
Original Research Article**A Study of filial piety: Differences and agreement within China and in the international arena**

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Abstract: Filial piety is a widespread virtue in human history and is regarded as the caring duty of adult children to their elderly parents (Bedford et al., 2022; Cicirelli, 1993; Sung, 1995; Leichtentritt et al., 2004). Scholars around the world have conducted a lot of research on filial piety. Scholars in China primarily explore filial piety from the perspectives of ethics, education, and political science, focusing more on theoretical analyses of the concept. In contrast, international research on filial piety is more closely associated with disciplines such as psychology, social sciences, and medicine, emphasizing its concrete manifestations within family dynamics and intergenerational relationships. This paper compares the consensus and differences in the phenomenon of filial piety in China and other countries between 2013 and 2024, in order to lay the foundation for the study of filial piety theory and related policies.

Keywords: Filial Piety; China; International Arena

1. Introduction

Filial piety is one of the most fundamental, yet relatively unknown, virtues that is universally found in diverse cultures throughout human history (Bedford, Yeh, Tan, 2022.) It is a high virtue and dominant social norms in the majority of Asian societies including China, Japan, Korea, Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, India and Bangladesh (e.g., Wangmo, 2010; Nichols, 2013). Although its form and connotation may be different from filial piety in Eastern culture, it still emphasizes respect and care for elders. scholars in China and abroad have conducted a large number of studies on the concept and behavior of filial piety for the elderly from different perspectives, exploring such hot social phenomena as empty-nested elderly, family relationships, and supportive behaviors. However, there are big differences between Chinese and Western studies in terms of focus, discipline distribution, and research methodology. In order to more comprehensively and deeply sort out the research status in the field of filial piety, this study compares the key hotspots and development trends of Chinese and international filial piety research from 2013-2024 based on bibliometric visualization and analysis methods, with a view to laying a foundation for the study of filial piety theories and related policies.

2. Annual trends in the volume of literature

Changes in the number of literatures in a research field reflect the overall level and development situation of research results in the field, and to a certain extent reflect the degree of attention paid to the field by the society and the academia, as well as the changes in the heat and development trend of the research field. Since the data of filial piety research in 2024 is incomplete, this study plots the annual trend of the number of filial piety research literature in the 2013-2023 10-year period (see Figure 1).

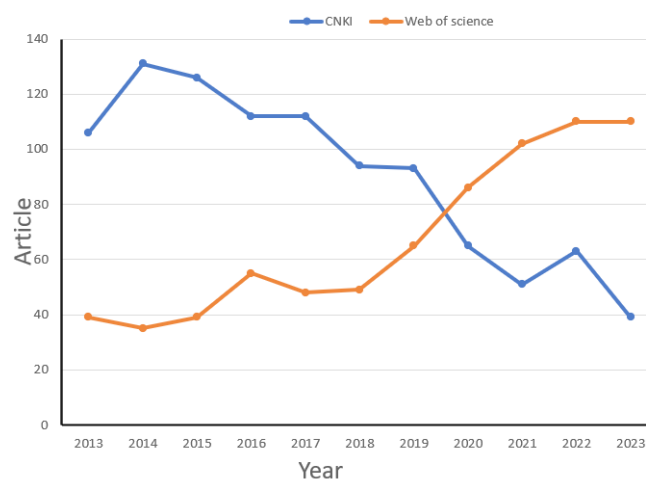


Figure 1. Annual change trend of the number of filial piety research literature from 2013 to 2023.

As can be seen from Figure 1: The number of Chinese literature on filial piety research from CNKI basically showed a continuous growth before 2014, and then began to decline continuously after peaking in 2014, only 2022 had a small increase, but the number of English language literature from the WoS platform has been showing a steady rise since 2013, gradually much higher than the latter after 2019, indicating that Chinese scholars in the field of filial piety research have paid less attention to Chinese journals in recent years, and their focus has tilted to English-language international journals.

3. National distribution of authors in the literature

In this study, the national distribution of authors of filial piety research literature in Web of Science core databases was calculated (see Table 1). Chinese scholars accounted for nearly 50% of the internationally published literature, which is the main force in filial piety research, followed by the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom. From the statistical results, it is clear that Asian countries are the main distribution areas for authors of filial piety research, and scholars from developed countries also show great research interest in this field.

Table 1. National distribution of authors in research literature on filial piety from web of Science (Top Ten).

