Family Stories about Parents as Resources for Young Adults' Well-Being and Identity

Jordan A. Booker[1], Alexus Morton[2], Bayliee Kulesa[1]

[1]University of Missouri, Department of Psychological Sciences, Columbia, MO, USA

[2]Benedict College, Department of Psychology, Columbia, SC, USA

Abstract

Family storytelling is ubiquitous in daily home life and could have lasting impacts on adult offspring. We tested whether college adults' access to stories about parents and reported vividness of parent stories were related with well-being and identity. We studied two college samples: adults during COVID-related shutdowns ($n = 237$; 76.8% women); and adults during returns to in-person activities ($n = 402$; 65.5% women). Students responded to narrative prompts about mothers' and fathers' upbringing and described a) the functions of parents' stories and b) how vivid the story was. Students also provided reports about well-being and identity development. Most adult offspring had ready access to stories about their parents; many salient stories functioned as opportunities to learn about parents or as life lessons; and appraisals of parent stories as more vivid were positively related with well-being and with reported identity progress.

Keywords: Intergenerational narrative; Gender; COVID-19; Identity Development; Well-Being

General Audience Summary

We are surrounded by life stories throughout life. This includes stories about our family members and other important people as we are growing up. Family stories include smaller, daily events—the kinds of stories shared over meals—as well as stories about larger milestones or events (e.g., how parents met, birth of a loved one) and stories about the deeper family genealogy (e.g., stories about how descendants first immigrated to the United States). Just like the ways we have access to autobiographical life stories and organize these stories can be important for well-being and a clear understanding of our identity, the stories we carry *about others*—our vicarious stories—could be important for these areas of functioning. We tested college adults' access to stories about their parents, focusing on stories about events their parents were proud of as they were growing up. We asked whether college adults might differ in having ready access to stories about parents, why stories about parents were first shared with these adults, and how vivid the memories about parents were rated by storytellers. We were also interested in how these stories might be related to well-being and identity progress. We expected having access to stories, having stories that served certain functions (i.e., life lessons), and having stories that were appraised as more vivid to be positively related to well-being and identity development. We studied two groups of college adults: adults working remotely during COVID-19-related shutdowns (i.e., Fall 2020); and adults working in-person around colleges (i.e., Spring 2022). Most adults had ready access to stories about parent stories, and many stories involved life lessons or ways of better understanding parents' upbringings. Parent story vividness was positively related with aspects of well-being and identity commitment, reinforcing the widespread relevance and importance of family stories.

Family Stories about Parents as Resources for Young Adults' Well-Being and Identity

Humans are natural storytellers. The stories we share about our lives are important for building reasoning and understanding about ourselves, our relationships, and the world around us (McAdams & McLean, 2013). Life storytelling between people involves key processes for sharing information, including information about the histories, values, and traditions that are appropriate and healthy for functioning in different groups (i.e., family) and out in the world (Barclay & Koefoed, 2021; Fivush et al., 2019; Merrill, 2022; Nelson & Fivush, 2004). There is consensus that both autobiographical storytelling and family storytelling are important for development and functioning (Barclay & Koefoed, 2021; Le & Booker, 2024; Merrill & Fivush, 2016; Reese et al., 2017). There is also evidence that vicarious memories, those about others' experiences, are important for relationship-building and identity (Alea & Bluck, 2007; Conway & Pleydell-Pearce, 2000; Merrill, 2022). Yet, there remains space to study how vicarious family stories are related to well-being and identity development, especially as adults take stories shared from childhood and continue to incorporate them as resources for the self (Merrill et al., 2019; Merrill, 2022). Across two samples, we collected college adults' stories about their parents' upbringing, and studied how stories about parents were related to well-being and identity development. We addressed questions about the value of vicarious parent stories during emerging adulthood—a period with increasing independence from one's childhood family and home (Arnett, 2014).

The Value of Life Storytelling

Life stories are key for reasoning and communicating about lived experiences. We are surrounded by stories from loved ones from birth (Nelson & Fivush, 2004; McAdams, 2001, 2013). With improvements in language and memory, and with feedback and guidance from other experienced storytellers (Fivush, 2011; Fivush et al., 2017, 2019), storytelling becomes a central

part of the human experience from childhood onward. The ways people come to organize and share life stories reflects maturation (Ell & Booker, 2023; Le & Booker, 2024), cultural norms (Fivush et al., 2006; Flatt et al., 2024), and personality (Booker et al., 2021; McLean et al., 2020).

As people mature into adolescence, they begin to confront developmental milestones in constructing their identity (Erikson, 1968; Meeus et al., 1999). Life storytelling is directly related to these challenges, as people integrate multiple memories of their past to organize and represent a stable view of their full life stories. The skills for building a complex, stable, and well-integrated view of one's life story, or narrative identity, co-develop with broader social identities during this time (Habermas & Bluck, 2000; Fivush et al., 2017; McAdams, 2013; McAdams & McLean, 2013). Relatedly, people can manage and re-present memories about others, using vicarious memories. Vicarious storytelling also has implications for personal well-being, relationship adjustment, and identity development (e.g., Alea & Bluck, 2007; Conway & Pleydell-Pearce, 2000; Merrill, 2022; Steiner, 2023). Our current work emphasizes a set of vicarious memories that emerge from routine family interactions—stories about parents.

The Importance of Family Storytelling

We are surrounded by family stories from early in life (Barclay & Koefoed, 2021; Nelson & Fivush, 2004) and continue to receive stories about parents and other family figures during meals or during downtime in and around the home (Bohanek et al., 2009; Merrill et al., 2019). Family storytelling provides opportunities for parents to model and give feedback about the ways to share a good story, to help coach children through personal experiences (e.g., how to handle tough assignments at school, handling conflicts with friends, trying out new recreational activities), and to share general insights about their upbringing (e.g., Ell & Booker, 2023; McLean & Mansfield, 2012). In fact, parents use their life stories—involving their valuable memories—as

resources or guides to share about their experiences growing up, to share life lessons, and to build closer relationships with their children (Merrill et al., 2019; Reese et al., 2017). For these reasons, researchers expect that a) children are exposed to many family stories that they retain and can later recount; b) that these family stories can function as important psychological resources for understanding oneself, one's family, and the world; and that c) access to family stories should be important for well-being and personal identity development (Fivush et al., 2011; Merrill et al., 2019; McLean & Mansfield, 2012; Steiner, 2023). Building on these assumptions, we tested the ways having access to vicarious stories about parents' upbringing could be related to well-being and identity development for adult offspring. These are questions about the lasting importance of intergenerational narratives for people who are spending much of their time away from parents and hometown (Arnett, 2014).

Our current work is informed by a considerable body of research on intergenerational, vicarious stories and family storytelling from childhood to adulthood. Stories about parents' upbringing are common across societies and different ethnic groups (e.g., Chen et al., 2020; Reese et al., 2017), come from multiple family figures (e.g., parents, uncles, aunts, grandparents, siblings; Merrill & Fivush, 2016; Merrill et al., 2019; Reese et al., 2017); and impact how offspring—both children and adults—continue to organize and frame their personal life stories (Fivush et al., 2011). Wu and Jobson's (2019) review showcased the ways mothers' storytelling behaviors (i.e., elaborating personal stories, confirming and repeating details in children's life stories) were related to ongoing story elaboration with 3-to-12-year-old children. Further, Zaman and Fivush (2013) collected adolescents' (12-to-16-year-olds) high point and low point life stories about mothers and fathers, finding that adolescents' expressed story coherence with mothers' experiences, but not fathers', was an indicator of attachment security. Similarly, Merrill (2022) collected college

students' stories about parents' prideful experiences. Most students were able to provide stories about mothers and fathers, and those who made more personal connections with fathers' stories reported greater identity development (Merrill, 2022). We build on this work, focusing on older adolescents and young adults, and stories about parents' prideful experiences growing up—the kinds of stories they may be excited to share with offspring. We were also interested in the functions of these shared memories (i.e., whether they were for entertainment or deeper life lessons; Merrill et al., 2019) and how vividly people reported these vicarious memories (i.e., Blagov & Singer, 2004).

