiani; prodotti e servizi*

RÉSUMÉ (FRA)

Cet article porte sur trois études - auto-ethnographique, ethnographique et basée sur des études - qui s'intéressent à l'auto récit de jeunes universitaires chinoises. Les résultats suggèrent que dans cette génération les femmes sont très centrées sur elle-même, et accordent beaucoup d'importance aux soins et au développement personnels. Elles sont ambitieuses et individualistes, très différentes de celles de la génération de leurs parents. On discute du rôle que jouent les produits et services dans la compréhension et l'appui des récits désirés de ce groupe étudié.

MOTS-CLÉS : *Récit, jeunes chinoises, bien-être, auto-ethnographie, archétype jungien, produits et services.*

RESUMO (POR)

Este artigo relata três estudos - autoetnográfico, etnográfico e baseado em estudos - nos quais é analisada a autonarrativa de jovens chinesas universitárias. Os resultados sugerem que, nesta geração, as mulheres são muito centradas em si mesmas e fazem ênfase no autocuidado e no autodesenvolvimento. São ambiciosas e individualistas, muito diferentes as da geração dos seus pais. É discutido o papel dos produtos e serviços na compreensão e no apoio das narrativas desejadas deste grupo de estudo.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Narrativa, jovens chinesas, bem-estar, autoetnografia, arquétipos jungianos, produtos e serviços*

NTRODUCCIÓN

NARRATIVE AND WELLBEING

A growing body of psychological research indicates that people's wellbeing is deeply influenced by the extent to which their narratives about themselves reflect their values and aspirations (e.g., Bruner, 1990, 2009; McAdams, 1993, 2001, 2003, 2013; Randall 2015). Robust, positive self-narratives are central to giving life meaning (Morgan, 2000; Brown and Augusta-Scott, 2007). A meaningful life brings associated benefits such as happiness, resilience, perseverance and reduced anxiety (McNamara, 2000; van den Poel and Hermans, 2019; Bauer et al., 2008; Dunlop, Guo and McAdams, 2016).

NARRATIVES

In narrative psychology, narratives are described as 'systems of stories' (McAdams, 2001). They derive from stories, with several stories contributing to a particular narrative.

For example, the following stories might contribute to the narrative "I am successful in my career".

- How I won the award for employee of the year
- When I became the youngest person in the company to be appointed director
- How I increased my company's profits through innovative savings
- The time when a colleague said he admired me more than anyone else in the company
- The time I was headhunted by a top international firm

Stories are closed, whereas narratives are dynamic and open-ended – new stories feed into them to bolster or perhaps undermine them.

In this case, for example the story *I was invited to give a presentation at the company's annual meeting*, would bolster the narrative "I am successful in my career", whereas the story *I got fired because I lost a key account* would undermine it.

The extent to which a self-narrative contributes to a person's wellbeing will depend on how positive it is and the extent to which it is important to them (Jordan, Bardill, Herd and Grimaldi, 2017). If having a successful career was important to this person, then keeping this narrative strong would likely be very important to their wellbeing. Stories that bolstered it would contribute to their happiness and stories that undermined it might cause them distress.

On the other hand, if the narrative was not that important to them then stories that contributed to it or detracted from it might have little effect on their wellbeing. It might be, for example, that although they want to do well in their career, family life and narratives around that are more important to them.

PRODUCTS AND NARRATIVES

The autoethnography and ethnography parts of the research reported in this paper involved selecting and describing products that the participants owned and used and which they felt significantly contributed to the quality of their lives. While previous research shows that materialism tends not to improve wellbeing, it also suggests that most people will have some genuinely life-enhancing products. Understanding the benefits that these products bring to their owners and the stories associated with them can enable an understanding of their owners' values and desired narratives (e.g., Grimaldi, 2012, 2014, 2018; Lichaw, 2016; Lupton, 2017; Jordan, Bardill, Herd and Grimaldi, 2017, 2020, 2021; Kim, Srinivarasan and Zhou, 2019; Jordan, Gupta, Bardill, Herd and Grimaldi, 2021). By studying them, we may also learn something of the properties of these products that deliver the narrative benefits.

JUNG'S ARCHETYPES

Within the disciplines of narrative psychology, branding, and design, Jung's archetypes have been used as a way of segmenting people's desired self-narratives. Jung

claimed that these archetypes are universal – that they represent sets of narratives that occur in all societies. The 12 archetypes are summarised in Table 1 below.