No.	countries	Numbers	Ratio
1	PEOPLES R CHINA	535	50.47%
2	USA	377	35.57%
3	AUSTRALIA	63	5.94%
4	ENGLAND	62	5.85%
5	CANADA	57	5.38%
6	SINGAPORE	48	4.53%
7	SOUTH KOREA	44	4.15%
8	NEW ZEALAND	21	1.98%
9	JAPAN	15	1.42%
10	NETHERLANDS	15	1.42%

4. Distribution of documentary disciplines in China

Based on the subject categories provided by the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) and the Web of Science Core Collection databases, presents the most disciplines represented in the literature on this topic. Research in China is most concentrated in the fields of ethics, secondary education, Chinese politics, and international politics (Table 2). For instance, Li Qiang (2021) presents a systematic examination of the

developmental trajectory of Confucian filial piety during the pre-Qin period. The work focuses on analyzing the perspectives on filial piety held by key Confucian figures, including Confucius, Zengzi, Mencius, and Xunzi. Li posits that Confucian filial piety underwent a significant transformation, evolving from a concept primarily rooted in family ethics to one that encompassed broader social ethics. Zhang Xiaoyi has examined the concept of filial piety in the Analects of Confucius and its multifaceted implications. The research reveals that the Analects presents a comprehensive view of filial piety, encompassing family ethics, clan ethics, and political ethics (Cai lixu,2012.)

The disciplinary scope of international research on FP is broader and exhibits greater diversity compared to that in China. Gerontology accounts for 24.43% of the literature, while 11.70% of studies adopt a psychological perspective. Additionally, numerous studies explore FP from the perspectives of family studies, sociology, and health care sciences and services (Table 3). For example, Yujia Wang (2013) examined the impact of family travel involving parents and children on the well-being of elderly individuals, analyzing intergenerational interaction, optimism, and psychological resilience as mediating factors. Similarly, Chih-Wen Wu (2021), employing the theoretical framework of the dual filial piety model, investigated the influence of adolescents' filial beliefs on their use of different conflict resolution strategies.

5. Themes of researches on FP in China

Research on FP in China focuses primarily on national culture and ethical morality, whereas international studies place greater emphasis on its concrete manifestations within family and intergenerational relationships. The articles are organized into a literature matrix, as illustrated in Table 4 and Table 5.

Table 4. Literature matrix in china.

Distribution	Study	Design Setting
Guan Jianying (2020)	Explore the focus of the dispute over filial piety between Confucianism and Buddhism in the Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties, the cultural stance behind it, and its significance.	By sorting out and analyzing relevant historical documents, the study examines the dispute over filial piety during this period.
Li Jiageng (2022)	By combing through the documents from the pre-Qin period to the Two Han Dynasties, this paper systematically summarizes Zhou Gong's way of filial piety and fraternal duty.	Using the method of document research, the records about Zhou Gong's way of filial piety and fraternal duty in the documents from the pre-Qin period to the Two Han Dynasties are sorted out and analyzed.
Shujie Yuan (2023)	Explore the impact mechanism of contemporary filial piety on the voluntary service behavior of adolescents.	Conduct a two-wave questionnaire survey of adolescents in 7 schools in the Yangtze River Delta region of China.
Xiao Qunzhong(2024)	To delve into the relationship among "filial piety," "benevolence," and "propriety," as well as the position and role of the theory of filial piety in the development of Confucianism.	Through literature research and theoretical analysis, relevant classical literature is sorted out and interpreted.

Western scholars studying FP often focus on Asian immigrant families in Western countries. Sharma and Kemp (2012), for example, examined informal support and communication between elderly parents and their adult children in multigenerational Indian (South Asian) families in the United States, exploring the expectations of older adults regarding familial support.

Table5. Literature Matrix in international.

Distribution	Countries	Study	Design Setting
Truong Thi Khanh (2020)	Vietnam	Conduct a preliminary validation of the Vietnamese version of the Dual Filial Piety Scale (DFPS - V).	Use a questionnaire survey to collect data from students in Vietnam.
Amy J. Lim (2021)	United States	Use the Dual Filial Piety Model (DFPM) to compare the filial piety differences between Asian Americans and Caucasian Americans.	Recruit participants through the online survey platform Amazon Mechanical Turk and conduct a questionnaire survey.
Puxiang Ren (2022)	Denmark and China	Explore the impact of filial piety and generativity on the well-being and loneliness of older adults in Denmark and China.	Conduct interviews and questionnaire surveys with older adults in Denmark and China.
Dicky Sugianto (2024)	Indonesia	Evaluate the reliability and validity of the Indonesian version of the Dual Filial Piety Scale (DFPS).	Adopt a quantitative, cross-sectional design to collect data and assess the psychometric properties of the adapted scale.

6. Conclusion

Based on the research conclusions and a comparison between China and international filial piety studies, the implications for developing domestic filial piety research are as follows. Firstly, while emphasizing publication in international English journals, continuously strengthen the publication in Chinese core journals on filial piety research to enhance its attention and influence in domestic theoretical and policy research. Secondly, considering elderly care situation, adopt interdisciplinary research techniques to broaden the disciplinary perspective. Thirdly, innovate survey and data analysis methods to improve research quality. Domestic research is mainly theoretical and lacks large-scale and longitudinal surveys. We can increase sample sizes, build standardized scales, and use advanced models like big data text analysis and structural equation models to enhance research quality.

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