Family storytelling integrates with gender and gender socialization. In studies of cisgender parents and children, both mothers and fathers often engage in high-quality and routine forms of family storytelling, but their approaches in sharing stories and in responding to children's life stories can differ. For example, past studies have found mothers' storytelling with children to be more elaborative and responsive to children's shared story details relative to fathers (e.g., Zaman & Fivush, 2013) and for fathers to emphasize more themes of achievement, particularly toward sons, than mothers (e.g., Fiese & Skillman, 2000). These differences in how earlier family stories are shared and re/presented for offspring could have lingering implications for adult daughters and sons. We considered the potential of gender in vicarious storytelling.

Family Stories During and Following Major Impacts of COVID-19

Family stories involve both mundane events (e.g., time spent joking with siblings; starting a new hobby; acquiring a new pet) and major milestones or challenges (e.g., marriage, birth of a child, death of a loved one, [grand]parent's divorce). Thus, family stories, and their potential benefits for identity and well-being, should be relevant across mundane periods of life and against the backdrop of major sociohistorical events. Given expanding evidence that aspects of personality

and approaches to life storytelling are valuable resources against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., Booker & Johnson, 2024; Booker et al., 2024), we expected family stories to also be key resources for individuals studied against the backdrop of COVID.

The COVID-19 pandemic introduced threats to physical, psychological, and financial health that impacted individuals and families across most parts of the world, with wide-ranging US impacts beginning in Spring 2020 and lingering across the following years (e.g., Booker et al., 2024; Gassman-Pines et al., 2020; Heggeness, 2020; Woolf et al., 2020; Zhu et al., 2021). Earlier in the pandemic, there were periods of quarantine and isolation that impacted school and college attendance, work and internship opportunities, and abilities for people to spend time with peers and extended family. These were periods of uncertainty and fear for young adults—fear about the future and opportunities for professional growth; fear for the state of close relationships with suddenly distant friends and romantic partners; and fear for the health of themselves and their loved ones (e.g., Greenhoot Follmer et al., 2022; Mitchell et al., 2024). Family stories about perseverance, success, and pride can be relevant for hopefulness and optimism during these challenging times (e.g., Schroeder et al., 2024). Hence, data collected during COVID-related shutdowns and in the years to follow shutdowns could be important to consider given their sociohistorical timing.

The Current Project

We collected data from college adults, asking students to provide stories about their parents' upbringing. We were interested in whether access to these stories, functions of these stories, and the rated vividness of these stories would be related to students' well-being and identity. We addressed three major aims:

1. **Describing provided shared parent stories**. We hypothesized that most students (> 80%) would be able to successfully provide parent stories (Merrill et al., 2019). We hypothesized that a plurality of stories would involve life lessons.

2. **Testing relations of family and personal characteristics with parent stories**. We hypothesized that being raised in the same home as the target parent would be positively related with access to parent stories and to story vividness. We explored gender differences for access to parent stories, functions of parent stories, and vividness of parent stories.

3. **Testing relations of parent story characteristics with storyteller well-being and identity**. We hypothesized that having access to parent stories would be positively related to well-being and identity development. We hypothesized that stories functioning as life lessons would be distinctly and positively related with well-being and identity development (Merrill et al., 2019; Merrill, 2022). And we hypothesized that more vivid stories—involving memories that could be key for self-reflection (Blagov & Singer, 2004)—would be positively related with well-being and identity development.

We addressed these aims using two samples: a sample of students living and working remotely from college during Fall 2020; and a sample of students working in-person during Spring 2022. This project was not preregistered. De-identified project data is available at: https://osf.io/n9kya/?view_only=e9f1ae91e3de4337b008528e78f60916

Study 1

We collected data from college adults who were living and working remotely during the Fall 2020 semester. This was a period of extensive distress and identity confusion for many adults across US colleges and universities (Booker et al., 2022; Pasupathi et al., 2022). We asked students to provide stories about mothers' and fathers' pride-based experiences from when parents were

growing up. We selected pride-based stories, because these specific prompts have been successfully used with older adolescent and young adult samples, because pride-eliciting stories can involve both personal and relational achievements, and because pride can be elicited from "mundane" events as well as major trials and milestones (Merrill et al., 2019).

Study 1 Method

Sample Size Selection

In anticipation of planned analyses (i.e., t-tests, correlations, ANOVAs, regressions), we conducted power analyses for medium effect sizes (i.e., $\rho = .30$, $d = .50$, f $= .25$), power $(1 - \beta)$ of .95, and error rates of $\alpha = .05$. Needed sample sizes ranged from 107 participants (i.e., regression) to 280 participants (ANOVA) with our expected tests. We pushed for this recruitment during ongoing COVID-related disruptions.

Participants

We recruited 237 students (M age $= 18.8$ years, SD $= 3.01$; 76.8% women). Most students identified as White (75.1%), followed by those identifying as Black (11.0%), Multiracial (6.3%), Latine (3.8%), Southeast Asian (2.1%), and Middle Eastern or North African (.8%). Students were recruited from Introductory Psychology courses, but most students represented majors outside of Psychology (i.e., Biology, Journalism, Mathematics, Animal Science, Nursing, History, ~95%). Growing up, most students were raised in a family environment with a biological or adoptive mother (94.9%), and most were raised in a family environment with a biological or adoptive father (76.8%).

Procedures

Participants were recruited through a SONA website tied to the Introductory Psychology course. Students were invited to take an online study at a private location of their choosing. Study

procedures included responding to life story prompts about parent events and completing survey

reports. Participation was expected to take no more than an hour, but there was no time limit for

students. Students received course credit for their time. Alternative assignments were also

available for students who did not want to participate in research and needed other course credits.

Materials

Life Stories about Parents' Prideful Life Events

Each participant was asked to provide two life stories about their parents: one involving an

experience their mother was proud of while growing up; and another involving an experience their

father was proud of while growing up. These prompts have been successfully used with other

young adult samples (Merrill, 2022; Merrill et al., 2019). This narrative prompt is below:

> I would like for you to write a story about your [mother] (or a [mother]-figure) when she
> was young. This story should be about a specific time your [mother] was proud of
> something [she] had done. Though this story is not based on your own experiences, please
> describe   the   event   in   as   much   detail   as   possible.
>
> Do your best to include, what happened, where it happened, who was involved, what your
> [mother] did, what [she] was thinking and feeling during and after the event, and why this
> event is a source of pride. Try to be specific and provide as much detail as you can.

Students completed follow-up questions for each provided narrative. They were asked *who* the

source of the narrative was (e.g., mother, father, grandparent, etc.); *why* they believed the event

was shared with them (i.e., entertainment, learning about the parent, getting closer to the parent,

life lesson); and to give appraisals of *how vivid* the memory was for them ("how vividly do you

remember this event"; completed on 1-7 Likert scale). We were more interested in reports about

parents' stories, than in manual ratings of expressed narrative vividness with these stories, because

we were interested in how participants felt these stories had been shared with them and retained

over time, rather than expressions of personality in the ways people organize life stories.

