

The Multidimensional Psychological Structure of Filial Piety: Divergent Orientations and Historical Transformations

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Abstract

The internal structure of filial piety is multifaceted; however, previous measurement scales have suffered from inadequate reliability and validity, researcher subjectivity, and omission of crucial factors. This study developed items through adaptation of classical texts and free generation by participants, and examined the structure of filial piety using factor analysis and criterion analysis (total sample size = 1725). The findings revealed a nine-factor structure comprising: respecting and ensuring parental well-being, obedience to parents, treating parents with a pleasant demeanor, self-preservation to avoid parental disgrace, accompanying parents, bringing glory to honor parents, yearning for parents, non-interference with parents, and remonstrating with parents. This structure demonstrated satisfactory reliability and validity. Different factors exhibited distinct association patterns with criterion variables (family self-concept, family resilience, parenting styles, inappropriate parent-child boundaries, self-reliance personality, and obedience tendency). These findings reflect the distinction between respect and admiration, and the transformation from respect to obedience in Confucian discourse on filial piety. Furthermore, the historical evolution of these factors across ancient and modern contexts is discussed.

Full Text

The Multidimensional Psychological Structure of Filial Piety: Differences in Orientations and Changes Across Time

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Abstract

Filial piety possesses a multifaceted internal structure, yet previous measurement instruments have suffered from inadequate reliability and validity, contamination by researchers' subjective intentions, and omission of important factors. The present study developed items through adaptation of classical texts and free generation by participants, and examined the structure of filial piety using factor analysis and criterion analysis (total sample size = 1725). The findings revealed that filial piety comprises nine factors: respecting and providing peace and happiness to parents, obeying parents, treating parents with a pleasant countenance, maintaining oneself without bringing shame to parents, accompanying parents, bringing glory to parents through achievements, yearning for parents, not interfering with parents, and remonstrating with parents. The nine-factor structure demonstrates good reliability and validity. Different factors exhibit distinct patterns of association with criterion variables (family self-concept, family resilience, parenting styles, inappropriate parent-child boundaries, self-supporting personality, and compliance tendency). These findings reflect the differences between respect and yearning, and the transformation from respect to compliance in Confucian discussions of filial piety. Additionally, the changes across ancient and modern times for different factors are discussed.

Keywords: Filial piety, Confucian cultural psychology, filial piety, filial behavior, indigenous psychology

1. Introduction

For Chinese people, the importance of filial piety requires no elaboration. In ancient times, filial piety was always the foundation of ethical life and played a constitutive role in Confucian ethics (Yang, 2017). However, since the New Culture Movement, filial piety culture has undergone much reflection and scrutiny, and attitudes toward filial piety have become divided. Some criticize filial piety for stifling independent personality (Yang, 2014). For instance, Chen Duxiu listed filial piety among “slave morals of subordinating oneself to others” (Chen, 1984). Hu Shi pointed out that the major flaw of making filial piety a religion was that it “cultivates a kind of timid demeanor” (Hu, 2013). Wu Yu argued that the teaching of loyalty and filial piety “teaches people to obediently listen to those in power who fool them, not to rebel, turning China into a ‘big factory for producing obedient people’ ” (Wu, 1985). Others affirm the positive value of filial piety for family functioning and quality of family life. This disagreement likely arises from the complex structure of filial piety—that is, although filial piety is a single concept, it contains multiple complex factors. Therefore, without clarifying its internal structure, vaguely criticizing or promoting filial piety may both lead to bias.

The definition of filial piety is not complicated. Texts such as *Erya*, *Shuowen Jiezi*, *Collected Commentaries on the Four Books*, and *A New Interpretation of the Analects* all define filial piety as “properly serving parents” or “being good to

parents.” Accordingly, we define filial piety as the proper way to treat parents. However, such a simply defined concept has extremely complex connotations and components, which is closely related to the long history of the term’s usage and its wide range of users. In view of this, psychological researchers believe that a multidimensional model of filial piety should be established (Fu et al., 2016), which would help clarify the component structure of filial piety. Unidimensional filial behavior scales or filial responsibility scales (e.g., Chen et al., 2007; Chuo & Li, 2008) are insufficient to comprehensively describe its internal structure.

