

Confucian Moral Cultivation And Its Psychological Impact On Adolescent Self-Discipline And Cognitive-Emotional Development

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Abstract

Confucian moral philosophy has long guided educational and social values across Southeast Asia, emphasizing virtues such as *ren* (benevolence), *li* (ritual propriety), and *xiao* (filial piety). These virtues are foundational for nurturing ethical behaviour, emotional intelligence, and cognitive maturity in youth. However, modern curricula lack moral instruction, contributing to adolescent behavioural issues; yet, few researches examine Confucian moral education's psychological benefits. This research examines the psychological effects of Confucian moral cultivation on adolescent self-discipline and cognitive-emotional development in Southeast Asia, employing a controlled experimental design. A total of 600 adolescents (aged 13–18) were randomly assigned to either an experimental group ($n = 300$), which participated in an 8-week Confucian moral education program, or a control group ($n = 300$), which received standard civic education. The intervention included ethical storytelling, moral reflection exercises, group discussions, and emotion-based journaling rooted in Confucian teachings. Self-discipline, emotional regulation, and moral cognition were measured pre-and post-intervention using culturally adapted, validated tools for adolescents. The research used IBM SPSS software version 29 to assess the psychological impact on adolescent self-discipline and cognitive-emotional development. Statistical analyses, including MANOVA, paired *t*-tests, and multiple regressions, revealed that the experimental group receiving Confucian moral training showed significantly greater improvements in self-discipline, moral cognition, and moral reasoning compared to the control group ($p < 0.01$). Regression results highlighted that frequent reflective practice and moral discourse predicted emotional resilience and behavioural control. The research highlights the positive psychological impact of Confucian moral education and its integration into school programs in Southeast Asia for adolescent mental and emotional development.

Keywords: Confucian moral cultivation, Multiple regression, Paired *t*-tests, Cognitive-emotional development, Southeast Asia

1. INTRODUCTION

Confucian moral cultivation, rooted in the teachings of Confucius, has influenced Southeast Asia societies for centuries, providing an enduring approach to personal growth and social harmony [1]. Central to this philosophy are the core virtues of *ren* (benevolence), *yi* (righteousness), *li* (propriety), and *xiao* (filial piety). Education in Confucian thought goes beyond acquiring knowledge; it is equally about shaping moral character. In today's rapidly changing world, adolescents face unprecedented academic pressure and the pervasive influence of social media, contributing to complex emotional challenges [2, 3]. A Confucian ideal offers valuable insights for fostering holistic adolescent development. Adolescence is a crucial period for identity formation, cognitive growth, and emotional maturity. During this stage, moral cultivation supports youth in managing ethical dilemmas and navigating peer relationships [4, 5]. Strong moral development during adolescence fosters empathy, prosocial behavior, and resilience, equipping young people to resist negative peer pressure and make sound decisions. Central to this process is the Confucian emphasis on self-discipline, defined as the conscious regulation of thoughts, desires, and actions by virtue [6]. Unlike mere behavioral control, Confucian self-discipline promotes reflective practice and continuous self-improvement, nurturing an inner sense of accountability and balance. When these timeless values are integrated into modern educational contexts, they can help adolescents persevere through challenges, maintain emotional stability, and act with integrity despite external distractions [7]. Moreover, adolescence is widely recognized as a key stage for cognitive and emotional development, as explained by psychological theories such as Piaget's cognitive development stages and Erikson's psychosocial stages [8]. These frameworks show how adolescents develop abstract thinking, identity, and emotional regulation. Moral education can complement these developmental processes by providing clear

value systems and behavioral guidance [9]. Confucian moral cultivation, with its strong focus on self-discipline and virtue, has the potential to enhance self-regulation, empathy, and resilience in adolescents. Such insights can help educators and policymakers design more effective, evidence-based character education programs for today's youth [10]. However, it is important to recognize that the application of Confucian moral cultivation can be influenced by cultural context, individual differences, and challenges in measuring psychological constructs. These limitations should be carefully considered when interpreting the findings and applying them in diverse educational settings.

1.1 Research objective

To tackle the above concern, the research aims to highlight the relevance of Confucian moral education and examine its potential psychological impact on adolescent self-discipline and cognitive-emotional development, offering meaningful directions for contemporary character education across Southeast Asia.

1.2 Research organization

Research frameworks are organized into the following sections: Section 1 includes the introduction of Confucian moral cultivation; Section 2 presents the related works, including the concept of Confucian moral cultivation; Section 3 depicts the methodology, i.e., the workflow of Confucian moral cultivation across Southeast Asia from research design to statistical test explanation; Section 4 shows the results of the statistical test; and Section 5 depicts the conclusions, along with limitations and future scope.