Two example narratives are below:

My mom loved to cook with her grandma when she was younger. Every time we see or hear blueberry pancakes my mom tells the same story. She talked about them and how they would always cook and bake together and how much fun it was. They would be so proud when they turned our good every time. She felt very full, very happy, and very loved. She tells how they would make it with blueberries in the pancakes, and also a blueberry sauce. This is a source of pride because of how happy it makes her to pass on the tradition and story.
- Story about mother's prideful experience from Leah [pseudonym]

When my dad graduated high school in 1987. It was the last time he graduated from anything. He really struggled in school, and he said it was the most proud he's even been of himself in his life once he heard his name and he walked across that stage and grabbed his diploma. He said it closed one of the hardest chapters in his life and gave him a sense of self pride and freedom.
- Story about father's prideful experience from Olly [pseudonym]

Life Stories about Autobiographical High Point and Low Point Events

Students also responded to two autobiographical narrative prompts about a positive life event (i.e., high point) and negative life event (i.e., low point). These prompts have been successfully used with other young adult samples (e.g., Booker et al., 2022c). Our interest in this project was comparing word length between intergenerational (vicarious) narratives and autobiographical narratives. The narrative prompt is below:

Please describe a scene, episode, or moment from the last month that stands out as an especially [positive] experience. This might be the [high] point scene of the last month, or else an especially [happy, joyous, exciting, or wonderful] moment. Please describe this [high] point scene in detail.

What happened, when and where, who was involved, and what were you thinking and feeling? Also, please say a word or two about why you think this particular moment was so [good] and what the scene may say about who you are as a person.

Participants did not provide reports of story vividness for autobiographical narratives, but vicarious stories—those shared by others—have been shown to involve lower reports of vividness relative to autobiographical—or personally lived—stories (e.g., Merrill, 2022).

Well-Being

Students completed three measures about psychological well-being, such as positive feelings about the direction of one's life, positive feelings about one's relationships, and the extent people feel they have purpose and fulfillment in life. They completed the Flourishing Scale (Diener et al., 2010), which includes 8-items on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree*; 7 = *Strongly Agree*; sample item = "I lead a purposeful and meaningful life"; ω = .92). They completed the Brief Inventory of Thriving (Su et al., 2012), which includes 10 items on a 5-point Likert Scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree*; 5 = *Strongly Agree*; sample item = "I am optimistic about my future"; ω = .92). And they completed the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985), which includes 5 items on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree*; 7 = *Strongly Agree*; sample item = "The conditions of my life are excellent"; ω = .91). These measures have been previously used in studies on young adult life storytelling and well-being, for college- and community-recruited adults (Booker et al., 2022bc).

Identity Development

Students completed the Dimensions of Identity Development Scale (Luyckx et al., 2008), which includes five major dimensions of identity exploration and identity commitment (see also Marcia, 1966): commitment-making (ω = .90); identification with commitment (ω = .87); exploration-in-breadth (ω = .77); exploration-in-depth (ω = .66); and ruminative exploration (ω = .74).[1] Each subscale had 5 items completed on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree*; 5 = *Strongly Agree*; sample item = "I think about the direction I want to take in my life"). This scale

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[1] Internal consistency was lower than expected for the exploration-in-depth subscale. Still, we note that this parallels challenges with this specific subscale of identity in other college samples from across multiple US sites that were also collected during major shutdown periods of the COVID-19 pandemic (Booker et al., 2022; ωs = .51 to .61 from Spring 2020 to Spring 2021).

has been used in previous projects addressing vicarious storytelling (Merrill, 2022), autobiographical storytelling (Booker et al., 2024), and college adults' identity development.

Analytical Plan

Preliminary tests (i.e., differences in word count by type of life story or by storyteller gender) included paired *t*-tests and independent samples *t*-tests. Aim 1 analyses (i.e., describing shared parent stories) included one-sample *t*-tests and frequency counts. Aim 2 analyses (i.e., relations of family structure and gender with stories) included chi-squares tests and independent samples *t*-tests. Aim 3 analyses (parent stories are related to personal reports) included ANOVAs and correlation analyses.

Study 1 Results

Preliminary Tests on the Word Count of Provided Stories

We tested whether story *word count* differed given the type of story and by participant gender. Paired-samples *t*-tests revealed that stories about mothers (*M* word = 56.76, SD = 49.91) had more words than stories about fathers (*M* words = 45.13, SD = 41.28; $t(236) = 4.58$, $d = .30$, $p < .001$). Vicarious stories had fewer words than autobiographical high point (*M* words = 78.50, SD = 52.48) and low point (*M* words = 84.37, SD = 78.21) stories, $ps < .001$. Independent samples *t*-tests revealed that women and men did not differ in word count for mothers' ($p = .127$) or fathers' ($p = .843$) stories.

Descriptive Tests about Parent Stories

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for this sample. Most students were able to provide stories about mothers' (96.6%) and fathers' (94.5%) prideful experiences. One-sample *t*-tests affirmed that students' access to both mothers' ($t(236) = 14.14$, $d = .92$, $p < .001$) and fathers' ($t(236) = 9.79$, $d = .64$, $p < .001$) stories exceeding our tested value of 80%, fitting with our

predictions. For each parent, the source of the story was most often the target parent (85.4% for mothers; 80.2% for fathers), followed by the other parent in the home (3.1% fathers providing stories about mothers; 6.8% mothers providing stories about fathers), and grandparents (3.1% grandparents providing stories about mothers; 5.0% grandparents providing stories about fathers).

Students' identified one of four story functions for vicarious memories: 1) helping them *learn more about their parent*; 2) *relationship-building* and intimacy with their parent; 3) *entertainment* or killing time; and 4) sharing *life lessons*. For mothers, opportunities to learn about mother (34.5%) and life lessons (33.6%) were the most common functions, followed by relationship-building (17.7%) and entertainment (14.2%). For fathers, life lessons (37.3%) and learning about father (30.5%) were the most common functions, followed by entertainment (17.3%) and relationship-building (14.5%). The high prevalence of parent stories as life lessons, alongside learning about parents, partially fit our expectations.

Relations of Family Structure and Gender with Shared Stories

Chi-squares tests revealed that family structure during students' upbringing was not related to parent story access. Being raised with mothers was not significantly associated with access to mothers' stories ($\chi^2(1) = .95$, $p = .329$), nor was being raised with fathers associated with access to fathers' stories ($\chi^2(1) = .44$, $p = .506$). Similarly, there were not significant differences between women and men's ability to provide stories about mothers ($\chi^2(1) = .53$, $p = .466$) or about fathers ($\chi^2(1) = .47$, $p = .492$).

Being raised in the same home as mothers was not significantly associated with the functions of mother stories ($\chi^2(3) = 6.22$, $p = .101$); however, being raised in the same home as fathers was associated with functions of father stories ($\chi^2(3) = 10.54$, $p = .014$). Students who had lived in the same home as fathers were more likely to share events about life lessons; whereas

students who were not raised in the same home as fathers were more likely to share stories meant to help them build their relationship with their fathers or that served as entertainment. Storyteller gender was not related to the functions of parent stories for either mothers ($\chi^2(3) = 2.36$, $p = .502$) or fathers ($\chi^2(3) = 2.13$, $p = .547$).