Regarding the internal component structure of filial piety, psychological researchers have conducted investigations using empirical research methods such as factor analysis and achieved some results. The most famous is the series of studies by Yang (2004), who proposed a four-factor structure of filial piety comprising respect and closeness to parents, self-restraint and obedience to parents, supporting and commemorating parents, and protecting and honoring parents. However, reviewing the exploration process of this structure reveals many limitations. First, the researcher first listed 15 connotations and then wrote items based on them, but these 15 connotations had no direct connection with the final structural model (and therefore were not model hypotheses). This process may have introduced the researcher’s subjective intentions and views. Second, the scale was compiled by the researcher based on classical texts and personal experience, without including content generated by participants. Therefore, if contemporary individuals have developed new psychological factors different from those in classical texts, such factors would be ignored. Third, the researcher decided to extract four factors based on the scree plot, which likely determined too few factors, resulting in constructs that were not closely related being merged into the same dimension. For example, the author acknowledged in the report that because the content of Factor 1 was broad, it could not be linguistically summarized as a single construct and could only be temporarily named (though this tentative name seems to have been directly adopted by later researchers).

By examining the scale content, we also found that the connection between many items and their factor names was not close. Fourth, only three factors in the scale were extracted through empirical factor analysis. Afterward, regretting that many “lost pearls” had not been included in the scale, the researcher subjectively compiled some items into a fourth factor based on personal will. Fifth, the scale’s reliability analysis failed to meet psychometric requirements. We found that among the 240 Cronbach’s α values reported by the author, 14 were less than 0.70 (accounting for 5.8%), with the lowest value reaching 0.46. In addition to possible problems in the measurement process, we believe this was likely because the author extracted too few factors to describe the complex structure of filial piety, thus squeezing many weakly related items into the same dimension, and also because the researcher subjectively compiled one of the dimensions. Sixth, the researcher conducted only exploratory factor analysis without confirmatory factor analysis. Seventh, from the perspective of scale content, many important factors of filial piety were omitted, which is detailed

in the next paragraph. In summary, there are many regrettable aspects in the compilation process of this scale. Although the study itself has very important value, subsequent researchers should be cautious when reusing this scale.

Another widely used scale was compiled based on the dual filial piety model, dividing filial piety into reciprocal filial piety and authoritarian filial piety (Yeh & Bedford, 2003). This scale conducted higher-order factor analysis on Yang's (2004) four-factor structure (Fu et al., 2016) and failed to overcome the drawbacks of the original scale. Although the dual structure can help people intuitively understand and distinguish the positive and negative parts of filial piety, it cannot reflect more detailed internal components. For example, some researchers have criticized the incompatibility between its dimension names and included content (Fu et al., 2016). Additionally, Fan et al. (2009) also explored the cognitive structure of filial piety. This scale also has some questionable points. For instance, the author did not report the number of items in the initial questionnaire, leaving readers unable to know whether the initial questionnaire comprehensively described all aspects of filial piety. Particularly, the author reported that principal component analysis only found four factors with eigenvalues greater than 1, which makes it even more necessary for readers to question the total number of items in the initial questionnaire. Moreover, similar to Yang's (2004) scale, this researcher first listed four angles and then wrote items based on them (and the four angles listed were completely unrelated to the final factor structure), possibly introducing researcher subjectivity. From the scale content perspective, it also omitted many important factors. Other previous scales also have problems, which will not be detailed here. Some researchers have compiled scales from other perspectives, expanding the field of filial piety research, but these are not descriptions of the internal structure of filial piety, such as the Filial Anxiety Scale (Murray et al., 1996).