Which archetype a particular narrative fits will depend on both its content and its tone (Jordan, Gupta, Bardill, Herd and Grimaldi, 2021). For example, a narrative built from stories of adventure might fit into the Hero or the Explorer archetype, based on the content of the story (e.g. climbing a challenging mountain). However, the tone that it is told in could give it other associations.

For example, if the story is told in a way that highlights things that went wrong and is told in a humorous way, it might fit with the Jester archetype, it the focus of the story is the camaraderie of the climbers, then it might fit with Everyman.

Looking at the narratives given in the example in section "Narratives", it appears that these would fit the Ruler narrative, but, again, this would depend on the way that the stories are told. For example, if the teller emphasised the role of their intelligence and wisdom in

Table 1. Jungian Archetypes Source: adapted from Mark and Pearson (2001).

Archetype	Goal	Strategy	Approach	Descriptors
Innocent	Safety and happiness	Doing things in the right way	Life is simple, simplicity is elegant	Optimistic, Honest, Humble
Sage	Truth and wisdom	Seek information and reflect	The truth will set you free	Knowledgeable, Assured, Guiding
Explorer	Authenticity	Exploring the world and exploring new things	Don't fence me in	Exciting, Fearless, Daring
Outlaw	Disrupt and shock	Challenge what is wrong in society	Rules are made to be broken	Disruptive, Rebellious, Combative
Magician	Make dreams come true	Develop vision and live it	It can happen	Mystical, Informed, Reassuring
Hero	Courage and mastery	Develop strength and competence	Where there's a will there's a way	Honest, Candid, Brave
Lover	Intimacy and sensual pleasure	Become more attractive in every way	I only have eyes for you	Sensual, Empathic, Soothing
Jester	Have fun and lighten the world	Play, joke and be funny	If I can't dance I'm not part of it	Fun-loving, Playful, Optimistic
Everyperson	Belong and fit in	Develop ordinary values and common touch	You're just like me, I'm just like you	Friendly, Humble, Authentic
Caregiver	Help and protect others	Do things for others	Love your neighbour as yourself	Caring, Warm, Reassuring
Ruler	Success and prosperity	Take responsibility and exert leadership	Power isn't everything, it's the only thing	Commanding, Refined, Articulate
Creator	Innovation and creativity	Use imagination, skill and creativity	If it can be imagined it can be created	Inspirational, Daring, Provocative

their success, then this might fit the Sage narrative. If they emphasised their innovation and forward-thinking then maybe the Creator.

The archetypes were used as a narrative segmentation framework in the studies reported in this paper.

YOUNG CHINESE WOMEN

While characteristics of the individual may influence values and desired self-narratives, these may also be socially and culturally mediated. This study focuses on young, university-educated, Chinese women, a group for whom circumstances and expectations have changed markedly in recent years, particularly due to the one-child policy implemented between 1980 and 2015 and the nation's rapid economic expansion.

There is evidence that both of these factors have had a greater effect on the upbringing of girls than of boys (Fong, 2002; Tsui and Rich, 2002; Attane, 2012; Lin, 2018), especially those born into middle-class families where higher-education and a professional career are aspired to. Before the policy, parents may have hoped for their son to have a great career and for their daughter to make a good marriage and be a good mother. But with only one child, a daughter might have both sets of expectations on her – to have the great career and the family. Those same critiques also suggest that having both sets of expectations may be too much to deal with and that increasingly Chinese women are choosing career over family. Statistics seem to bear this out. Despite the one-child policy being abolished, the birth-rate has continued to fall (Gan, January 17, 2022). Chinese women are marrying later and having kids later, if at all (Li, 2022).

These critiques and the accompanying research enable a good understanding of the opportunities and pressures associated with this cohort. The research reported in this paper aims to compliment this, by understanding internalised narratives within this group and the relationship between external circumstances and inner hopes, fears and desires.

AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

The research was designed to investigate the desired self-narratives of young, university-educated Chinese women.

It addressed the following research questions:

- What self-narratives do they aspire to?
- How are these enabled by the products and services they most value?

METHODOLOGY

APPROACH

A mixed qualitative and quantitative approach was taken, employing autoethnography, ethnography and a survey.

AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

Autoethnography involves a participant using self-analysis and self-reflection to generate insights about themselves. It is an approach commonly used in narrative psychology (Folkenflik, 1993; Anderson, 2006; Randall, 2015). Usually – as is the case here – further investigation will look at the extent to which these insights apply to a wider cohort of which the participant is a member (Ellis 2004; Holman-Jones, Adams and Ellis, 2013; Hughes and Pennington, 2017) – in this case young, university-educated, Chinese women.

With this method, the participant and the researcher are the same person. This affords them the opportunity to critique the outcomes of a study both as a professional researcher and as an individual – to what extent do the outcomes of the analysis reflect their personal view of who they are (Allen-Collinson, 2012).

The autoethnographic study involved the first author – who as twenty-five-year-old, university-educated, Chinese woman fitted the profile of the population being researched – selecting ten products or services that she judged as significantly enhancing her life and assessing the self-narratives associated with each (this approach was based on that of Jordan, Gupta, Bardill, Herd and Grimaldi, 2021). These narratives were then cross-referenced to identify the self-narratives that were most important to her identity and wellbeing. Unlike the other participants in the study, who all reside in China, the first author resides in the UK.

ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

This was similar in design to the autoethnographic study, with participants selecting life-enhancing products or services, discussing narratives associated

with them and these being cross-referenced to identify important self-narratives. They selected five products or services each (it was felt that to ask for ten, as in the autoethnographic study might, have been asking for too great a time commitment, making it harder to recruit). Four university-educated Chinese women aged between 21 and 25 participated. They had volunteered to participate in the research in response to a recruitment email and were not paid for their participation. As with the autoethnographic study, they were briefed to select products or services that they currently owned and/ or used that they found significantly life enhancing and explain why they found them so. It was explained that we were interested in what they felt the product said about themselves and how they saw themselves.

to me to…" Respondents marked a scale indicating the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with each statement. The choices were: "strongly disagree", "disagree", "neither agree nor disagree", "agree", "strongly agree". One hundred and twelve young Chinese women completed the questionnaire. All had university degrees, were in employment and were resident in China. They were aged from 20 to 25.

In analysing the questionnaire, only the number of participants who had strongly agreed with each item was tallied. It was considered that this was the most salient indicator of something that was important to them. This meant that for each participant an archetype could score between 0 and 4.

SURVEY

This involved asking respondents to anonymously complete a questionnaire, from which their affinity with each of Jung's archetypes was assessed.

The questionnaire contained 48 items, four for each of the archetypes. These items are listed in Table 2. Each item was preceded by the statement, "It is important
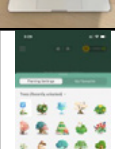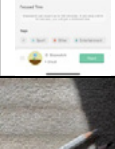
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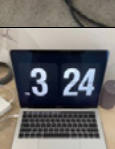
AUTOETHNOGRAPHY STUDY

Here (Table 3) are the product descriptions and analyses in the first author's own words, which are written in italics.

Table 2. Survey items used in quantitative study

Archetype	It is important to me to…			
Innocent	Keep to the rules	Look after my wellbeing	Be humble	See the best in others
Explorer	Be free	Explore the world	Experience new things	Be open-minded
Sage	Use my intelligence	Always be learning	Think analytically	Develop wisdom
Lover	Be attractive to others	Have romance in my life	Have a fulfilling sex life	Have a happy relationship
Ruler	Be well organized	Have status	Have authority	Show leadership
Jester	Make people laugh	Have fun	Have a light-hearted approach to life	Enjoy every moment
Carer	Take care of others	Put others needs before my own	Show empathy toward others	Help people
Hero	Show courage	Protect the weakest in society	Overcome challenges	Perform at my best
Outlaw	Challenge authority	Be different from others	Break rules if necessary	Challenge convention
Magician	Amaze others	Have spiritual experiences	See opportunity in chaos	Make people's dreams come true
Everyperson	Fit in with others	Feel that I am part of a group	Live an ordinary life	Be down-to-earth
Creator	Create things of enduring value	Be creative	Be imaginative	Develop skills