Being raised in the same home as mothers was not associated with vividness of mother memories ($t(227) = -.51$, $d = -.16$, $p = .608$). However, being raised in the same home as fathers was positively related with father memory vividness ($t(222) = -.215$, $d = -.34$, $p = .033$). This difference was in the expected direction. Vividness did not significantly differ between participants' mother and father stories ($t(219) = -.42$, $d = -.03$, $p = .677$). Women and men did not differ in reported mother ($t(227) = -.12$, $d = -.02$, $p = .907$) or father story vividness ($t(222) = .42$, $d = .07$, $p = .677$).

Shared Parent Story Characteristics and Personal Adjustment

Because of the limited instances where students did *not* provide mother ($n = 8$) or father ($n = 13$) stories, we did not test whether parent memory access was related to self-reports on well-being or identity.

Table 2 presents one-way ANOVAs of reported well-being and identity development given the story function. For mother events, the model omnibus was not significant for tested outcomes. For father events, the model omnibus was significant for flourishing and life satisfaction. Post-hoc, Tukey-corrected contrasts revealed significant differences given story functions. Stories shared for entertainment were related with lowest scores of flourishing and life satisfaction, whereas stories shared for life lessons were related with the highest scores of flourishing and life satisfaction. These contrasts fit with expectations.

Table 3 presents correlations of mother and father event vividness with self-reports. Vividness from mother stories was positively related with flourishing, thriving, and identification with commitment. Vividness from mother stories was negatively related with identity ruminative exploration. Vividness from father stories was positively related with flourishing, thriving, identity commitment-making, and identification with commitment. Vividness from father stories was negatively related with identity ruminative exploration. Correlations were in expected directions.

Study 1 Brief Discussion

Most college adults had access to parent stories about prideful events and many of these events were focused on life lessons and efforts to share insights about the respective parent. Memories functioning as life lessons and more vivid memories were positively related with adjustment and identity development. We aimed to replicate and expand this work, testing adults who were no longer predominantly completing their work from home due to the COVID-19 pandemic We addressed our same research aims with college adults in Spring 2022; a period where most students had returned to in-person college activities and were re-acclimated with in-person learning and living activities (e.g., Booker & Johnson, 2024; Booker et al., 2024).

Study 2

We collected data from college adults who had mostly returned to in-person activities around campus during the Spring 2022 semester. Earlier work has revealed that this return to campus served as a unique boost to resilience and identity progress for many college adults, above and beyond other longitudinal changes against the backdrop of COVID (Booker et al., 2024; Booker & Johnson, 2024). We tested whether previous findings involving parent stories were replicated with this important shift in daily living.

Study 2 Method

Participants

We recruited 402 students into this project (mean age = 19.2 years, SD = 2.01; 65.5% women). Most students identified as White (77.7%), followed by those identifying as Black (10.2%), Multiracial (4.8%), Latine (3.3%), Southeast Asian (1.5%), Middle Eastern or North African (.8%), American Indian (.8%), and Indio-Asian (.5%). Students were recruited from Introductory Psychology courses, but most students represented majors outside of Psychology (~95%). Growing up, most students were raised in a family environment with a biological or adoptive mother (92.9%), and most were raised in a family environment with a biological or adoptive father (79.4%).

Procedures

Participants were recruited through a SONA website tied to the Introductory Psychology course. Students were invited to take an online study at a private location of their choosing. Study procedures included responding to life story prompts about parent events and completing survey reports. Participation was expected to take no more than an hour, but there was no time limit for students. Students received course credit for their time. Alternative assignments for course credit were available for students.

Materials

Students responded to the same narrative prompts for pride-based stories about mothers' and fathers' upbringing. Students completed the same follow-up questions as with Study 1.

Students completed the same measures of well-being and identity as Study 1. This included the Flourishing Scale (ω = .89), Brief Inventory of Thriving (ω = .91), Satisfaction with Life Scale (ω = .88), and Dimensions of Identity Development Scale (ω commitment-making = .89; ω

identification-with-commitment = .90; ω exploration in breadth = .88; ω exploration-in-depth = .78; ω ruminative exploration = .83).

Analytical Plan

Preliminary tests (i.e., differences in measures between Study 1 and Study 2) included independent samples t-tests. Aim 1 analyses included one-sample t-tests and frequency counts. Aim 2 analyses included independent samples t-tests and chi-squares tests. Aim 3 analyses included ANOVAs and correlation analyses.

Study 2 Results

Preliminary Analyses between Study Samples

We compared mean scores for parent pride stories and students' reports of well-being and identity development between Sample 1 and Sample 2. Access to parent stories did not differ between samples ($ps \geq .336$). However, the vividness of both mother ($t(613) = 3.21$, $d = .27$, $p = .001$) and father ($t(436.04) = 2.39$, $d = .21$, $p = .019$) stories was higher with Sample 1—among students who were more likely to be living and working from homes with their parents (i.e., Booker & Johnson, 2004; Greenhoot Follmer et al., 2022; Schroeder & Booker, 2024). Most self-reports of well-being and identity development did not systematically differ between samples ($ps \geq .100$), except for ruminative identity exploration ($t(629) = 2.53$, $d = .86$, $p = .012$), which was higher among Sample 1 respondents. Elevated ruminative identity exploration among college adults during the early phases of COVID-related shutdowns matches other college sample comparisons between pre-COVID samples and samples studied during Spring 2020 (Pasupathi et al., 2022).

Descriptive Tests about Parent Stories

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics for Study 2. Most students were able to provide stories about mothers' (95.7%) and fathers' (92.5%) prideful experiences and provided

significantly more than our test value of 80% (ps < .001). As with Study 1, the source of each story was most often the target parent (83.4% for mothers; 80.8% for fathers), followed by other family storytellers, including the other parent (2.6% fathers providing stories about mothers; 4.3% mothers providing stories about fathers) and grandparents (4.9% grandparents providing stories about mothers; 3.5% grandparents providing stories about fathers).

The prevalence of story functions was similar to Study 1. For mother stories, opportunities to learn about mother (35.3%) and life lessons (34.7%) were the most common reasons, followed by entertainment (15.4%) and relationship-building (14.6%). For father stories, life lessons (34.1%) and opportunities to learn about father (33.2%) were the most common reasons, followed by entertainment (20.3%) and relationship-building (12.4%).

Relations of Family Structure and Gender with Shared Stories

Family structure was related to students' access to parent stories. Students raised with mothers ($\chi^2(1) = 38.62$, $p < .001$) and fathers ($\chi^2(1) = 30.64$, $p < .001$) were more likely to share parents' respective stories. There were not significant differences between women and men in providing stories about mothers ($\chi^2(1) = 1.09$, $p = .297$) or fathers ($\chi^2(1) = .18$, $p = .671$).

Being raised in the same home as mothers was not related with the functions of mother stories ($p = .453$). Being raised in the same home as fathers was weakly related with the functions of father stories ($\chi^2(3) = 7.71$, $p = .052$). Students raised with fathers were less likely to share stories about entertainment and more likely to share stories about life lessons. Storyteller gender was not related to the functions of shared mother ($\chi^2(3) = 2.07$, $p = .558$) or father stories ($\chi^2(3) = 3.02$, $p = .338$).