The most prominent problem with these previous scales is that they have too few factors. Although they can concisely help researchers understand the main aspects of filial piety, they also have the problem of omitting important factors. Taking Yang's (2004) scale as an example, from the scale item content, there is no mention of remonstrating with parents, yearning for parents, or not interfering with parents (although the researcher mentioned them in the initial list of 15 connotations). Remonstrating with parents is an important aspect of filial piety. The *Classic of Filial Piety* has a special chapter "Remonstrance" discussing this issue, and many scholars in humanities have emphasized remonstrating with parents as an important component of filial piety (e.g., Zeng, 2002). Yearning for parents is the core of Mencius's discussion of filial piety, which researchers regard as the fundamental difference between Confucius's and Mencius's discussions of filial piety (Yang, 2017). *Shiming* states: "Tomb, mu ye, the place where filial children yearn." Such important factors are rarely manifested in previous scales, which shows that the factor structures explored in previous research remain relatively coarse, not detailed enough, and not comprehensive.

On the premise of adhering to the principles of filial piety research proposed by

Yang (2004) (i.e., balancing humanities and social sciences, balancing the ideal and the actual, balancing tradition and modernity, balancing theoretical verifiability and research tool operability, balancing specific content and cognitive structure, viewing filial piety as multidimensional psychology and behavior, and adopting emic research methods as much as possible), this study attempts to re-explore the internal structure of filial piety through a combination of inductive and deductive methods, in order to overcome the drawbacks and deficiencies existing in the aforementioned research. On this basis, this study will also examine the different association patterns between different factors of filial piety and criterion variables, as well as people's views on different factors of filial piety, to demonstrate the necessity and value of distinguishing filial piety into more factors, and discuss the different orientations of filial piety in combination with the intellectual history of Confucianism.

2. Pilot Study

To ensure that the structure of filial piety balances both tradition and modernity, this study developed items for the initial questionnaire through two methods: adaptation from core classical texts and free generation by participants.

The core classical texts selected were *The Analects*, *Mencius*, *The Classic of Filial Piety*, and *The Book of Rites*, all of which are among the “Thirteen Classics,” representing the programmatic classics of ancient culture, and contain many specific descriptions of filial piety. The principle for selecting items from classical literature into the initial questionnaire was to include as many as possible. Except for the content that needed to be excluded, all content related to filial piety was included to avoid bias caused by subjective selection by researchers. Content to be excluded included: first, any discussion of funeral and sacrificial issues after parents' death was not included in the scale, because the death of parents is a situation that only some people have experienced and is difficult to assume, and the differences between ancient and modern funeral and sacrificial rituals are considerable; second, any discussion centered on specific social roles (such as sage kings, feudal lords, daughters-in-law, etc.) was not included in the scale, as it lacks general applicability; third, some chapters contain the character “filial piety” but are not descriptions of filial piety (e.g., “At home, a young man should be filial”), and were not included in the scale; fourth, some chapters in *The Book of Rites · Quli* involve specific ritual norms, which have lost comprehensibility and practicability due to fundamental changes in the material world and social mobility between ancient and modern times (e.g., “As a son, when at home, do not occupy the southwest corner; when sitting, do not take the middle seat; when walking, do not take the middle path; when standing, do not take the middle door”), and were not included in the scale. In addition, any content that only mentioned a single parent was changed to both parents when compiling items. Since *The Book of Rites · Quli* and other chapters involve detailed etiquette, generalization was made during adaptation. To facilitate participants' accurate and quick understanding of scale items, all

items were written in modern vernacular Chinese. Interpretations referred to Zhu Xi's *Collected Commentaries on the Four Books*, Yang Bojun's *Translation and Commentary on the Analects* and *Translation and Commentary on Mencius*, Qian Mu's *A New Interpretation of the Analects*, Hu Pingsheng's *Translation and Commentary on the Classic of Filial Piety*, and Yang Tianyu's *Translation and Commentary on the Book of Rites*. A total of 50 items were compiled.

Additionally, we invited 56 participants through Sojump's sample service to generate descriptions of filial piety. Among them, 58.9% were female, aged 19–57 years ($M = 31.75$, $SD = 8.65$), with highest education levels covering high school or junior college (14.3%), undergraduate (76.8%), and graduate (8.9%). Only 1.8% of participants had lost both parents (or other legal guardians when underage). Participants were asked to describe in writing “the characteristics of people who can be regarded as ‘filial’ in daily life,” with at least 5 items (no more than 10). Since we wanted participants to generate items spontaneously without being influenced by researchers' subjective assumptions, and filial piety is a self-evident, well-known concept in China, we did not provide any definition or explanation of filial piety in the instructions. We received a total of 337 descriptions ($M = 6.02$). A master's student in psychology who was unaware of the research hypothesis conducted redundancy reduction on these descriptions. Sentence structures were optimized without damaging the original meaning. A total of 48 items were compiled.

