

Review

Media construction on the concept of child abuse in Mainland China

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Child abuse is a harsh word in China. Not only is there no legal definition of child abuse in China, but also most people do not even agree that child abuse exists. This is mainly influenced by special culture in China, and the contested territory between discipline and child abuse has existed for a long time. This unclear cognition of child abuse has hindered the development of child protection work in China. However, in recent years, the concept of child abuse has been accepted gradually by the public. The changing perception on the concept benefits from media. This research will analyze the media data on child abuse collected in the last five years from 2011 to 2016 in China to explore and interpret the media construction on the concept of child abuse in Mainland China.

Key words: Media construction, child abuse, cognition, perception.

INTRODUCTION

How to bring children up and how to educate them during their childhood are controversial topics everywhere in the world. The parenting style of 'Tiger Mother' and 'Wolf Father' has aroused heated discussion in many countries, especially in Mainland China. This heated 'wave of naming' was sparked off by Tiger Mother Amy Chua, a Chinese American professor at Yale University. She published a controversial piece in *The Wall Street Journal* (2011) which mentioned her strict 'traditional Chinese' way of parenting. Her book *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother* was published in 2011, whose cover says: "This was supposed to be a story of how Chinese parents are better at raising kids than Western ones" (Amy, 2011). As the book has talked about the education under two kinds of cultures, it has attracted a lot of scholars and parents in the world to discuss. This harsh philosophy of educating children, such as asking her children "to spend hours studying and practicing piano or violin and not to watch TV, not to play the computer games, not to engage in play dates and sleepovers" (Amy, 2011), and calling her child "garbage" all attracted western attention to Chinese parenting. The features of that style of parenting are that the parents emphasize academic achievement above all else and they treat their children with the most stringent requirements in order to ensure academic

success.

After the introduction of the notion of the Tiger Mother, the debate spread to a strict father named Xiao (2011) who made waves across China as a Wolf Father who imposed a series of strict restrictions on his children and beat them almost every day, especially when they failed to meet his requirements. He believes that his parenting method is very successful because three of his four children have been admitted into Peking University, one of the two top universities in China (Zhu, 2015). In his book *So, Brother and Sisters of Peking University*, he advocates that parents should "Beat your children every three days. They'll definitely get into Peking University". These cases have raised the important question of whether such behaviour could be considered to be emotional and/or physical abuse according to international definitions and when does a strict parenting style become maltreatment or violence. Alarmingly, in China both parents believe that this is a type of good education, which has resulted in heated debates and discussions about whether their behaviour is appropriate and what is a proper parenting style.

It is necessary to make clear why this parenting style results in so many arguments among Chinese people throughout the world. Most scholars researching on child

protection believe that this is because of typical Chinese culture of parenting. This parenting style would principally be regarded as the behaviour of child abuse in the western perception, but in China it is considered to be a normal and effective parenting way. This is a kind of culture inherited from feudal society in China. However, the perception of child abuse in Mainland China has been changed in recent years, which benefits from media.

According to media reports, the success of the Wolf Father was due to him beating three of his four children into Peking University with a feather duster. Such behaviour from the western point of view seems to be close to child maltreatment. But some scholars have summed it up as 'physical discipline', or considered it to be the normal behaviour of authoritarian parents. This education model has been questioned by some scholars and some parents, but also welcomed by other parents. How to educate children and how to treat children have become tough questions. The boundary of what is child maltreatment and what is authoritarian parenting seems to be more difficult to recognize and define nowadays.

Media is one of the means or channels of general communication in society, as newspapers, radio or television, the internet, etc. The media focus is where news media on delivering news to the general public and providing space for the public to discuss various topics, and especially with the development of electronic newspaper, news can catch the public attention within a very short time (Media, 2017). This study will focus on only two main media: the internet and the news centres of *Xinhuanet* and *Sina*. The research has collected 136 news reports on child abuse which report within the five years from January 1, 2011 to January 1, 2016, from which the Chinese media's perceptions and classification of child abuse are concluded.