Being raised in the same home environment as mothers was not associated with vividness of mother stories ($t(384) = -1.64$, $d = -.35$, $p = .103$). However, being raised in the same home as

fathers was positively related with story vividness ($t(370) = -3.31$, $d = -.45$, $p = .001$). Storytellers'

ratings of vividness were higher for father stories than mother stories ($t(369) = -2.00$, $d = -.10$, $p =$

.046). Women and men did not differ in mother ($t(383) = -.54$, $d = -.06$, $p = .590$), or father story

vividness ($t(369) = 1.00$, $d = .11$, $p = .319$).

Shared Parent Story Characteristics and Personal Adjustment

While there were still few students who did not provide mother (10 missing responses) or

father (24 missing responses) stories,[2] we had larger groups to consider than Study 1, and used

independent-samples *t*-tests to determine whether providing parent stories (treated as access to

parent stories) was related to student reports of well-being and identity development.[3] Access to

mother stories was not significantly related to student reports ($ps \geq .204$). Access to father stories

was related to significant differences in reported flourishing ($t(394) = -2.57$, $d = -.54$, $p = .011$),

thriving ($t(394) = -2.41$, $d = -.51$, $p = .016$), life satisfaction ($t(394) = -2.85$, $d = -.60$, $p = .005$),

and identification with commitment ($t(392) = -2.78$, $d = -.60$, $p = .006$). Students who provided

father stories endorsed greater well-being and identity development.

Table 5 presents one-way ANOVAs of reported well-being and identity development given

the reason the salient story was first shared. The model omnibus was significant for identity

exploration in-depth when testing reasons for mothers' events. Stories about entertainment with

mothers were related to lower scores of identity exploration, relative to stories about relationship-

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[2] We recognize that these are not desirable cell sizes for *t*-tests, and post-hoc power analyses affirmed that we were underpowered for detecting medium ($d = .50$) effects for access to mothers' stories ($1-\beta = .34$) and access to fathers' stories ($1-\beta = .66$); however, with larger effects ($d = .80$), we were sufficiently powered for access to fathers' stories ($1-\beta = .97$). We present these findings for transparency of our conducted tests.
[3] Many students who did not provide a story about their parent(s) were explicit in mentioning that they could not think of or remember a relevant event (e.g., "I honestly do not know much about my father when he was young").

building and learning about mother's history. We did not find support for life lessons as distinctly, positively related to student identity.

We used correlations to test relations of parent story vividness with well-being and identity development. See Table 6. Vividness from mother stories was positively related with flourishing, thriving, life satisfaction, identity exploration in-breadth, and identity exploration-in-depth. Vividness from father events was positively related with flourishing, thriving, life satisfaction, identification with commitment, and identity exploration-in-depth.

We lastly used *post-hoc* regression analyses, using observations across both Study 1 and Study 2 samples to test the robust associations of parent story vividness with student well-being and identity development. We were interested in a) incremental relations of parent story vividness beyond family structure and gender and b) whether sample timing (i.e., during quarantined living versus the return to face-to-face activities) further qualified (moderated) the relations between parent story vividness and storyteller adjustment. Step 1 included sample timing, family structure, and storyteller gender. Step 2 included main effects of mother and father event vividness. Step 3 included story vividness * sample timing interaction terms. Table 7 presents regression findings.

With main effects of story vividness (Step 2), the model omnibus was significant for most outcomes, exceptions being identity exploration-in-breadth and identity ruminative exploration. Vividness for mothers' stories was robustly and positively related with student flourishing. Vividness for fathers' stories was robustly and positively associated with student flourishing, thriving, life satisfaction, identity commitment-making and identification with commitment.

Additionally, two interaction effects were supported, involving sample timing and mother story vividness for reports of identity development. For identity ruminative exploration, the estimate of mother event vividness was near zero during remote living (estimate = -.02, SE = .03,

$p =$. 410) and was positive and significant with the return to face-to-face activities (estimate = .06,

SE = .02, $p < .001$). See Figure 1. For identity exploration-in-depth, the estimate of mother event

vividness was negative during periods of remote work (estimate = -.05, SE = .03, $p = .111$), and

was positive during the return to face-to-face activities (estimate = .04, SE = .04, $p = .132$). See

Figure 2. Bias sensitivity tests suggested each significant interaction was at low risk of bias: 22.5%

of observations and 11.0% of observations, respectively, would need to be null values to change

our interpretation of significant interaction terms.[4]

A final set of secondary, post-hoc analyses, addressing possible covariates of vicarious

stories and storytelling (i.e., first-person language in vicarious stories; family-based social support)

is presented in the Supplemental Materials.

General Discussion

We studied college adults' vicarious stories about mothers' and fathers' upbringing, the

functions of these stories, memory vividness for stories, and whether the characteristics of *parents'*

stories were related to *offspring's* well-being and identity development. Most participants had

ready access to these stories about their parents; the functions of most stories involved learning

about parents and personal lifer lessons; and vivid stories were positively related to well-being and

identity.

Parent Stories are Widely Accessible for Adult Offspring

Most adult offspring had ready access to stories about their parents, including offspring

who were not raised in the same household as the target parent. This aligns with past findings on

vicarious storytelling (i.e., Alea & Bluck, 2007; Conway & Pleydell-Pearce, 2000; Merrill et al.,

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[4] Post-hoc analyses did not support moderating effects of participant gender in regression models. That is, there was not evidence that same-sex or opposite-sex parent stories were operating differently for women and men offspring in our current work.

2016, 2019; Zaman & Fivush, 2013) and broader arguments about family storytelling and family processes (i.e., Fivush, 2011; Nelson & Fivush, 2004; Reese et al., 2017). Many stories had functions of building understanding *about* parents and new lessons and insights *for* offspring. This reinforces views that families are invested in sharing about family knowledge and the broader family history (e.g., how did the family emigrate to the US; how did parents meet; how did nicknames come about, who always told the best jokes; Barclay & Koefoed, 2021; Duke et al., 2008; Merrill et al., 2019). These are also stories that can be as sources of self-understanding, a process that incorporates relationships and family knowledge for whole, integrated views of the self (Merrill, 2022; Reese et al., 2017; Schroeder et al., 2024).

Gender was not systematically related to parent story access—both women and men often shared stories about both mothers and fathers. Additionally, the reasons these stories were first shared with offspring were comparable from mothers and fathers and for son and daughter storytellers. However, family structure (i.e., living with fathers) was related to father story vividness. This is important, as life story vividness is key for the ways specific events are integrated into the fuller life story and are relevant for autobiographical reasoning (Blagov & Singer, 2004). Notably, father story vividness was positively related to both well-being and identity *during* (Study 1) and *after* (Study 2) COVID-19 impacts. There remain questions on the ways gender shapes family storytelling processes, and there is room to further study the roles of family structure and family dynamics with mothers' and fathers' sharing of family history.

Adult Offsprings' Storytelling about Parents is Related to Well-Being and Identity

During periods of COVID-related quarantine, many residential college students quickly returned to their hometowns/familial homes in response to college shutdowns and switches to remote instruction (i.e., Greenhoot Follmer et al., 2022; Pasupathi et al., 2022). During this period,

nearly all surveyed students (Study 1) were able to successfully recount stories about their parents'

upbringing, limiting opportunities to test how access might be related to personal adjustment, but

matching ideas of family stories as ubiquitous in daily family life (i.e., Bohanek et al., 2009; Fivush

et al., 2011, 2019). With returns to residential college life (Study 2), a larger proportion of students

struggled to provide stories about parents' upbringing, and findings reinforced that access to

parents' stories, and particularly fathers' stories, was related with greater well-being and identity

commitment. This is important, as adult offspring were navigating more spaces and major tasks

independent from their parents and other family members (i.e., college work; advancing career

goals and professional development; pursuing romance; Arnett, 2014). Part of these differences

could reflect something distinct about the kinds of stories shared by and about fathers (i.e., stories

centered on achievement; Fiese & Skillman, 2000), or other reflections of the family structure that

can be intwined with father story access (i.e., whether father lived in the same home). These

findings encourage ongoing research at junctions between family dynamics, cognitive, and

narrative sciences.