3. Study 1: Exploratory Factor Analysis

3.1 Research Hypotheses

The hypotheses of Study 1 and their theoretical foundations are presented in Table 1. This study did not write items based on these hypotheses but instead used empirical factor analysis of items to test whether these hypotheses held. This method is a combination of inductive and deductive approaches (Tskhay et al., 2018).

Table 1 Theoretical Hypotheses for Exploratory Factor Analysis

Hypothesis	Theoretical Foundation (Example)
Hypothesis 1: Filial piety at least includes a factor of not violating principles.	<i>The Analects · Weizheng</i> : Meng Yizi asked about filial piety. The Master said, “Do not violate.” ...
Hypothesis 2: Filial piety at least includes a factor of treating parents with a pleasant countenance.	<i>The Analects · Weizheng</i> : Zixia asked about filial piety. The Master said, “The difficulty lies in the countenance ...”

Hypothesis	Theoretical Foundation (Example)
Hypothesis 3: Filial piety at least includes a factor of remonstrating with parents.	<i>The Analects • Liren</i> : The Master said, “In serving parents, one may gently remonstrate…”
Hypothesis 4: Filial piety at least includes a factor of maintaining oneself without bringing shame to parents.	<i>Mencius • Lilou</i> : Mencius said, “…What is the greatest thing to preserve? Preserving oneself is the greatest…”
Hypothesis 5: Filial piety at least includes a factor of not interfering with parents.	<i>Mencius • Lilou</i> : Mencius said, “…Like Zengzi, one can be said to support their will…”
Hypothesis 6: Filial piety at least includes a factor of yearning for parents.	<i>Mencius • Wanzhang</i> : Mencius said, “…The greatest filial piety is to yearn for parents throughout one’ s life …”
Hypothesis 7: Filial piety at least includes a factor of bringing glory to parents through achievements.	<i>The Classic of Filial Piety</i> : Establish yourself and practice the Way, spread your name to later generations to bring glory to your parents—this is the ultimate filial piety.
Hypothesis 8: Filial piety at least includes a factor of respecting and providing peace and happiness to parents.	<i>The Classic of Filial Piety</i> : The Master said, “The filial son’ s service to his parents: in daily life, show utmost respect; in support, show utmost joy; in illness, show utmost concern…”
Hypothesis 9: Filial piety at least includes a factor of obeying parents.	<i>The Book of Rites • Neize</i> : When parents are angry, displeased, and beat one until blood flows, one dares not harbor resentment but instead shows respect and filial piety.
Hypothesis 10: Filial piety at least includes a factor of continuing parents.	<i>The Book of Rites • Jiyi</i> : Zengzi said, “The body is the remains of parents…”

Note: Due to space limitations, only one example is given for the theoretical foundation of each hypothesis.

3.2 Method

3.2.1 Participants Questionnaires were distributed through Sojump's sample service, and 1028 samples were collected. After excluding questionnaires with incorrect responses to detection items (e.g., "If you are reading carefully, please select 'somewhat inconsistent,' " 6 items total), 642 remained. Since the scale content clearly involves value judgments, samples with social desirability scores more than 2 standard deviations above the overall mean were excluded, leaving a final valid sample of 633. Among them, 56.2% were female, aged 18-73 years ($M = 29.98$, $SD = 7.75$), with highest education levels covering junior high school or below (0.6%), high school or junior college (13.0%), undergraduate (79.3%), and graduate (7.1%). Only 1.9% of participants had lost both parents (or other legal guardians when underage). Participants' IP addresses covered 29 provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities.

3.2.2 Measures Filial Piety: Participants completed the initial questionnaire compiled in the pilot study, consisting of 98 items. The questionnaire used a 7-point scale, with participants rating the degree to which each descriptive statement fit them, where "1" indicated "completely inconsistent" and "7" indicated "completely consistent."