Table 3. Ten products selected and described by first author

	iPhone 12. *I bought this after the screen of my iPhone X broke. I am a loyal fan of Apple and am used to the iOS system. I am not willing to reduce my work efficiency in order to learn new operating methods.*
	Philips HX9924 Electric Toothbrush. *I regard having an electric toothbrush as essential, and I bought Philips as it is a trusted brand. The toothbrush has many features and can be charged in a glass, which I enjoy as it makes me feel scientific and technological.*
	Nikon Z6 Camera. *I have always enjoyed taking pictures, and this is a top-quality camera. I bought it in college. I didn't want to ask my parents for money, so I got a part-time job and saved for it - that makes it more special for me.*
	IKEA Blomdoft Scented Candles. *I fell in love with this after smelling it in IKEA and am still using it today. It reminds me of the days when I lived with my grandmother as a child. Burning it while I study helps me to be more focussed.*
	Dyson HD03 Hairdryer. *My hair is prone to damage, and this product was promoted as something that can dry hair without harming it. I like the quality feel of the product. Improving my image makes me feel happy.*
	MacBook Pro Laptop. *I couldn't stand the slowness of my previous computer, and the MacBook has greatly improved my work efficiency and reduced my stress. I think of it as a friend that helps me in my life and study.*
	Forest App. *This helps me keep focused on my work by limiting the amount of time I spend on my smartphone. I was having trouble being self-disciplined in the lockdown, and this helped me focus.*
	Prismacolor Pencil. *I draw to relax when I am under pressure. I love stationery, and the Prismacolor pencil is the smoothest I have ever used. Using effective, high-quality products make me happy.*
	Morning Rain Showerhead. *Chinese people assume that the water in the UK is impure. This showerhead filters the water and also gives a peach aroma. It gives me a sense of security.*
	Air Pods Earphones. *The most useful function of these is noise cancellation, giving me my own space in a noisy environment. They help keep me calm and focussed.*

Table 4. Archetypes and narratives associated with first author's selected products

Product	Archetype	Narratives
iPhone 12	Hero	Being competent and performing at my best
Philips HX9924 Electric Toothbrush	Innocent	Taking care of my wellbeing
	Sage	Having the intellectual curiosity be interested in the technical sophistication of the product
Nikon Z6 Camera	Creator	Enjoying the creative process of photography
	Hero	Facing and the financial challenge myself to afford the camera
IKEA Blomdoft Scented Candles.	Innocent	Look after my wellbeing and remembering how loved I am
Dyson HD03 Hairdryer	Innocent	Looking after myself
	Lover	Looking attractive
MacBook Pro Laptop	Hero	Being more efficient and working well
Forest App.	Hero	Being focussed and performing at my best
Prismacolor Pencil	Innocent	Relaxing is part of self-care
	Creator	Enjoying the creative process
	Ruler	Enjoying having the best quality things
Morning Rain Showerhead	Innocent	Looking after my wellbeing
Air Pods Earphones	Innocent	Being calm is self-care
	Hero	Being focussed helps me perform very well

Here (Table 4) are the self-narratives and archetypes that I associate with each product.

My Emergent Narratives

The two self-narratives that emerged most strongly were:

"I look after my wellbeing." (***Associated with the Innocent archetype***)

This refers to my physical and mental health, both of which are essential to my quality of life. On the physical side it includes keeping my teeth and hair healthy and bathing in pure water. Mentally it includes the relaxation from the candle and from drawing, the calming bubble provide by the earphones and the cathartic effects of drawing.

Associated products: electric toothbrush, candles, hairdryer, laptop, pencil, shower, earphones

"I perform at my best." (***Associated with the Hero archetype***)

I want to use my time as effectively as possible and do things to a high standard. This means using my time efficiently – using a laptop and phone with a familiar and usable operating system is part of this. They are also products that perform very effectively, as are the camera and the pencil. Meanwhile the earphones and the app both help me to focus on what I am doing by minimising distractions.

Associated products: phone, camera, laptop, app, pencil, earphones

Three other themes also emerged. They are summarised here with the associated products.

"I am determined and independent" (associated with the Ruler archetype)– evident in my getting a job to pay for the camera myself.

"I am loved" (associated with the Innocent archetype) – this emerges from the candles reminding me if my time with my grandmother.

"I look attractive" (associated with the Lover archetype)– the hairdryer enabling me to look good.

"I am intellectually curious" (associated with the Sage archetype) – taking an interest in the technology associated with the electric toothbrush.

ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

The tables below contain the product selections and descriptions – in their own words (in italics) – of the participants in the ethnography study. The narrative analysis was carried out by the authors, including the archetypes most strongly associated with each product narrative. The names of the participants have been changed to preserve anonymity, but the age and occupation data is correct.

DAXI

Daxi is a 21-year-old advertising student.

Daxi's Emergent Narratives

Narrative: "I look after my wellbeing." (*Innocent*)

Three of the products she discusses are about physical wellbeing: her appearance, health and pain relief. The other two contribute to her psychological wellbeing - reducing anxiety through being orderly and being reminded of her mother's love for her.

Associated products: comb, beanbag, sports bottle, storage rack, camera

Table 5. Daxi's selected products and descriptions

	Tangle Teezer Comb. *"My hair has become unruly after many perms and dyes. This sorts it out. I find the feel of the comb on my scalp soothing."* (Innocent, Ruler)
	MUJI Beanbag. *"I often work in a chair, which makes my waist uncomfortable. This beanbag is very comfortable. Whenever I sit in it, I have a sense of security."* (Innocent, Ruler)
	Jan Home Sports Bottle. *"This bottle has a capacity of 2000ml, so I have plenty of water for the gym. It brings me a sense of security and enables a healthy life."* (Innocent, Ruler)
	Polaroid Camera. *"This camera is of great significance to me. It was a birthday gift from my mother and carries her love for me. It has recorded many happy moments in my life and having a paper photo is a joy."* (Innocent)
	IKEA Storage Rack. *"The rack saves space and makes my life more orderly. It helps me to find things quickly."* (Ruler)

Narrative: "I am in control." (Ruler)

In four of her descriptions, she mentions that the products are helping her to take control of situations - getting the tangles out of her hair, helping relieve her back problems, ensuring she doesn't run out of water at the gym, making sure she knows where her things are.

Associated products: comb, beanbag, sports bottle, storage rack

MIAO

Miao is a 25-year-old accountant.

Miao's Emergent Narratives

Narrative: "I am in control." (Ruler)

Two of her product descriptions mentioned this - the foundation that made her feel powerful and confident at work and the efficient storage system that made her more efficient.

Associated products: storage rack, foundation

Table 6. Miao's selected products and descriptions

	Starbucks Coffee Cup. *"I can't imagine my life without coffee. When I first saw this Starbucks coffee cup, I was attracted by it. It is a glazed ceramic coffee cup with a metal texture. Every time I drink coffee with it, I feel like I am sitting in a luxury Cafe drinking an expensive cup of coffee."* (Ruler)
	IKEA Kvissle Storage Rack. *"My life must be orderly because disorder usually brings me negative emotions. I chose this storage box because each layer of it is durable and can keep my items in a straight line."* (Ruler)
	Nars Liquid Foundation. *"My image is very important to me. Using this foundation liquid makes me feel that I am the best employee in the company. It has greatly increased my self-confidence and improved my communication skills."* (Ruler)
	NetEase Music App. *"I feel exhausted dealing with relationships in the company. It seems that no one likes me, and everyone is for their own interests. So, I use this app when I drive home from work, and it relaxes me."* (Innocent)
	Palace Museum Phone Bracket. *"I put this in the car so that I can see it every day. I think his expression is infectious. Using it makes me feel that I am a lovely person and love life."* (Innocent)

Narrative: "I deserve the best." (*Ruler*)

This narrative emerges from what she says about the coffee cup and the foundation - it is worth spending the money to buy the best for herself.

Associated products: Coffee cup, foundation

Narrative: "I look after my wellbeing." (*Innocent*)

This is based on relaxing with the music app and having her mood lifted by the phone bracket.

Associated products: music app, phone bracket

Jinjin is a 25-year-old, high school physics teacher.

Jinjin's Emergent Narratives

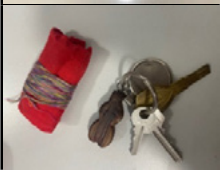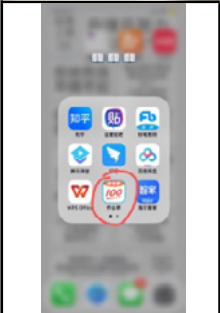**Narrative: "I have authority and self-confidence." (*Ruler*)**

She wants to be seen by others as authoritative and to feel self-confident. The boots have a role in the image she gives to others. Meanwhile, the app gives practical benefits.