About parenting style, many scholars have researched on the related fields at home and abroad; however, few scholars study on media construction on the concept of child abuse in China. Tuchman (1978), a sociologist, holds that news is not the product of nature, but a study in the construction of reality, a product of medium organizations and social culture. It has the public function of transferring or conveying social events, so that news is a kind of partly truth and a process of "restructuring" the social truth. However, in China, media has its special political attribute, that is, on behalf of the officials' voice of the Communist Party of China; it keeps a unified political tone and leads the political discourse and public opinion (Xin, 2006). Although Chinese media is still under the control of the central government, Chinese news and information departments have experienced great changes of developing with the market trend (Zhao, 1998). With the leadership of the party, the mainstream media has begun to meet the need of wider audiences and consumers.

Reports on the cases of child maltreatment in the whole world have significantly increased. For example, in USA,

there were 10,000 child abuse cases in 1966, and then the number climbed to three million in 1992, including 1,261 cases of fatal child abuse. However, there is no similar data showed in China. As a matter of fact, child abuse and neglect cases reported in recent years show that the status is not optimistic in China. Although typical cases have been reported, little academic attention has been paid to empirically analyze how the media portray child abuse in China.

Many studies show that crimes in news report are described as "distortion, misrepresentation, and oversimplification" (Stevens and Dorfman, 1997; Ditton and Duffy, 1983; Barlow et al., 1995). According to the research of Stevens (1998), reporters often report some violent events from the perspective of criminal justice, and they are likely to focus on isolated event, rather than provide a comprehensive analysis of the violence situation. More specifically, the criminal event is usually reported as an individual problem rather than a social issue. Stevens (1998) proposed that the "alternative reporting practice", which provides causes and background details, help the audience understand by paying attention to thematic reporting. Since the media plays a vital role in shaping public attitudes and behaviour (Wallack et al., 1993), it is very important to explore how the media reports and describes the events of child maltreatment, especially whether they adopt a public health approach or take a criminal judicial attitude toward the issue. Therefore, this research will also explore how the media reports child maltreatment cases and reveal the child maltreatment perceptions held by the general public and the government based on information in the reports.

It is the media in Mainland China that has brought the concept of child abuse to the public. In this research, three problems should be made clear. One is how the news media report child abuse in China; the second is about what the media have reported regarding child abuse in China in recent five years; the third is about the function of news media to the cognition on child abuse. Therefore, it will mainly explore how the concept of child abuse is gradually constructed by media in China.

ANALYSIS OF NEWS ARTICLE DATA

A total of 136 news reports have been presented as a result of the search by the key words of "child", "abuse" and "China" at the news centre of *Xinhuanet*. The study focuses on child's physical and mental abuse (physical abuse is often accompanied by mental abuse in reports). Of the 136 reports, 67 have provided direct coverage of particular cases involving physical and/or mental abuse as well as child abuse/protection policies. Similarly, at the news centre of *Sina*, 245 reports are available, of which 122 have provided direct coverage. The two media together contribute 189 directly related news reports.

Table 1. Number of News Reports per Year.

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Number	15	47	36	37	54	189

Table 2. Types of Articles on Child Cases.

Type	News story	Editorial	Feature articles	Other opinion	Total
Number	103	18	41	27	189
Percentage	54%	10%	22%	14%	

Growth in the number of the related news reports in the five years

In China, the cases of related child abuse reported by the news media have increased every year. It shows that media in mainland China begin to pay more attention to child abuse, which is helpful for all the parents' people to cognize the concept of child abuse gradually. Table 1 shows the number of news reports by year in this study. As shown in the table, from 2012 onward, the media attention to the topics on child abuse has increased gradually. This kind of increase should owe to Amy Lynn Chua's work, *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*, whose cover shows "it's about a bitter clash of cultures and a fleeting taste of glory" (Amy, 2011). This is a typical clash between Chinese culture and Western culture in raising children. Because of Amy Chua's background of Chinese and Western culture, the topic about how to raise a child resulted in heated discussion under the help of contemporary swift media. Therefore, the concept of child abuse was presented by the media to Chinese public. It is also very easy for media to stimulate Chinese parents and college students to discuss this controversial topic in the strong background of "A good scholar will make an official" and "Parents have great ambitions for one's child". Media shake the perception on parenting style passed on during thousands of years in China and make the concept of child abuse into Chinese people's cognition.