2. Literature reviews

The Western views misinterpret shame by contrasting it negatively with guilt, using Confucian thought to clarify its internal moral role [11]. Confucius and Mencius show that moral shame fosters ethical cultivation and should be distinguished from harmful forms. Limited cultural context and lack of empirical data can restrict how broadly these insights apply across different moral systems. Confucianism affirms innate conscience guiding moral growth through continuous self-cultivation rooted in unity, dynamics, and mutual generation, encouraging individuals to resolve dilemmas by prioritizing systemic harmony [12]. Analysis of classical texts highlighted its relevance for addressing modern moral erosion driven by materialism and technology. Limited practical frameworks and measurable outcomes constrain its direct integration into contemporary global contexts. Confucianism shapes social and emotional health among Vietnamese adolescents by interpreting the experiences of 15 participants through hermeneutic phenomenology [13]. An authentic understanding of Confucian values strengthened self-esteem and supportive relationships, aligning with other beliefs. Limited sample diversity and cultural specificity narrow generalization across broader adolescent populations. The research outlined the practical use of Confucian self-cultivation in philosophical counseling, illustrating how concepts like "gongfu" and "jingjie" guide sessions that address existential and ethical dilemmas [14]. Session examples and counselor qualification standards show the potential for greater counseling impact. Limited empirical validation and reliance on practitioner integrity can affect consistent application across contexts. The research explored the use of Confucian philosophy in clinical practice to lower the risk of teenage suicide [15]. It used phenomenological interviews with 12 participants. Findings suggest repairing family ties and nurturing neutral lifestyles as coping resources, but cultural specificity and small sample size limit applicability. A mindfulness-based positive psychology program integrating Confucian values was implemented among 138 Chinese adults using a randomized design with pre- and post-intervention measures to assess its impact on mental health [16]. Findings showed reductions in anxiety and stress and links between practice amount and increases in gratitude and joy. Limited effect sizes and theme acceptability suggest refinement and culturally attuned measures were needed [17]. Findings indicate that adolescents rarely see teachers as role models, highlighting the need to align moral guidance with students' chosen figures. The limited empirical depth and focus on perception can restrict broader application in diverse educational settings. The research examined how moral character and responsible behavior affect adolescent life satisfaction in 2,474 Hong Kong adolescents, using validated measures and factor analyses [18]. Results showed that moral character predicts responsible behavior and life satisfaction, with responsible behavior acting as a mediator. Reliance on self-report and cultural context can limit broader generalization across different youth populations.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research examines how Confucian moral cultivation can help build self-discipline and cognitive-emotional development in adolescents who are going through an important time in the formation of identity. Confucianism, with its timeless virtues of benevolence and propriety, provides a foundation for moral and psychological growth and aims to create an orderly, balanced society. In utilizing Confucianism, this research seeks to frame a traditional philosophy in a modern-day educational approach that can respond to newly cited behaviors and emotional challenges for adolescents across Southeast Asia. Figure 1 presents the methodology flow of Confucian moral cultivation across Southeast Asia.

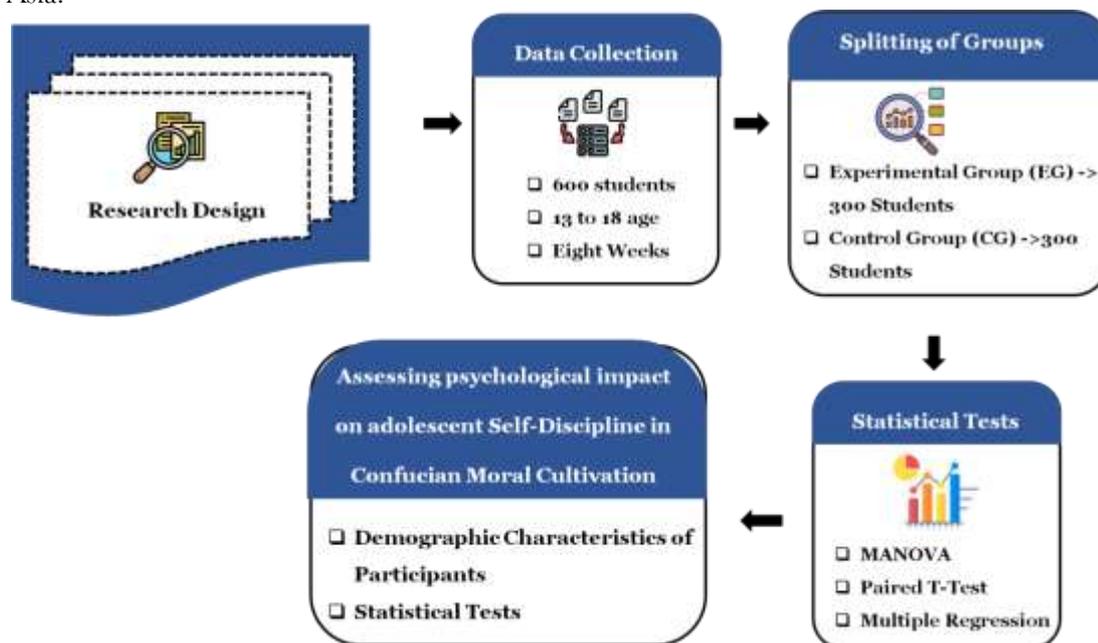


Figure 1: Presentation of methodology flow in Confucian moral cultivation across Southeast Asia