Further, across mother and father stories, appraisals of memory vividness were adaptive

for adult offspring. Rating mothers' and fathers' stories as more vivid was positively related to

psychological fulfillment, life satisfaction, and identity commitment. There was evidence that

story vividness was valuable across different phases of the COVID pandemic, but mother story

vividness during returns to in-person activities were related to both constructive (i.e., identity

exploration in depth) and problematic (i.e., ruminative identity exploration) forms of identity

exploration. In some ways, this fits with separate projects about college adults across multiple US

sites. These college populations endorsed disruptions and delays in identity work compared to

previous samples of peers from the same college settings (Pasupathi et al., 2022), and there may

be multiple efforts to "catch up" in the years following disruptions. Further still, the same students who reported on early COVID disruptions, when tracked over time, reported increasing investments in identity exploration and progress in identity commitment—and these improvements were even larger for students who engaged more in deeper autobiographical reasoning in life stories about COVID's impacts (Booker et al., 2024). It is reasonable to assume that vicarious stories about parents, as resources about the journeys others have taken (i.e., information about parents) and guides for personal actions (i.e., life lessons), could also be part of the life story toolkit useful for considering—for exploring—different roles, values, and goals for oneself and one's identity (Steiner, 2023). These steps for catching up on exploration could also be messy at times, involving second-guessing or having difficulties accepting outcomes for the ways coursework, relationships, and career/goal progress have resolved (i.e., ruminative exploration). Questions stemming from these findings are worth continuing to build on with future work.

Limitations, Strengths, and Future Directions

Our work was limited by aspects of sample homogeneity, including recruitment of majority-White, traditional age college samples representing the central US. Our current work may not generalize well to adult populations outside of college contexts, across different regions of the US, or with adults representing other aspects of the lifespan. This work remains important to replicate and expand on with adult populations representing additional social identities, geographic regions, and adult roles and obligations (i.e., childrearing; full-time employment). In addition, our work was limited by concurrent designs and correlational analyses. We cannot speak to directionality of effects between measured constructs. Because it was rare for students to not provide parent stories, our analyses involving story access were underpowered in Study 2. Further, we note that we relied on reports of memory vividness, rather than using existing rating systems

for capturing expressions of narrative identity, like expressions of coherence across multiple stories (e.g., Waters et al., 2019), elaboration in parent pride stories (Schroeder et al., 2022), or the study of self-event connections with parent pride stories (Merrill, 2022). This was an intentional decision to incorporate appraisals about memories involving others, rather than expressions of personal narrative identity. However, this leaves important questions about the role of different narrative processes—both for the ways family stories are first shared with offspring, and the ways offspring continue to re-story vicarious memories—for ongoing development and functioning.

In contrast, our project benefits from two larger samples collected from different sociohistorical phases of the COVID-19 pandemic and from including a focus on stories about others' development—a rarer focus on intergenerational storytelling. Future research will benefit from more diverse adult populations, including adults outside of college contexts and who better represent the rich ethno-racial diversity of the US. Projects with multi-wave and longitudinal designs will also be important to clarify the stability and variability of family storytelling and possible longitudinal effects between family storytelling and personal adjustment. Further, there remains both space and a need to study narrative processes and expressions of narrative identity with more vicarious stories.

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Table 1

Study 1 Descriptive Statistics

	%	Valid %		
% Provided Mother Stories	96.6%			
% Learning about Mother		34.5%		
% Relationship-Building		17.7%		
% Entertainment		14.2%		
% Life Lesson		33.6%		
% Provided Father Stories	94.5%			
% Learning about Father		30.5%		
% Relationship-Building		14.5%		
% Entertainment		17.3%		
% Life Lesson		37.3%		
	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Mother Story Vividness	3.68	2.07	1.00	7.00
Father Story Vividness	3.74	2.15	1.00	7.00
Flourishing	5.60	1.03	1.38	7.00
Thriving	3.91	.68	1.40	5.00
Life Satisfaction	4.90	1.40	1.20	7.00
Commitment-Making	3.73	.95	1.00	5.00
Identification with Commitment	3.89	.84	1.00	5.00
Exploration-In-Breadth	4.13	.63	1.80	5.00
Exploration-In-Depth	3.74	.65	2.00	5.00
Ruminative Exploration	3.34	.81	1.20	5.00

Table 2

Study 1 One-Way ANOVAs of Student Well-Being and Identity Development Given the Reasons for Shared Mother and Father Events

	Well-Being				Identity Development			
	Flourishing	Thriving	Life Sat.	CM	IC	EB	ED	RE
Mother Event Reasons								
$F(3, 222)$	.33	.31	.55	.10	.52	1.74	1.73	2.15
η^2	.005	.004	.007	.001	.007	.023	.023	.028
Level Means (SD)								
Learning about Mother	5.69 (.99)	3.97 (.69)	5.06 (1.46)	3.71 (.97)	3.91	4.23	3.80	3.44
Relationship-Building	5.65 (1.01)	3.86 (.72)	4.74 (1.37)	3.81 (.89)	3.86	4.10	3.68	3.18
Entertainment	5.69 (1.06)	3.86 (.76)	4.83 (1.22)	3.71 (.86)	3.74	3.94	3.54	3.24
Life Lesson	5.58 (1.09)	3.91 (.65)	4.89 (1.42)	3.75 (.99)	3.95	4.14	3.81	3.53
Contrast Means (SD)								
Life Lessons vs Others	-.11 (.45)	.04 (.30)	.05 (.61)	.01 (.41)	.35 (.37)	.16 (.27)	.41 (.28)	**.73 (.34)**
Learning and Lessons vs Others	.12 (.30)	.16 (.20)	.39 (.40)	-.06 (.27)	.27 (.24)	.34 (.18)	**.40 (.18)**	**.55 (.23)**
Entertainment vs Others	.44 (.60)	.15 (.40)	.19 (.81)	.13 (.55)	.51 (.49)	.66 (.36)	.68 (.37)	.42 (.46)
Father Event Reasons								
$F(3, 217)$	**3.34**	1.17	**3.29**	.58	1.27	.53	.52	.38
η^2	.044	.016	.044	.008	.017	.007	.007	.005
Level Means (SD)								
Learning about Father	5.66[ab]	3.91	4.97[ab]	3.76	3.85	4.05	3.68	3.35
Relationship-Building	5.56[ab]	3.91	4.73[ab]	3.79	4.05	4.14	3.81	3.48
Entertainment	5.21[a]	3.78	4.45[a]	3.62	3.72	4.15	3.71	3.44
Life Lesson	5.83[b]	4.02	5.25[b]	3.86	3.98	4.18	3.79	3.32
Contrast Means (SD)								
Life Lessons vs Others	**1.05 (.43)**	.46 (.29)	**1.59 (.59)**	.40 (.39)	.32 (.35)	.18 (.26)	.17 (.28)	-.30 (.35)
Learning and Lessons vs Others	**.72 (.29)**	.24 (.20)	**1.04 (.40)**	.21 (.27)	.06 (.24)	-.07 (.18)	-.05 (.19)	-.24 (.23)
Entertainment vs Others	**1.41 (.54)**	.51 9.37)	**1.61 (.74)**	.54 (.50)	.72 (.45)	-.09 (.33)	.16 (.35)	-.17 (.44)

Note. Bolded values were significant at the α = .05 level. Life Sat. = Life satisfaction. CM = Commitment-making. IC = Identification with commitment. EB = Exploration in-breadth. ED = Exploration in-depth. RE = Ruminative exploration. Retested model contrasts tested three solutions: that life lessons [+3] might differ from other types of stores [-1, -1, -1]; that learning about parents or life

lessons [+1, +1] might differ from entertainment or relationship-building [-1, -1]; and that entertainment stories [-3] might differ from all other kinds of stories [+1, +1, +1].