Four categories of news reports

The articles collected can be divided into four categories: news story, editorial, feature articles and other opinion pieces based on the principle of exclusivity. News story here refers to discuss current or recent news about child abuse in the selected media. An editorial is an often-unsigned opinion piece, here referring to reflect the leading opinion on child abuse. The feature articles here mean the articles to focus on an issue about child abuse for in-depth investigation. Other opinion pieces are

comments or discussions on the cases about child abuse especially in website.

As shown in Table 2, news story is the main form to report child abuse because news informs what's happening to the public; however feature articles are a better way to understand the cause and effect of a case. A total of 41 in-depth reports on child abuse have been published, which provide a detailed analysis of the highlights and the formulation of laws within the years. This is an evidence of growing media attention to child abuse. Editorials mainly include editors' views and general comments. Unlike news and feature articles, editorial can reflect, lead and even supervise public opinion. There are 27 general reviews (other opinion pieces) and 18 editorials, mainly published in 2013 and onward. This indicates growing media attention to child abuse since 2013.

Case analysis in the news article data

In the 103 news reports relating to child abuse, 63 news stories reported evidently different cases of child abuse (physical abuse, accompanied by mental abuse or neglect) and 22 reported child protection policies. The cases of child abuse are as shown in Table 3.

As shown in Table 3, the reported cases number had a significant increase from 2011 to 2014. Although fewer cases in 2015 were reported, there was a landmark case, which is "Nanjing Child Abuse Case", which occupied the attention of the major newspapers for over half a year. It will be discussed later in details.

ANALYSIS ON ABUSED CHILDREN IN THE NEWS REPORT

The data analysis collected from news reports within recent five years shows us clearly that the cases of child abuse in China Mainland have great difference in gender, age, and the results abused.

Table 3. Child Abuse Cases from News Report by Year.

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Number	5	10	17	19	12	63

Table 4. Victims Gender Distribution.

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Male	1	3	5	9	6
Female	4	7	13	10	6
Total	5	10	18	19	12

Table 5. Age Distribution of Abused Children.

Age	Under 6 years	7-10 years	11-12 years	Over 12 years	Total
Number	34	21	3	5	63
Percentage	54%	33.3%	4.76%	7.94%	100%

Table 6. Results of the Abused Children.

Results	Fatal	Seriously Injured	Other	Total
Number	22	30	11	63
Percentage	35%	47.6%	17.4%	100%

Difference in gender

Most cases of child abuse reported from 2011 to 2013 are girls. However, starting from 2014, more boys abuse cases have been reported (Table 4).

Difference in age

Of abused children aged 0-16, there are 55 victims aged under 10, accounting for 87.3%, and 34 victims aged 0-6, accounting for 54%. The proportion of abused children aged 7-12 and above 12 is 34.38 and 7.81%, respectively.

Table 5 shows that the abused children under the age of 10 are more likely to be reported by the media, accounting for more than 87%. The number of abused children over 10 accounts for only about 12%. This might be due to the reason that younger children in the news are more easily to cause people's sympathy and attention. In the media reports, most cases of new-born babies aged under one were abandoned or even killed because of superstition or preference for a son. In several cases, the perpetrators killed their new-born

babies because of their preference of boys to girls.

Results of physical abuse

The reported cases, by way and results of abuse, all involved severe child abuse or crime, of which 22 cases were reported to be abused to death and 30 of the abused children were seriously injured, resulting in child being in a coma or developing a disability. This accounted for more than half of the total. In terms of the duration of abuse, more than 50% of the abused children were violated repeatedly for a long time (Table 6). The longest recorded abuse lasted 14 years before it's exposed by the media.

In the news report, most cases of child abuse were violent, in which children were pricked by needles, scalded with boiling water, kicked on belly with feet, or hit on head with iron bars. This indicates that those particularly serious child abuse cases have aroused public concern. But on the other hand, general violence and cases that have not led to serious consequences yet are less exposed and are not receiving public attention. They have not been brought the forefront and not been discussed in public.