3.1 Research design

The research design involved a randomized controlled design to rigorously assess Confucian moral cultivation's psychological effect on adolescent self-discipline and cognitive-emotional development across Southeast Asia. Participants were randomly assigned to either an experimental group that underwent an 8-week Confucian moral education intervention or a control group that underwent standard civic education. This facilitated a direct comparison between the two groups on the impact of the interventions on the specified psychological outcomes. The use of quantitative strategies and validated measurement tools assured reliable assessment of differences in key variables.

3.2 Data collection

A total of 600 students, aged 13 to 18, were randomly assigned to an intentionally designed 8-week Confucian moral education program across Southeast Asia. The students participated in ethical storytelling, guided moral reflection, and group discussion based on Confucian virtue's ability to formulate one's moral principles. The moral education program included opportunities to practice, including asking students to connect their experience of moral development, which can help build their self-control, emotional regulation, and cognitive-emotional resilience during this important transitional point in their lives.

3.3 Splitting of Groups

A total of 600 adolescents (aged 13–18) were randomly assigned to an Experimental Group (EG) and a Control Group (CG). This approach enables the assessment of regime regarding its impact on self-discipline, emotional regulation, and moral development across Southeast Asia.

- **EG:** It comprised 300 adolescents, aged 13–18, engaged in an 8-week Confucian moral education program that included ethical storytelling, moral reflection, and group discussions centered on Confucian virtues. The activities aimed to develop self-discipline, emotional self-regulation, and moral reasoning through active participation across Southeast Asia.

- **CG:** It consisted of 300 adolescents aged 13–18 participating in standard civic education during the same period. The curriculum addressed general civic duties and social responsibilities but did not have any discrete Confucian moral instruction; this group served as a baseline for comparing psychological and behavioral outcomes of the intervention across Southeast Asia.

3.4 Statistical analysis

The research used IBM SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software version 29 to assess the psychological impact on adolescent self-discipline and cognitive-emotional development. Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was used to assess overall group differences across several psychological variables influenced by Confucian moral cultivation. Significant differences in self-discipline and emotional regulation were found between pre-and post-intervention using t-tests for the data from the two conditions and multiple regressions to examine which components of the intervention most strongly predicted improvements in adolescent cognitive emotional development and moral reasoning across Southeast Asia.

3.4.1 MANOVA

MANOVA was employed to examine the impact of the Confucian moral education program on the dependent variables in concert, and to test whether there were significant differences between the experimental and control groups concerning self-discipline, emotional regulation, empathy, and moral reasoning. By examining the combined outcome of these dependent variables, MANOVA also controlled for the potential inter-correlation among the psychological factors involved and provided a rigorous assessment of how Confucian moral cultivation influenced adolescents' cognitive-emotional development in totality. Equation (1) shows the formula for the MANOVA.

$$\Lambda = \frac{|E|}{|H+E|} \quad (1)$$

Wherein, E denotes the error, and H is the matrix of the MANOVA in psychological impact on adolescent self-discipline

3.4.2 Paired t-tests

Paired t-tests were used to analyze the scores of pre- and post-interventions for the critical variables such as self-discipline and regulation, as shown in (2). Specifically, it examined whether individual students experienced meaningful improvements after the engagement with Confucian moral teachings. In the EG, the statistically significant positive gains that reflected this adjustment were preserved in addition to individual developmental growth from reflective practice, ethical storytelling, and group discussion, and again these comparative t-tests provided evidence directly linking the program experience to the psychological attributes key to Confucian moral cultivation and development.

$$t = \frac{\bar{D}}{s_D/\sqrt{n}} \quad (2)$$

Wherein, t is the mean difference, n denotes the number of pairs of observations, and s_D is the standard deviation of the differences

3.4.3 Multiple regressions

A multiple regression analysis examined how certain characteristics of the intervention were predicting change in adolescent self-discipline and cognitive-emotional outcomes. To identify the main predictors of positive change, the regression analysis looked at the relationship between the frequency of reflective practice, moral dialogue, and psychological tests. The regression model helps to isolate which of the elements of Confucian moral education predicted emotional resilience and moral reasoning overall. The findings from this analysis can inform the way to improve the practices of moral cultivation to reach the greatest positive developmental impact. Equation (3) shows the formula for the multiple regression analysis.

$$Z = \beta_0 + \beta_1 W_1 + \beta_2 W_2 + \dots + \beta_l W_l + \varepsilon \quad (3)$$

Wherein, ε represents the error term, and $\beta_1, \beta_2, \dots, \beta_l$ is the coefficients of the regression point.