Associated products: boots, app

Table 7. Jinjin's selected products and descriptions

	Nail Bar. *"Having beautiful nails makes me feel happy, and I feel excited every time I go to this nail bar. As a regular customer, I get special offers and more personalized treatments."* (Innocent, Lover)
	Dr Martin's Boots. *"Because of their thick soles, these make me look taller, which gives me self-confidence, vital in my role as a teacher. Also, unlike high heels, they are not tiring to wear."* (Ruler)
	Mahogany Key Ring. *"This was a gift from my mother five years ago. In China, mahogany is associated with peace and health. So, this represents my mother's love for me."* (Innocent)
	Problem Solving App. *"This app can automatically generate test papers and help parents check their children's homework. Parents were grateful to me for recommending it, which gave me a sense of achievement as a teacher."* (Ruler)
	Colored Contact Lenses. *"I have lots of different colours so that I can match my eye colour to my clothes and makeup. They enhance my appearance and help me to be fashionable."* (Lover)

Narrative: "I look after my wellbeing." (*Innocent*)

The manicure is the primary manifestation of this. She treats herself to it and, along with enjoying the outcome, feels that it is valuable to her psychological wellbeing.

Associated products: nail bar

Narrative: "I am loved." (*Innocent*)

The keyring reminds her of her mother's love.

Associated products: keyring

Narrative: "I am attractive."(*Lover*)

Part of her motivation for the manicure, and especially the coloured contact lenses, is being about being attractive to others.

Associated products: nail bar, coloured contact lenses

NANA

Nana is a 24-year-old graphic designer.

Nana's Emergent Narratives

Narrative: "I look after my wellbeing."(*Innocent*)

There are several examples – the pyjamas that help her relax, the sounds she enjoys in bed, the excitement of the blind box and the therapeutic effects of writing in her diary.
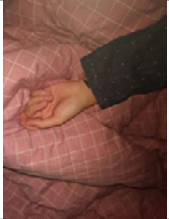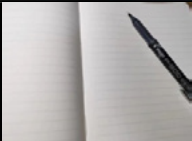
Associated products: pyjamas, recording app, blind box, diary

Narrative: "I am loved." (*Innocent*)

The cat notes remind her of the love of her friend.

Associated products: sticky notes

Table 8. Nana's selected products and descriptions

	MUJI Pyjamas. *"These pyjamas are very comfortable, give me a sense of security, and let me relax after a hard day's work. I look neat in them. They are made of 100% cotton, which satisfies my desire to be hugged and soft."* (Innocent)
	Recording App. *"I like to collect sounds from nature. Before going to bed, I play these repeatedly. I imagine lying on a lawn, walking along a beach or trekking through the jungle. It feels like the world is peaceful."* (Innocent)
	Blind Box. *"This has become a popular way to buy toys. Whenever I buy blind boxes, I like the excitement they bring me because I hope that I will love the toys. They are no longer mysterious when I open them and don't impress me. I enjoy the process, however."* (Innocent)
	Sticky Cat Note. *"A dear friend brought me these from Japan. She knows I like cats and that I like to write down ideas. She and I cherish each other. Every time I see this gift, I feel that someone cares about me and understands me."* (Innocent)
	Diary. *"My diary carries my memories. It records my complex emotional changes, like an old friend who listens to me. I enjoy that it is paper. Reading it back helps me to understand myself. I need to reflect on myself and correct my shortcomings in order to get promoted."* (Innocent, Hero)

Narrative: "I am improving myself."(Hero)

Concerning the diary, she states that she wants to improve herself to get a promotion.

Associated products: diary

EMERGENT THEMES AND SCHEMAS FROM THE QUALITATIVE STUDIES

Table 9 summarises the narrative themes that emerged from autoethnographic and ethnographic analyses.

The archetypes associated with these were as follows.

SURVEY

The results were calculated as percentage scores and are presented in Table 11. One-hundred percent would mean that all participants had scored their affinity with the archetype as 4 out of 4 – i.e., selected "strongly agree" for all 4 items. Zero percent would mean that all participants had scored their affinity with the archetype as 0 out of 4 – i.e., not selected "strongly agree" for any of the 4 items.