Table 7. Relationship between perpetrator and abused children

Perpetrators	Father	Mother	Step mother	Step father	Teachers	Others
Number	25	15	10	2	7	4
Percentage	40%	24%	16%	3%	11%	6%

PERPETRATORS AND CHILD ABUSE

According to the data collected from the recent five-year media, most cases of child abuse belong to domestic violence. The research shows that most of the perpetrators are parents. As the tendentious traditional Chinese culture on parenting style, domestic violence is elusive and the behavior of child abuse was often believed to be effective parenting. This family violence would often drift out off legislation before.

Relationship of perpetrator to children

The relationship between perpetrators and children shows us different results from the traditional popular subjective opinions that step parents are main perpetrators (Table 7). Of the cases reported during the recent five years, parents were still the main group of perpetrators, accounting for 80%, of which 64% were biological parents. There were 25 cases involving abuse from biological fathers and 15 involving abuse from biological mothers. The cases involving abuse from stepparents accounted for 19%, including 10 related to stepmothers, 2 related to stepfathers and 3 related to both stepparents. The cases of abuse by other perpetrators, mainly teachers, accounted for 11%. There were also some cases involving abuse from grandparents, relatives, or strangers.

Perpetrators' social class and background

In terms of the location of abuse, statistics of reported cases show that, of the 63 cases, 48.25% occurred in rural areas and 48.95% in non-rural areas. Due to incomplete information provided by the media, it's hard to determine the specific location of abuse in some cases, which are believed to occur in small towns according to the case details and thus included in the data of non-rural areas. So far, the proportion of cases reported by the news which occurred in rural and urban areas is basically the same. Many reported cases that occurred in urban areas show that the involved families usually had a low economic means, or the guardians had alcohol or drug problems.

But from these reported cases, we found out that, media report shows the close link between the behaviors of perpetrators' child abuse and their traditional concept

of education, for example, the mother in Nanjing child abuse cases has been reported that "I have the right to teach my child a lesson", "I do this for my child's own sake, and I don't expect the serious result" (Zhang, 2015a), the same as the father in the Nanfang News (2014) who was witnessed by neighbours beating his son for 17 hours at the balcony. In the news he told the police that "I'm disciplining my own child" and "Others have no say in my way to teach my own child".

The media choose to report those child abuse cases in rural areas, particularly where the abuse was motivated by parents' superstitions, or where the preference was for a son, and the daughter were abused. In some related cases, parents were influenced by the idea of carrying on the family line by male, the female children in a family would likely be abandoned, sold and even killed, but the abducted male children would be purchased.

Legal outcome of perpetrators

Before the child abuse case in Nanjing (2015), child abuse cases were not brought to the judicial process unless abused children died or particularly serious consequences occurred (Qiao and Xie, 2015). The analysis of the reported cases shows that, in 23 cases, perpetrators were held under criminal detention or investigated for criminal responsibility, accounting for 36.5%, most of which involved the death of abused children and of which 19 cases of child death were reported and the remaining cases belonged to serious physical harm. The types of crime included extreme killing, intentional injury and maltreatment.

In addition to the above cases involving criminal penalties, the remaining 40 cases reported were very serious violence, in which perpetrators should have been investigated and punished. However, due to lack of accountability and non-criminal penalties for parents' infringement upon lawful rights and interests of minors, many parents who committed violence were not seriously criticized and punished, which to some extent indulged their acts of violence towards minors. For example, of those cases where criminal prosecution was not pursued, only in six cases the parents who committed violence were criticized by Police Department. In one case, the father hit his son heavily for 17 rounds in 8 h for his son's disobedience and occasional theft. The father was seen pushing the kid to the ground, dragging the child from one end of the balcony to the other by hair, and bumping

the kid's head against the balcony. As a result, the child named Yangyang had a swelling face and a lot of bruises and scars on his back, buttocks, thighs and calves. For the other cases, the results were either unknown or unclear. Most of these cases involved killing, or extreme maltreatment and maiming, but the results were not properly reported, partly due to the time-window nature of press coverage. No follow-up reports were found either despite their significance to the handling of child abuse cases. This paper is expected to arouse the media's sensitivity in reporting similar cases.