4. RESULTS

Adolescence is a time when a range of emotional and behavioral issues are becoming increasingly prevalent amongst young people due to rapid shifts in the social landscape and rapidly changing technology, often without clear moral frameworks in contemporary curricula. Traditional Confucian

moral cultivation practices and teachings are present in many Southeast Asian contexts and include deep wisdom and principles for principal action and critical self-reflection. Using these traditional teachings, structured educational and learning opportunities for young people can help to produce greater capacities for self-regulation, and empathy. The research considers how to harness older moral structures to support healthy psychological development in young people in an age of increased psychosocial pressures.

4.1 Demographic characteristics

The demographic distribution indicates that both groups, EG and CG, were well-balanced in terms of age, gender, and school level, ensuring competency for comparability for the outcomes of the intervention across Southeast Asia. The age ranges were relatively evenly distributed and the largest proportions fell within the 15–16 age brackets for both groups. Gender representation was also nearly equal, with male students slightly prevailing in the EG and an equal gender split in the CG. Most participants appeared to have come from middle schools, consistent with the research focus on early and mid-adolescence populations. The balanced demographic profile provides competency for the reliability of the studies' psychological results about Confucian moral cultivation for adolescents. Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of participants across Southeast Asia. Figure 2 (a) presents participants of EG (a) age, (b) gender, and (c) school level. Figure 2 (b) presents participants of CG (a) age, (b) gender, and (c) school level across Southeast Asia.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants across Southeast Asia

Variables	EG (n = 300)	Percentage (%)	CG (n = 300)	Percentage (%)
Age				
13–14	90	30	85	28
15–16	120	40	125	42
17–18	90	30	90	30
Gender				
Male	155	51.7	150	50
Female	145	48.3	150	50
School Level				
Middle School	180	60	185	61.7
High School	120	40	115	38.3

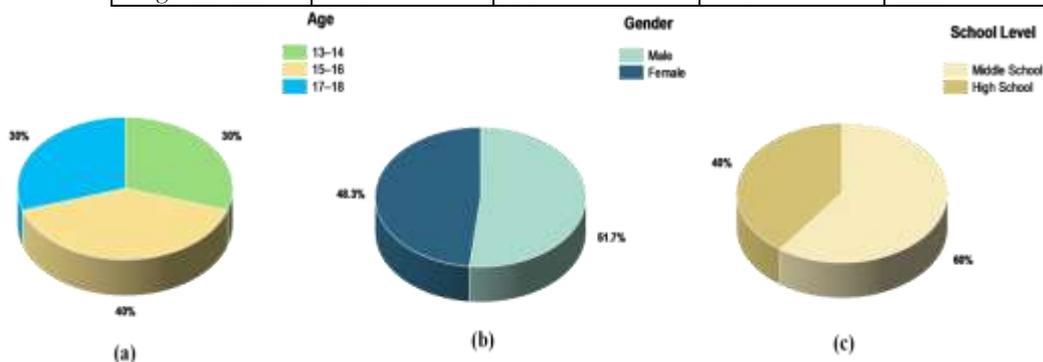


Figure 2 (a): Presents of participants EG (a) age (b) gender and (c) school level across Southeast Asia

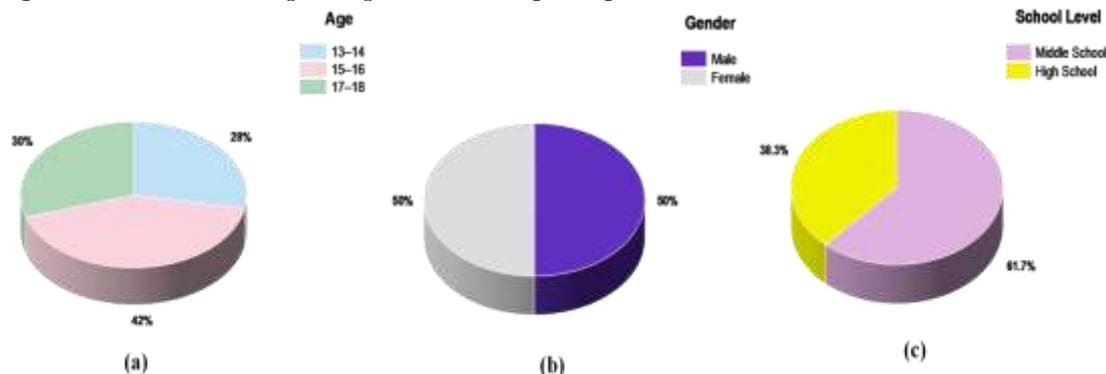


Figure 2 (b): Presents of participants CG (a) age (b) gender and (c) school level across Southeast Asia