Table 3

Study 1 Correlation Analyses of Parent Memory Vividness with Student Well-Being and Identity Development

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
1. Mother Event Vividness	--									
2. Father Event Vividness	**.58**	--								
3. Flourishing	**.14**	**.21**	--							
4. Thriving	**.14**	**.19**	**.84**	--						
5. Life Satisfaction	.07	.13	**.73**	**.74**	--					
6. Commitment-Making	.10	**.20**	**.51**	**.55**	**.42**	--				
7. Identification with Commitment	**.14**	.17	**.58**	**.64**	**.46**	**.81**	--			
8. Exploration-In-Breadth	-.05	.02	**.32**	**.27**	**.20**	**.31**	**.46**	--		
9. Exploration-In-Depth	.05	.12	**.42**	**.45**	**.35**	**.59**	**.69**	**.67**	--	
10. Ruminative Exploration	**-.16**	**-.14**	**-.30**	**-.39**	**-.33**	**-.51**	**-.40**	**.24**	.00	--

Note. Significance values were corrected for multiple tests using the Benjamini-Hochberg correction. Bolded values were significant at the α = .05 level following these corrections for multiple tests.

Table 4

Study 2 Descriptive Statistics

	%	Valid %		
% Provided Mother Stories	95.7%			
% Learning about Mother		35.3%		
% Relationship-Building		15.4%		
% Entertainment		14.6%		
% Life Lesson		34.7%		
% Provided Father Stories	92.5%			
% Learning about Father		33.2%		
% Relationship-Building		12.4%		
% Entertainment		20.3%		
% Life Lesson		34.1%		
	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Mother Story Vividness	3.15	1.91	1.00	7.00
Father Story Vividness	3.32	1.96	1.00	7.00
Flourishing	5.64	.82	2.88	7.00
Thriving	3.92	.61	1.60	5.00
Life Satisfaction	4.73	1.27	1.00	7.00
Commitment-Making	3.85	.85	1.00	5.00
Identification with Commitment	3.83	.88	1.00	5.00
Exploration-In-Breadth	4.15	.73	1.00	5.00
Exploration-In-Depth	3.75	.75	1.00	5.00
Ruminative Exploration	3.22	.89	1.00	5.00

Table 5

Study 2: One-Way ANOVAs of Student Well-Being and Identity Development Given the Reasons for Shared Mother and Father Events

	Well-Being			Identity Development				
	Flourishing	Thriving	Life Sat.	CM	IC	EB	ED	RE
Mother Story Functions								
$F(3, 379)$	2.49	2.58	2.61	1.11	1.68	2.43	**3.84**	.80
η^2	.019	.019	.020	.009	.013	.019	.030	.006
Level Means (SD)								
Learning about Mother	5.65	3.91	4.79	3.90	3.86	4.22	3.79[a]	3.24
Relationship-Building	5.69	3.95	4.58	3.97	4.03	4.28	3.94[a]	3.37
Entertainment	5.39	3.73	4.37	3.71	3.69	3.96	3.49[b]	3.15
Life Lesson	5.74	3.99	4.88	3.82	3.78	4.12	3.75[ab]	3.17
Contrast Means (SD)								
Life Lessons vs Others	.48 (.27)	.39 (.20)	**.91 (.42)**	-.13 (.28)	-.25 (.29)	-.08 (.24)	.04 (.25)	-.24 (.29)
Learning and Lessons vs Others	.30 (.18)	.22 (.14)	**.72 (.28)**	.04 (.19)	-.09 (.20)	.10 (.17)	.11 (.17)	-.10 (.20)
Entertainment vs Others	**.89 (.35)**	**.66 (.26)**	**1.15 (.54)**	.56 (.37)	.60 (.38)	**.75 (.31)**	**1.02 (.32)**	.34 (.38)
Father Story Functions								
$F(3, 365)$	.82	1.13	1.84	.10	1.46	1.61	.66	1.02
η^2	.007	.009	.015	.000	.012	.013	.005	.008
Level Means (SD)								
Learning about Father	5.68	3.93	4.83	3.87	3.94	4.26	3.84	3.28
Relationship-Building	5.77	3.97	4.83	3.84	3.80	4.20	3.74	3.29
Entertainment	5.55	3.84	4.51	3.85	3.70	4.06	3.71	3.18
Life Lesson	5.70	4.00	4.92	3.90	3.90	4.10	3.73	3.10
Contrast Means (SD)								
Life Lessons vs Others	.09 (.27)	.25 (.20)	.58 (.41)	.15 (.29)	.28 (.28)	-.21 (.24)	-.11 (.25)	-.44 (.30)
Learning and Lessons vs Others	.05 (.18)	.11 (.13)	.40 (.28)	.08 (.19)	.35 (.19)	.10 (.16)	.11 (.17)	-.09 (.20)
Entertainment vs Others	.48 (.32)	.38 (.24)	**1.05 (.48)**	.06 (.32)	.55 (.34)	.37 (.28)	.18 (.29)	.13 (.32)

Note. Bolded values were significant at the $\alpha = .05$ level. Life Sat. = Life satisfaction. CM = Commitment-making. IC = Identification with commitment. EB = Exploration in-breadth. ED = Exploration in-depth. RE = Ruminative exploration. Planned contrasts and post-hoc contrasts both involved Tukey-family corrections. Retested model contrasts tested three solutions: that life lessons [+3] might

differ from other types of stories [-1, -1, -1]; that learning about parents or life lessons [+1, +1] might differ from entertainment or relationship-building [-1, -1]; and that entertainment stories [-3] might differ from all other kinds of stories [+1, +1, +1].

Table 6

Study 2: Correlation Analyses of Parent Memory Vividness with Student Well-Being and Identity Development

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
1. Mother Story Vividness	--									
2. Father Story Vividness	**.53**	--								
3. Flourishing	**.18**	**.21**	--							
4. Thriving	**.17**	**.23**	**.86**	--						
5. Life Satisfaction	**.12**	**.20**	**.66**	**.71**	--					
6. Commitment-Making	.06	.07	**.43**	**.48**	**.37**	--				
7. Identification with Commitment	.08	**.12**	**.51**	**.54**	**.39**	**.80**	--			
8. Exploration-In-Breadth	**.11**	.09	**.43**	**.39**	**.25**	**.53**	**.58**	--		
9. Exploration-In-Depth	**.17**	**.11**	**.45**	**.45**	**.37**	**.60**	**.65**	**.71**	--	
10. Ruminative Exploration	.09	.03	**-.19**	**-.21**	**-.17**	**-.42**	**-.39**	.00	-.05	--

Note. Significance values were corrected for multiple tests using the Benjamini-Hochberg correction. Bolded values were significant at the α = .05 level following these corrections for multiple tests.