The child abuse case in Nanjing (2015) which has been described in the previous paragraph marks the first effort of the public authority in China to interfere in domestic physical abuse cases. It's a milestone in the judicial history of child abuse. With the rapid development of media, the concept of child abuse has been gradually recognized and paid more attention by parents, public, and the government.

Elusiveness of child abuse in Mainland China

According to the investigation, most cases of child abuse (over 85%) occurred at home. So it is difficult to find out the violence of child abuse in China. Of the violence cases reported by Xinhua and Sina, 50 reported cases occurred at home, indicating that domestic child abuse is a top concern; this matches the finding from a telephone survey of 1,019 households in Hong Kong conducted by Tang (2002), which found children were more likely to be abused inside their family, and under the age of 6. Child abuse cases usually occur at home and are thus well hidden, making their exposure and reporting very difficult. Also, according to media reports, 7 cases happened in schools, the traditional authority of teachers and support from parents in China has led to a high incidence of child abuse in schools. There were 6 reports of maltreatment in public places other than schools. In Nanchong City, for example, a child was tied on a tree naked and whipped by his father due to his absence from school. At the same time, the news also highlights that child abuse in public places can do greater harm to children, not only to their body, but also to their self-esteem and self-confidence. The Huaihai news (09/04/2015) also pointed out that the most effective way to protect a child is to avoid scolding or beating him/her in public.

MEDIA CONTRIBUTION TO EXPOSURE AND COGNITION ON CHILD ABUSE IN CHINA

In China, almost all the parents believed that children were their own kids and it was normal for parents to beat or scold their own children. Therefore, even if a parent beat his or her child rudely, nobody would interfere with it. It is media that have changed the rooted viewpoints.

Case exposure by media

In general, after the occurrence of child abuse, due to the family bonds and limit of child's personal ability, parents' violence behaviors are usually not reported to the police. Of the 63 exposed cases, only 1.4% was reported to the police by the abused children. Particularly, none of the reported cases that occurred from 2011 to June of 2012 were reported by the abused children. Shang and Katz (2010) found that other family members, village committees, and neighbourhood committees believed that parenting was a family affair and tended not to report child abuse cases in Hunan provinces. Although the cases reported by the non-violence party, guardians and other family members accounted for 33.8%, most of the cases had been reported because of particularly serious consequences, such as killing or extreme abuse. Compared to the total number of child abuse cases, the rate of reporting by family members was not high. Village committees and neighborhood committees, as grassroots or mass organizations, have the obligation to protect children and prevent domestic violence as their duty (Shang and Katz, 2010). However, of the reported cases, only 3-4 exposed cases were reported by the village committees, and for many other cases that the parents killed their children or committed violence against their children for a long time, the village and neighborhood committees neither discovered the cases in a timely manner nor reported the cases after their exposure.

From 2013 and onwards, due to the media's growing exposure of child abuse cases, the increasing awareness for the personnel in close contact with children, professionals providing service to children and even the whole of society to report family violence, are gradually forming. Because of the speed of access and reach of Internet communication, more and more cases of child abuse have been discovered by neighbors and citizens and exposed online. The cases reported in this way accounted for 34.27%. Comparatively cases reported by professionals providing service to children such as medical personnel, teachers, journalists and policemen accounted for 10.03%. Moreover, for some reported cases, only simple coverage was given, so there's no way to get the specific information of case reporters.

Leading role of media report

Government personnel were the leading role in media report on most occasions of child abuse. A total of 62 media reports, accounting for 41%, were reported by the government personnel, particularly policemen, judges and personnel of the Woman's Federation; these were the main sources consulted by the media. These three kind of main reporters analyzed cases in terms of government intervention, justice and welfare policy deficiencies. Another 39 reports, accounting for 26%,

reflected the views and interpretation of parents and relatives. Charity personnel gave 31 media reports, accounting for 20.67%. Most of such reports focused on how NGOs intervened. With growing Internet access, some 14 reports (accounting for 9.33%) quoted online users' views and comments as well as the neighbourhood's views. However, the voice of children, the biggest victim of child abuse, was only heard in four reports, accounting for 2.67%.