4.2 MANOVA

The MANOVA results indicate statistically significant differences across all psychological variables measured between the experimental and control groups, indicating that Confucian moral cultivation was of value for use in adolescent development. The experimental group's mean scores for self-discipline, emotional regulation, moral cognition, empathy, and moral reasoning were all noticeably higher and had all p-values less than 0.001. The partial eta squared values from moderate effects reflect values ranging from 0.10 to 0.12 and suggest a practical significance as well as suggest using Confucian moral education can enhance the holistic learning experience for adolescents. While this phenomenon needs to be measured in longer-term research, the elevated mean scores for self-discipline and emotional regulation imply that educators have successfully encouraged adolescents to internalize reflective practice and action in situ to produce virtue-based behavior and greater internal control and resilience. The increases in moral cognition and moral reasoning demonstrated how using ethical narrative along with group conversations helped foster a developmental process where the students grappled with the way to navigate the moral murkiness of day-to-day dilemmas while building a clearer moral orientation. The increased levels of empathy also continued to indicate that the emphasis on benevolence and respect related to caring for each other from the Confucian ideals connected to all participants' socio-emotional growth as adolescents. These results collectively reinforce the important opportunity for educators to think through the integration of Confucian moral education in current curricula with a broader view of their goal for educating and strengthening adolescents' holistic cognitive-emotional development and ethical self-regulation. Table 2 illustrates the quantitative values of MANOVA.

Table 2: Quantitative values of MANOVA

Variable	Groups	Mean	SD	Wilks' Lambda	F-value	df	p-value	Partial Eta-Squared
Self-Discipline	EG	4.25	0.50	0.88	20.12	1, 598	<0.001	0.11
	CG	3.12	0.55	0.88	20.12	1, 598	<0.001	0.11
Emotional Regulation	EG	4.10	0.55	0.85	23.75	1, 598	<0.001	0.12
	CG	3.05	0.52	0.85	23.75	1, 598	<0.001	0.12
Moral Cognition	EG	4.05	0.53	0.90	18.60	1, 598	<0.001	0.10
	CG	3.10	0.50	0.90	18.60	1, 598	<0.001	0.10
Empathy	EG	4.35	0.52	0.87	21.80	1, 598	<0.001	0.11
	CG	3.25	0.54	0.87	21.80	1, 598	<0.001	0.11
Moral Reasoning	EG	4.00	0.55	0.86	22.95	1, 598	<0.001	0.12
	CG	2.95	0.53	0.86	22.95	1, 598	<0.001	0.12

4.3 Paired t-tests

As indicated by the results of the paired t-test, there is strong evidence that the Confucian moral education program had worthwhile positive effects on the key psychological attributes of the adolescents in the experimental group. Mean scores for self-discipline, emotional regulation, and moral cognition, as well as empathy and moral reasoning, improved by more than one point after intervention with highly significant t-values and p-values less than 0.001. These improvements unequivocally substantiate how consistent forms of moral reflection, telling of ethical stories, and group dialogue practiced from general tenets of Confucianism can bolster an adolescent's moral-reaching and decision-making competencies. Except for emotional regulation, the control group variables had negligible or statistically insignificant improvement, which suggests, with the combination of change scores, that the motivating factors in Confucian moral cultivation were unique. In this sense, the mean differences suggest with respect to emotional resilience, moral cognition and reasoning, as well as moral empathy toward others, that adolescents who had actively engaged with Confucian virtues had a richer emotional experience than adolescents who had not been exposed to structured Confucian moral education. These changes in the variables exist partly in the meaningful experience of developing the self, which subscribes to the notion of Confucianism that one should never cease to improve oneself or, as it relates to a conscious regulation of behavior through virtue. Table 3 shows the values of the Paired t-test for pre- and post-intervention changes. Figure 3 presents the mean in pre and post (a) EG and (b) CG.

Table 3: Paired t-test for Pre- and Post-Intervention Changes

Variables	Groups	Mean (Pre)	Mean (Post)	Mean Difference	t-value	df	p-value
Self-Discipline	EG	3.10	4.25	1.15	11.15	299	<0.001
	CG	3.08	3.12	0.04	0.95	299	0.34
Emotional Regulation	EG	2.95	4.10	1.15	12.00	299	<0.001
	CG	2.97	3.05	0.08	1.05	299	0.31
Moral Cognition	EG	3.00	4.05	1.05	10.25	299	<0.001
	CG	3.02	3.10	0.08	1.15	299	0.25
Empathy	EG	3.20	4.35	1.15	11.75	299	<0.001
	CG	3.18	3.25	0.07	1.02	299	0.29
Moral Reasoning	EG	2.90	4.00	1.10	10.50	299	<0.001
	CG	2.88	2.95	0.07	0.90	299	0.37