A binomial probability test was carried out to examine whether an archetype was significantly more or less likely to the chosen than the others ($p < 0.05$). Those significantly more likely to be chosen are highlighted green, those significantly less in red and those for which there was no statistical significance orange. Participants desired Sage, Creator, Innocent and Explorer significantly more than other archetypes and Carer, Outlaw, Ruler and Magician significantly less.

The first author also completed the questionnaire. This enabled us to see how typical she was of the sample as a whole, as regards her affinity with the archetypes. To obtain figures that could be used for correlation, her responses were quantified differently, scoring a "strongly agree" as a 4; "agree" as 3, "neither agree or disagree" as 2, "disagree" as 1, and "strongly disagree" as 0. With four items per archetype, that gave a potential score of

Table 9. Emergent self-narratives from the autoethnography and ethnography studies

Narrative	Participants
"I look after my wellbeing."	Me, Daxi, Miao, Jinjin, Nana
"I am loved."	Me, Jinjin, Nana
"I am attractive."	Me, Jinjin
"I am in control."	Daxi, Miao
"I perform at my best."	Me
"I deserve the best."	Miao
"I have authority and self-confidence."	Jinjin
"I am improving myself."	Nana

Table 10. Archetypes associated with participant narratives. (Figures in parentheses indicate the number of times each participants product selection and description fitted that archetype. For example, of the five selections Daxi made, four of her descriptions fitted with the Innocent archetype.)

Archetypes	Participants
Innocent	5: Me (6/16), Daxi (4/5), Miao (2/5), Jinjin (2/5), Nana (5/5)
Ruler	4: Me (1/16), Daxi (4/5), Miao (3/5), Jinjin (2/5)
Hero	2: Me (5/16), Jinjin (1/5)
Lover	2: Me (1/16), Jinjin (1/5)
Creator	1: Me (2/16)
Sage	1: Me (1/16)

between 0 and 16 per archetype. This method of scoring is different from the other participants in the sense that we are not only scoring based on items which she marked "strongly agree". For a sample of just one person, this wouldn't have given sufficient granularity to enable meaningful comparison.

Her scores are also included in the table, with colour coding in this case simply indicating which archetypes were in her top 4 (green), middle 4 (orange) and bottom 4 (red).

Comparing the affinity scores of the first author with those of the respondents gave a correlation of 0.83.

DISCUSSION

OVERALL ANALYSIS (BY FIRST AUTHOR)

The autoethnographic and ethnographic studies gave a consistent view of young Chinese professional women as a group. The emphasis was very much about self-focus – looking after our own wellbeing, performing at our best, being well organised, taking control. It painted a picture of independent, emotionally-intelligent and driven women. Being loved was important too – by our families, rather than romantically in the narratives that emerged here. It seemed clear that, by and large, we are the centre of our worlds. We value things that will make

us 'better', whether that be in better mental and physical health, looking more attractive, or performing better at our selected careers.

The responses to the questionnaire mirrored the outcomes of the quantitative study to some extent. Of the six archetypes that emerged from the case studies (Innocent, Ruler, Hero, Lover, Creator, Sage), four (Creator, Sage, Innocent, Lover) were in the top six ranked from the questionnaire. However, it was notable that Ruler – the second most common archetype from the case studies was significantly less likely to score highly in the questionnaire when compared to the other archetypes. This seemed puzzling so we looked at the scoring on each of the four items contributing to the Ruler score. One of the items, "Be well organised" did score very highly, but the others "have status", "have authority" and "show leadership" did not. It's difficult to draw any inferences about this apparent anomaly, in particular because of the small sample used in the ethnographic study, however it is a notable inconsistency given the general alignment between the ethnographic and survey studies.

Chinese culture tends to be regarded as one of the most collectivist in the world and there is empirical evidence to support this (Hofstede, 1991; Meyer, 2014). But when analysing myself and the ethnography participants, it was notable how individualistic our narratives were. We decided to analyse the questionnaire again, through an individualistic vs collectivist lens. Instead of looking

Table 11. Survey respondents' indicated affiliation with the archetypes

Archetype	Respondents' Affinity (%) (n = 112)	First Authors Affinity (Potential Range 0-16) n = 1
Creator	38	14
Sage	37	12
Innocent	35	12
Explorer	34	14
Lover	32	10
Jester	32	12
Everyperson	29	8
Hero	26	9
Magician	25	8
Ruler	23	4
Outlaw	20	10
Carer	18	4

at which architype each item was associated with, we reclassified them as to whether they represented an individualistic or collectivist outlook.

