

Constructing Parenthood After Infertility: A Narrative Study of Adoptive Parents

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R e v i e w e r s

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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The phrase “particularly for individuals reconstructing parenthood outside the framework of biological lineage” could benefit from a clearer theoretical anchor. Consider referencing foundational concepts in identity theory or symbolic interactionism to support this framing.

This section would be enriched by distinguishing between identity disruption and identity reconstruction. Consider incorporating literature on biographical disruption and self-concept repair.

This theme is compelling but would benefit from a cross-cultural lens. Since participants reside in Austria, what role do religious affiliations or secular beliefs play in reframing parenthood? Providing this context would enhance interpretability.

The idea of celebrating “gotcha days” and using memory books is insightful. Consider referencing research on family rituals and their role in emotional bonding and identity affirmation.

The authors write, “Mixed emotions were a recurring theme.” This could be further explored through affect theory or the psychological construct of “dual affective processing” to theorize this ambivalence more explicitly.

The phrase “restoring self-worth” suggests a pre-existing damage to self-image. The authors should be cautious not to imply pathology without referencing studies on self-esteem trajectories post-infertility.

While “parental legitimacy” is a recurring theme, the authors should more clearly define this concept. Is it rooted in internal self-perception, social validation, or institutional recognition? The ambiguity weakens theoretical precision.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The sentence “adoption is often framed as an endpoint rather than a complex identity-shaping process in its own right” is compelling. However, the authors could strengthen this by explaining who frames it this way—social narratives, clinicians, policy discourse? Clarifying the source of this framing would increase analytical depth.

While the rationale is clear, the authors should state more explicitly the research questions guiding the study. Currently, the purpose is described broadly, but specific research questions would offer more focus and rigor.

The quote “I had to grieve the child I never had” is powerful, but the authors might consider integrating theoretical frameworks of ambiguous loss (e.g., Pauline Boss) to deepen interpretation.

The quote “Where’s his real mom?” illustrates external invalidation. The authors could enhance analysis by connecting this to Goffman’s theory of stigma or sociological research on legitimacy and social roles.

The emotional complexity of navigating children’s inquiries is addressed, but the article would benefit from citing developmental psychology literature on children’s cognitive understanding of adoption.

The statement “infertility is not simply a past medical event but an ongoing psychological reference point” is insightful. However, this could be further supported by referencing chronic sorrow or persistent grief frameworks.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.