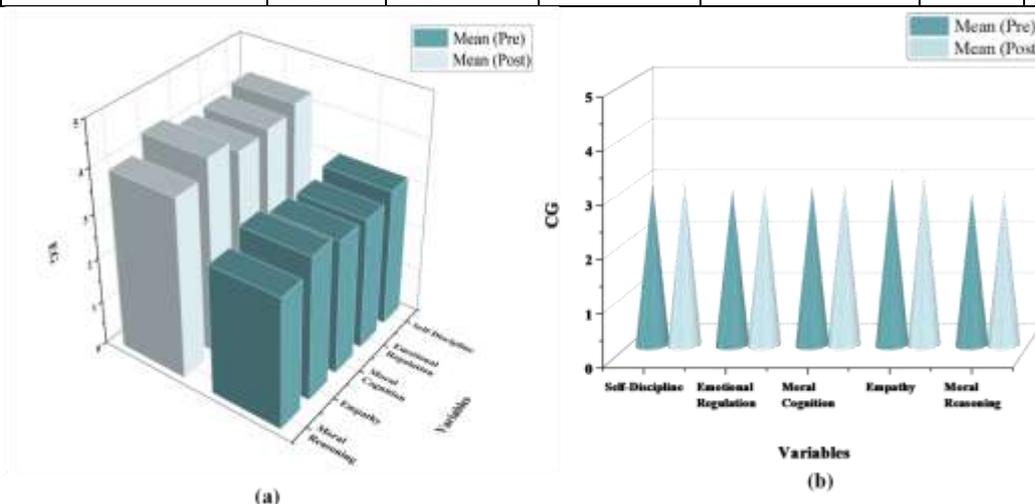


Figure 3: Presentation of mean in pre and post (a) EG and (b)CG

4.4 Multiple regressions

The Confucian moral educational program showed highly positive psychological results for the experimental group of adolescents. Engaging in modestly frequent reflective practice and moral discourse contributed significantly to developing participants' emotional resilience and behavioral regulation with appropriate self-control. Reflective practices and moral discourse explained approximately half of the variability in their emotional resilience, suggesting again the power of Confucian practices in shaping developmental outcomes in young people. Predictors of the control group, in contrast, were all non-significant, suggesting that no structured moral cultivation took place. The reciprocal development of adolescents' inner moral reasoning and capacity for self-regulation can be developed through Confucian-based daily reflective practices and dialogue. These results add to evidence documenting meaningful psychological inputs of moral cultivation and suggest that the inclusion of traditional forms of moral cultivation into educational programs can make lasting contributions to adolescent youth development. Table 4 presents (a) Predicting Emotional Resilience and (b) Predicting Behavioural Control. Figure 4 shows the mean and SD of predicting emotional resilience in both (a) EG and (b) CG.

Table 4 (a): Values of Predicting Emotional Resilience

Groups	EG						CG					
	Mean	SD	B	β	t-values	p-values	Mean	SD	B	β	t-values	p-values
Reflective Practice Frequency	3.90	0.50	0.40	0.39	8.00	<0.001	2.75	0.60	0.08	0.08	1.14	0.254

Moral Discourse Participation	4.00	0.55	0.35	0.34	5.83	<0.001	2.70	0.65	0.10	0.09	1.25	0.212
Group Discussion Engagement	4.05	0.52	0.30	0.28	4.29	<0.001	2.80	0.55	0.07	0.06	0.88	0.378
Emotional Resilience	4.20	0.50	—	—	—	—	3.00	0.52	—	—	—	—
Constant	—	—	1.90	—	9.50	<0.001	—	—	2.85	—	11.4	<0.001
Model R ²	—	—	0.46	—	—	—	—	—	0.04	—	—	—
F (3, 296)	—	—	84.75	—	—	<0.001	—	—	—	—	—	—