Overall, there were 28 items that we classified as individualistic (highlighted in blue) and 20 that were classified as interactive (highlighted in grey). As the table illustrates, the individualistic items were mainly scored high, and the interactive ones low. We used a binomial analysis to test if items were significantly more (green), less (red) or neither more nor less (orange) to be valued than the others. Of the 19 items valued significantly more than average, 17 indicate an individualistic mindset and 2 a collectivist mindset. Of the 13 items significantly less valued, 1 indicates an individualistic mindset and 12 a collectivist mindset. Taken together with the case studies, this provides further evidence that we are a very individualistic cohort.

As a comparison, we looked at the outcomes of a recent UK-based study which included a quantitative analysis of UK design students' self-association with the archetypes (Jordan, Bardill, Herd and Grimaldi, 2021). In this, Everyperson came top – a very collectivist archetype.

This could be because the study cohort was mostly of an age where people may see it as important to fit in (they were university students). However, our cohort is only a few years older, but Everyperson is down at number 7 in our survey rankings and doesn't appear at all in our autoethnographic or ethnographic studies. The UK is considered a very individualistic culture (Hofstede, 1991; Meyer, 2014) yet it seems that this Chinese cohort is far more individualistic.

Perhaps Westernisation, exposure to different cultural norms, has played a role. My generation has had far more exposure to Western culture than my parents' generation had, both through the media and travel. I live in the UK and studied here. Although the other participants in the study are based in China, they are still exposed to Western culture.

Another major generational change is the wealth of China. When my parents grew up it would probably have been considered a second-world country, while now it is arguably the economic powerhouse of the world. There are far more opportunities to have a fulfilling professional career and make a good living. But it is now very

Table 12. Ranking of individualistic (blue) vs. collectivist items from the survey

It is important to me to…			
Think analytically	Perform at my best	Create things of enduring value	Protect the weakest in society
Develop my wisdom	See opportunity in chaos	Have a fulfilling sex life	Show leadership
Develop skills	Help people	Feel that I am part of group	Be attractive to others
Have a happy relationship	Always be learning	Keep to the rules	Be different from others
Be imaginative	Be creative	Be open-minded	Challenge convention
Be humble	Overcome challenges	Explore the world	Make people laugh
Look after my wellbeing	Show courage	Live an ordinary life	Make people's dreams come true
Be down-to-earth	Enjoy every moment	Have romance in my life	Show empathy toward others
Experience new things	See the best in others	Have status	Challenge authority
Use my intelligence	Have spiritual experiences	Take care of others	Fit in with others
Have fun	Be free	Break rules if necessary	Amaze others
Be well organised	Have a light-hearted approach to life	Have authority	Put others needs before my own

competitive. To get the best jobs you have to overcome fierce competition from your peers. You need the best degree from the best university, which means that you have to do well in high school and before. You are under a lot of pressure from a young age. To come out on top you must be very self-focussed.

METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

An issue with autoethnography is validity – to what extent can the researcher claim to be representative of the population he or she is investigating? This was addressed in this research by comparing the first author to the participants in both the qualitative and quantitative parts of this study. In the qualitative part she associated herself with the same archetypes as the women who took part in the ethnographic study. In the quantitative part, her survey responses had a high correlation with those of the rest of the respondents. Based on this, it seems reasonable to assume that she is, with respect to the issues addressed here, representative of her cohort, suggesting that the autoethnographic methodology has a good measure of validity in this case. In the context of the narrative and the population examined here, she could be seen as a 'living-persona' that can produce generalisable insights through self-reflection.

CONCLUSIONS

The outcomes of all three studies paint a similar picture – of a cohort that is focussed on self-care and self-development. Creating products and services that support these ambitions is likely to be important in appealing to this them. This can be emphasised both in the functionality (e.g. enabling wellbeing and control) and the way that the products and services are marketed and promoted (e.g. depicting loving familial relationships). The findings suggest that young Chinese women live in a high-pressure world. They face intense competition and to succeed feel the need to be organised, driven and make the most of their talents. The emphasis on self-care may also be a result of this competitive scenario. In part because self-care can aid performance, but perhaps primarily because of the desire for relief from the psychological pressure that striving for success can entail.

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