In 127 reports, the causes of child abuse cases were not discussed or only surface causes were given, namely, the media attributed cases to their particularity. According to media reports, the following causes of child abuse cases have been mentioned or summarized in media news:

- (1) The most frequent reason in the report is family disharmony or conflict. Child abuse occurs as a result of abreaction or retaliation, for example, triggered by extramarital affairs, bad marital relations or conflicts with other family members. In such cases, since minors are still young and not strong enough, some parents deem them as a punching bag or revenge tool instead of equal individuals.
- (2) Wrong concepts of discipline lead to violence to children, e.g. violent or improper discipline in response to children's disobedience, lying, contradicting against parents, being suspected of stealing money or bad academic performance. In these cases, when neighbours or the police intervene, the parents committing violence usually claim that they have the right to beat their own child and it's all for the child's own sake.
- (3) There are also some cases that children are abused, abandoned or killed due to hard living, huge life pressure or birth out of wedlock. Media report says that the main cause is the lack of necessary conditions due to excess birth or unmarried birth instead of difficult survival. In one case, for example, the perpetrator already had two sons and thus sold the third new-born boy for money due to the tight economic situation.
- (4) Some other cases in news are caused by parents' evil practices and misbehaviours. In three cases where infants and children were maimed, for example, the perpetrators were superstitious, believing their children would bring bad fortune, and thus abused their children cruelly. There are also eight cases where the parents had drug or alcohol problems.
- (5) Children's physical and intellectual defects, disability and the preference of boys to girls can also lead to domestic violence. The forms of violence in such cases include child abuse, abandonment and killing.
- (6) Parents' psychological abnormality is another factor that has been mentioned in media which may trigger family violence to minors.

In 2011, starting with the "Tiger Mother" and followed by the "Wolf Father, Chinese parents were named soon by

the media as a series of animal related codes, which stirred up a wave of comparison, discussion and even argument about parenting style in Mainland China.

From then on, "child abuse" has gradually been introduced into the public view. Since then, the media coverage and the attention of child abuse have increased tremendously.

Development of child's image construction by way of media

From the discussion above, the media attention about events of child abuse have showed a rising trend year by year from 2011 to 2016. And the images of both the abused children and abusers (parents and teachers) have been changing in the media reports.

"Little Emperor" is a kind of negative description of the one-child generation who was born after China's family-planning policy (one-child policy). Due to family-planning policy, the situation of two generations and two families to raise one child was formed in Mainland China. Children became the central figure in a family, so that images of them as spoiled, self-willed and unreasonable, were often reported in the media from which the title of "Little Emperor" appeared to refer to "spoiled" one-child. Therefore, the public in China paid more attention to the images of the spoiled "Little Emperor" and paid less attention to child abuse issues before 2012.

After the image of "Little Emperor", here comes the "Bear Children" which began to spread in the media. Bear Children refer to the children who are badly behaved, such as leaving things in a mess, damaging property, and unruly behaviours, which left parents feeling extremely troubled. In the media, the parenting methods to train "Bear Children" have frequently been discussed. For example, the opinion that this kind of Bear Children must be beaten has appeared frequently on the internet.

The news report of both Tiger Mother and Wolf Father, or Little Emperor and Bear Children begin from the viewpoint that they are against the spoiled children and their behaviours, emphasizing the importance and effects of strict parenting. Media reports in 2011 therefore showed less attention to child abuse cases. In media reports for child injury cases, they often emphasized the child's misconduct or their lack of obedience, etc. A parent was reported of how he used needles to stab his child for punishment because his son did not attend training class. The child was also accused of making trouble in an internet café, so that this father punished his son strictly: if his son runs out to play, the feet of his child will be prodded; If his son goes out to play games in computer or go on the internet, he will be stabbed on his hands. If his son cannot finish what he promised, the child's auricle will be prodded. He believes that if he does not use this way to teach his child a lesson, the son will do something wrong again and again (Wu, 2013).

However, the media comments did not discuss whether the behaviour was child abuse, but discussed the main topic whether it is suitable to use violent education and "sticks education". This kind of image construction let public begins their cognition of child abuse although the children were thought to be on the "wrong side" and should accept the harsh discipline.