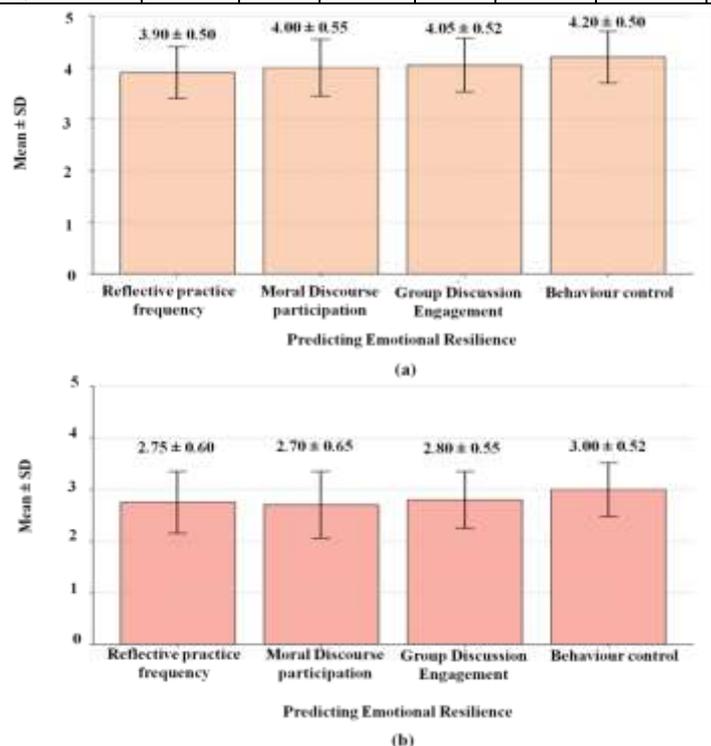


Figure 4: Presents of mean and SD Predicting Emotional Resilience (a) EG and (b) CG

The multiple regression analysis indicates that different aspects of the Confucian moral education program are highly predictive of a change in individuals' behavioral control with the experimental group. The most significant predictor was the frequency of reflective practice ($\beta = 0.37$, $p < 0.001$), reflecting that students who consistently self-reflected consciously engaged with regulating their behaviors and impulses. Then, participation in moral discourse, $\beta = 0.31$, and participation in group discussion, $\beta = 0.26$, identified significant contributions to the 44% change in behavior control ($R^2 = 0.44$), suggesting that students continued open dialogue and exploration of moral issues support the development of these positive behavioral changes. In contrast, the control group did not identify statistically significant predictors, with lower beta values and non-significant p-values ($> .05$), indicating that traditional civic education alone does not influence self-regulation in a meaningful way. These findings support the notion that structured deliberative moral cultivation, such as reflective practices and collaborative discussions, can facilitate adolescent self-discipline and psychological stamina to thrive in a contemporary educational context. Figure 5 illustrates the mean and SD of predicting behavioural control in (a) EG and (b) CG.

Table 4 (b): Values of Predicting Behavioural Control

Groups	EG						CG						
	Predictor Variable	Mean	SD	B	β	t-value	p-value	Mean	SD	B	β	t-value	p-value

Reflective Practice Frequency	3.90	0.50	0.38	0.37	7.60	<0.001	2.75	0.60	0.09	0.09	1.29	0.198
Moral Discourse Participation	4.00	0.55	0.32	0.31	5.33	<0.001	2.70	0.65	0.11	0.10	1.37	0.172
Group Discussion Engagement	4.05	0.52	0.28	0.26	4.00	<0.001	2.80	0.55	0.06	0.05	0.75	0.454
Behavioral Control	4.10	0.48	—	—	—	—	2.95	0.50	—	—	—	—
Constant	—	—	1.85	—	8.80	<0.001	—	—	2.80	—	11.7	<0.001
Model R ²	—	—	0.44	—	—	—	—	—	0.03	—	—	—
F (3, 296)	—	—	79.20	—	—	<0.001	—	—	—	—	—	—

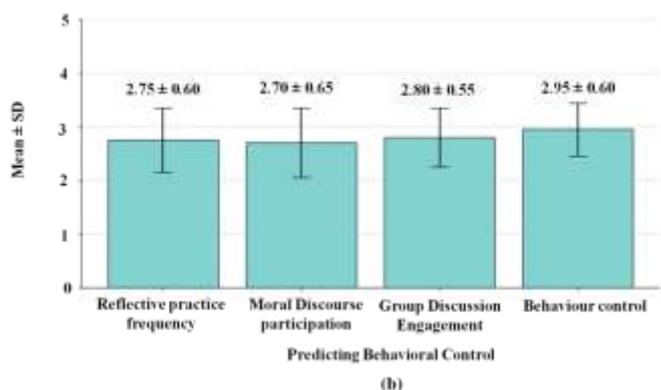
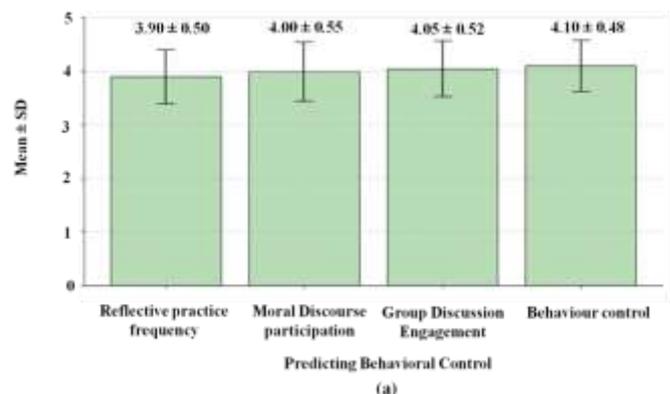


Figure 5: Presentation of mean and SD of Predicting Behavioural Control (a) EG and (b) CG