Table 7

Across Samples: Regressions of Student Reports on Family Structure, Gender, and Parent Story Vividness

	Well-Being			Identity Development				
	Flourishing	Thriving	Life Sat.	CM	IC	EB	ED	RE
Step 1								
Study Sample	.05 (.08)	.00 (.05)	-.16 (.11)	.11 (.07)	-.04 (.07)	.04 (.06)	.03 (.06)	**-.15 (.07)**
Gender	.15 (.08)	.00 (.06)	**.22 (.11)**	.06 (.08)	.06 (.08)	.09 (.06)	.10 (.06)	.08 (.07)
Raised with Mother	**.45 (.16)**	.19 (.12)	**.52 (.24)**	.00 (.16)	.05 (.16)	.15 (.13)	.18 (.13)	-.01 (.16)
Raised with Father	**.22 (.09)**	**.18 (.07)**	**.47 (.14)**	.12 (.09)	.06 (.09)	-.01 (.07)	-.01 (.08)	-.15 (.09)
Step F(4, 584)	**5.41**	**3.10**	**7.18**	1.13	.44	.97	1.27	**2.40**
ΔR^2	**.04**	**.02**	**.05**	.01	.00	.01	.01	**.02**
Step Sig.	**.000**	**.015**	**.000**	.342	.782	.414	.281	**.049**
Step 2								
Mother Story Vividness	**.04 (.02)**	.03 (.02)	.01 (.03)	.01 (.02)	.02 (.02)	.01 (.01)	.03 (.02)	.00 (.02)
Father Story Vividness	**.07 (02)**	**.05 (.02)**	**.09 (.03)**	**.04 (.01)**	**.04 (.01)**	.02 (.02)	.02 (.02)	-.01 (.02)
Step F(6, 582)	**8.27**	**6.50**	**7.38**	**2.11**	**2.19**	1.11	**2.66**	1.66
ΔR^2	**.04**	**.04**	**.02**	**.01**	**.02**	.00	**.02**	.00
Step Sig.	**.000**	**.000**	**.000**	**.050**	**.043**	.352	**.015**	.130
Step 3								
Mother Story Vividness * Study Sample	.05 (.04)	.02 (.03)	.05 (.06)	.02 (.04)	**.00 (.04)**	**.08 (.03)**	**.09 (.04)**	.10 (.04)
Father Story Vividness * Study Sample	-.06 (.04)	.00 (.03)	.01 (.06)	-.06 (.04)	-.01 (.04)	-.02 (.03)	-.04 (.04)	.01 (.04)
Model F(8, 580)	**6.47**	**4.90**	**5.65**	1.84	1.64	1.65	**2.77**	**2.29**
ΔR^2	**.00**	**.00**	**.00**	.00	.00	.01	**.01**	**.01**
Model Sig.	**.000**	**.000**	**.000**	.068	.111	.107	**.005**	**.020**

Note. Bolded values were significant at the $\alpha = .05$ level. Variance inflation factor ≤ 1.51 for all measures. Life Sat. = Life satisfaction. CM = Commitment-making. IC = Identification with commitment. EB = Exploration in-breadth. ED = Exploration in-depth. RE = Ruminative exploration.

Figure 1

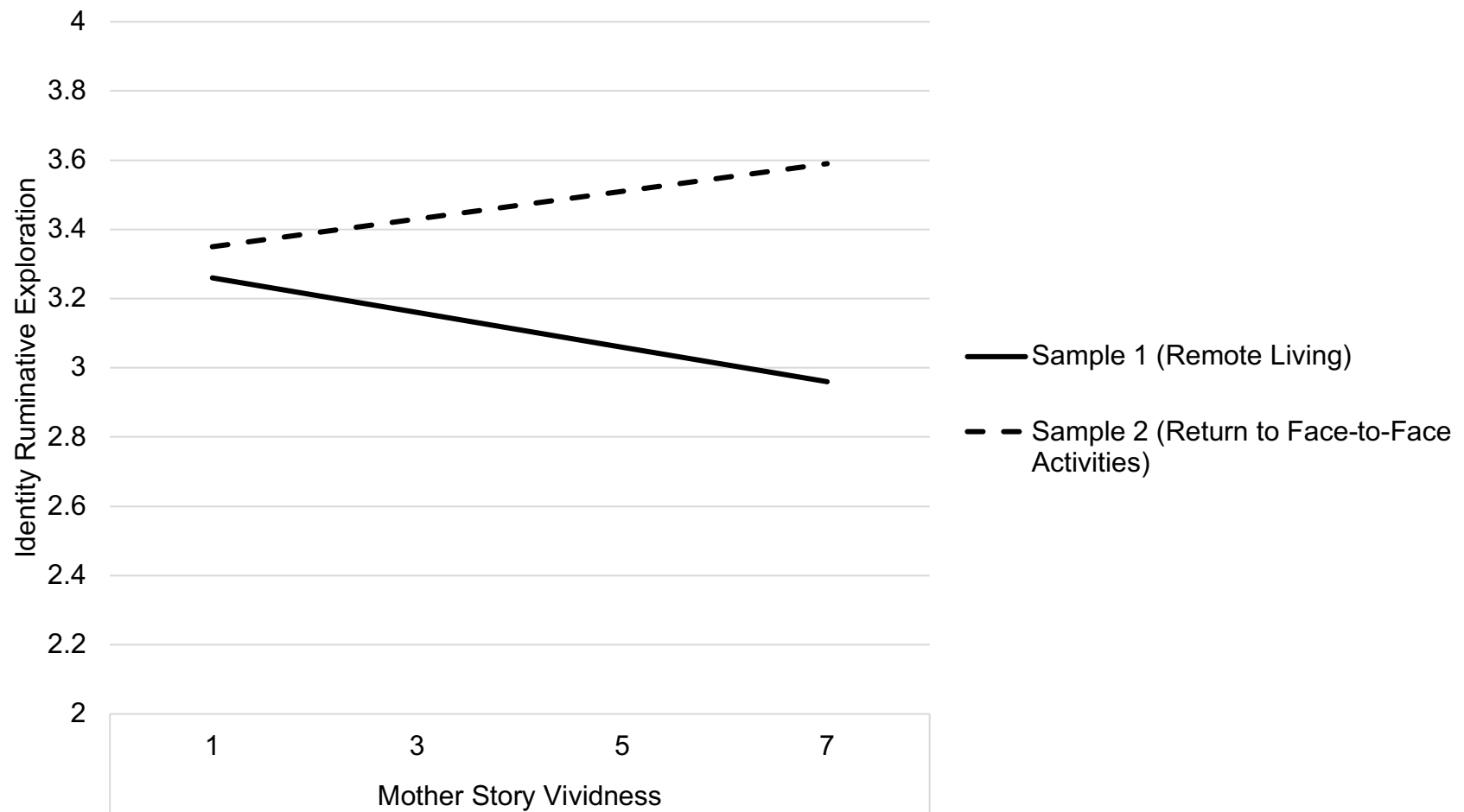*Simple Slopes for Identity Ruminative Exploration Given Mother Event Vividness and Sample Timing*

Figure 2

Simple Slopes for Identity Exploration in Breadth Given Mother Event Vividness and Sample Timing