With the rapid development of network media and the convenient rapid spread of foreign information, child abuse has gradually become a hot topic. And the foreign customs and legal knowledge infiltrate into Mainland China step by step after many overseas students return to homeland and a great number of Chinese citizens go out traveling in the world. The construction of child's image in media has turned from the original "wrong side" into a complete "injured party". The damage done to children has now begun to be highlighted, as well as a focus on their weakness and helplessness. In recent years, the frequency of reporting of child abuse is evidently higher than in previous years, mainly because of the rise up of social media. Considering the scope of information exposure, great changes have taken place in media.

Media uses large numbers of child abuse cases to influence public mood. Images of scarred bodies are reported for effect. Much of the textual description about child's "dying" or "black and blue" makes the construction of these images of innocent victims vivid and penetrating. For example, an article on the "Exposure of the Photos of 5-year-old Abused Child, Attention to Parents' Child Abuse" (Zhang, 2015b) was reported by a net-friend named @ maymay - Tsui in his microblog, requesting media "to concern the case of parents' child abuse" and telling that "it takes place in Shilong Town of Dongguan City and the current child is being saved in Shilong People's Hospital." The micro-blog comes with three photos in which the injured child is a female baby, who is black and blue over her body, with all kinds of rubber hoses to keep her alive. The pictures are very distressing.

Another piece of news entitled "The Tragedy of a Jiangxi 5-year-old Girl Who Was Beaten Cruelly to Cerebral Infarction by Hanger" (Shi, 2014) was reported that on the morning of April 12, 2014 a five-year-old girl in Jiangxi Province was beaten cruelly by her mother with hangers, then fell down from the attic, resulting in severe coma, swelling on her head and black and blue all over her body.

Some other reports in Xinhuanet include "Six-Year-Old Girl Is Suspected to be Abused to Death by Her Father who has been Detained" (Zhang and Zhou, 2015), "Abused Two-Year-Old Girl Whose Lower Part of the Body was Torn off, Resulting in Kidney Failure, and Her Father Was in Control" (Lu, 2011). The similar images of victims of child abuse and dispossessed weak images attract the public attention. These images spreading on the Internet have resulted in an improvement of the

situation as society and government now pay closer attention to the phenomenon of child abuse, and attach importance to protecting child's rights against infringement in Mainland China.

CONCLUSION

According to the analysis mentioned above, it is evident that media reports have made most of the parents in Mainland China have the cognition or concept of child abuse. News analysis shows that the conflict over the child abuse concept mainly arises from the debate between old and new ideas in child education. According to some news reports, parents' traditional education paradigms are being challenged with the time, the laws, and also child's growing self-protection awareness. In traditional education paradigms, parents believe their children are their private property and they are entitled to handle their children at their own will. The old opinions of "I beat the child for his/her own good sake", "Hitting and scolding are the way I love my child" and "Spare the rod, spoil the child" have been gradually convinced to be against the modern concept of human rights.

The public heated discussion caused by media has urged the government to take measures to improve child protection policies. During recent years, the media have reported a series of child injury and abuse cases, such as beating and scolding, hand cutting, eye digging, burning, sexual abuse, etc., which strained the public's nerves and exposed a lot of cases of child abuse with photos of child victims and mass publicity over violent acts. Therefore, the State Council of China issued the Outline of Chinese Children Development (2011-2020) in 2011, in which the main goal and strategy measures of child's development are put forward in the four areas of their health, education, legal protection and the environment. Since 2013, the Ministry of Civil Affairs of PRC has gradually established universal-type social welfare system to cover all the children. The policy and implementation should owe to the media. In recent years of practice to protect child, a team of social workers for child protection have been trained and set up in the communities across the country. It is reported by Pan (2016) that the system of joint meeting on the protection of rural left-behind children has been established among the heads of the departments under provincial government in Fujian and other provinces in Mainland China. This is also the result of media promotion.

However, while the media call for opposition to all acts of violence against children, people's awareness of child abuse in reality still needs to be improved. Some parents still express their counterview about the result of Nanjing child abuse case. Therefore, although the media have contributed to the construction of the concept on child abuse, the real cognition on child abuse still has a long way to go in Mainland China.

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