4.5 Impact of Confucian Moral Education on Key Psychological Attributes

The relative proportions quite clearly indicate that adolescents in the EG who underwent the program of Confucian moral education experienced consistently higher percentages on all important psychological factors than adolescents in the CG. Adolescents in the EG had the highest increase in self-discipline at 85% while adolescents in the CG only had 62%. Similarly, emotional regulation and moral cognition for the EG improved substantially at 80% and 83%, respectively and the CG had low increases of 62% and 55%, respectively. The statistical development of empathy and moral reasoning is also consistent with the EG developing at 78% and 82%, respectively, while the CG only increased at 55% and 57%, respectively. The levels reflect the value of Confucian moral cultivation to work towards developing adolescents' ability

to self-regulate the behaviors, think ethically, and be emotionally aware. Table 5 and Figure 6 shows the impact of Confucian moral education on key psychological attributes across Southeast Asia.

Table 5: Quantitative values on Key Psychological Attributes in EG and CG

Factors	EG (%)	CG (%)
Self-Discipline	85	62
Emotional Regulation	80	58
Moral Cognition	83	60
Empathy	78	55
Moral Reasoning	82	57

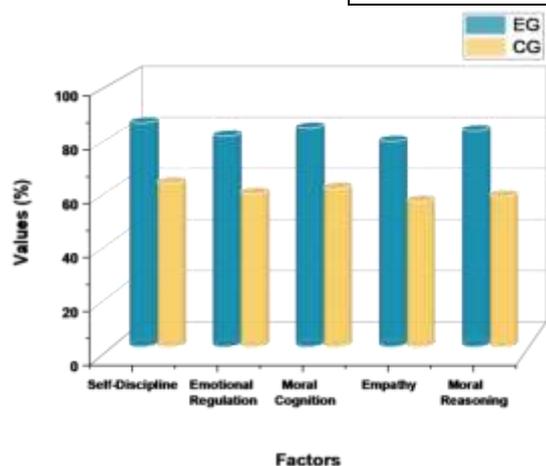


Figure 6: Presentation of Key Psychological Attributes in EG and CG

4.6 DISCUSSIONS

Confucianism provides conceptual merit regarding the innate conscience and system harmony; empirical measures of direct community impact on self-regulation and affective development are limited by quasi-empirical approaches [12]. A lack of accessible application models has also limited how Confucianism can be used in a respective educational system, which resulted in less reliable outcomes when dealing with moral and personal development in contemporary settings. Adolescent findings illustrated how Confucian values can enhance self-esteem and relationships. However, findings from a small, culturally specific group of adolescents applied to an international readership reduce their generalizability [13]. Using a single hermeneutic phenomenology protocol can also mask a range of indefinite individual differences in self-regulation and cognitive-emotional responses. Broader, larger, and more diverse samples are required to adequately substantiate these benefits within and across contexts.

The research reveals that incorporating Confucian moral cultivation into modern learning can significantly enhance adolescent self-control, emotion regulation, and moral reasoning. Students who engaged in reflective moral discourse, ethical storytelling, and practiced empathy and compassion experienced greater growth in empathy and cognitive-emotional resilience. The research also found that the frequency of moral reflection and group dialogue were strong predictors of adolescents' emotional resilience and behavioral control across Southeast Asia. This suggests that Confucian moral education is comprehensive, empowering young people to take control and develop virtue-based action in a rapidly changing world. However, the research findings should be interpreted with cultural context in mind.

5. CONCLUSION

Research shows that Confucian moral cultivation can meaningfully improve adolescent self-discipline and emotional-cognitive development in a modern Southeast Asian context. Compared to students who followed a typical civic education and programming, the youth in the Confucian moral education program made statistically significant improvements on measures of self-discipline, emotional management, moral cognition, empathy and moral reasoning. Reflective engagement, moral dialogue and group participation predicted emotional resilience and behavior regulation with the aspect of

Confucianism that prioritized self-cultivation, virtue and reflective moral learning as a way to promote self-development and social harmony across Southeast Asia. The program integrates traditional narrative ethical storytelling and group discourse with contemporary education practices, demonstrating how ancient ethics can be relevant to the emotional and behavioral issues facing youth today. Integrating Confucian moral cultivation education into contemporary programming can be an effective way to support adolescent mental health and well-being, helping youth act in moral integrity and experience emotional resilience, and flourish in contemporary complex social contexts. While the EG receiving Confucian moral training showed significantly greater improvements in self-discipline at 85%, moral cognition at 83%, and moral reasoning at 82%. Future research should expand to other cultural values and contexts, and mixed methods should be adopted to have a comprehensive understanding of the effects of Confucian moral cultivation. Moreover, the effects of engaging in sustained practice over a considerable period of time for adolescent self-discovery development can be explored through long-term studies across Southeast Asia.

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