Social Desirability: The Chinese version of the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Wang et al., 1999) was used, with 10 items selected (internal consistency reliability $\alpha = 0.70$), 5 of which were reverse-scored, using a 7-point scale.

3.3 Results and Discussion

Bartlett's test of sphericity ($\chi^2 = 26796.59$, $df = 4753$, $p < 0.001$) and KMO test ($KMO = 0.95$) indicated suitability for factor analysis. Principal axis factoring with Promax rotation was used, with the principle of extracting factors with eigenvalues not less than 1. Three types of items were eliminated: those with communality less than 0.3, those with factor loading absolute values less than 0.5, and those with differences in absolute loading values across multiple factors less than 0.3. Each time an item was eliminated, the analysis was rerun until no items met any of the above conditions. The final scale contained 36 items distributed across 9 factors, with a cumulative contribution rate of 49.2%. Factors were named according to the content meaning of the items they contained. Factor loadings, communalities, rotated eigenvalues, and other indicators are shown in Table 2 .

Table 2 Items Retained After Exploratory Factor Analysis and Their Indicators (Study 1)

Item	Content	Loading	Communality	Source
1	I respect my parents.	0.41	<i>The Analects • Weizheng</i> (Confucius)	
2	I strive to make my parents' lives peaceful, comfortable, happy, and pleasant.	0.65	<i>The Classic of Filial Piety • Shengchi</i> (Confucius)	
3	I feel grateful to my parents.	0.36	<i>The Book of Rites • Ji yi</i> (Zengzi)	
4	I attach great importance to respecting my parents.	0.46	<i>The Book of Rites • Fangji</i> (Confucius)	
5	When my parents are ill, I will accompany and care for them.	0.64	<i>Mencius • Wanzhang</i> (Mencius)	
6	I pay attention to my parents' physical health.	0.58	<i>Mencius • Wanzhang</i> (Mencius)	
7	Even if my parents are not perfect, I will accept them.	0.45	<i>Mencius • Lilou</i> (Mencius)	
8	When my parents are ill, I will fully express my concern for their health.	0.08	<i>The Analects • Liren</i> (Confucius), <i>The Classic of Filial Piety • Jianzheng</i> (Confucius)	

Item	Content	Loading	Communality	Source
9	When I support my parents, I strive to give them great joy.	0.00		
10	When my parents scold or hit me, I do not talk back or resist.	0.41	<i>The Book of Rites · Neize</i>	
11	Even if my parents are angry and hit me until blood flows, I will not resent them.	0.36	<i>The Book of Rites · Yuzao</i>	
12	I try to satisfy any request from my parents, regardless of whether it is reasonable.	0.00		
13	I will cater to my parents' wishes to win their favor.	0.00		
14	When my parents need me, I will immediately stop what I am doing.	0.00		
15	Even if my parents treat me badly, I will treat them well.	0.00		
16	I am patient with my parents.	0.00		

Item	Content	Loading	Communality	Source
17	When my parents nag, I do not find them annoying.	0.00		
18	I treat my parents with a gentle attitude, without losing my temper or making a fuss.	0.00		
19	When my parents make mistakes, I will remonstrate with them gently and softly.	0.00		
20	I listen to my parents and do not talk back to them.	0.00		
21	I emphasize moral cultivation and act cautiously because I fear my mistakes will dishonor my ancestors.	0.00		
22	I do not go to dangerous places because I fear bringing shame to my parents.	0.00	<i>The Book of Rites • Quli</i>	

Item	Content	Loading	Communality	Source
23	I maintain myself and do not let myself fall into unrighteousness to avoid shaming my parents.	0.00	<i>Mencius • Lilou</i> (Mencius)	
24	To avoid losing face for my ancestors, I do not do wrong things.	0.00		
25	I often accompany my parents.	0.00		
26	I think of my parents often, frequently greeting them and visiting them.	0.00		
27	I often chat and communicate with my parents, sharing life with them.	0.00		
28	I hope to achieve success and become famous to bring glory to my parents.	0.00	<i>The Classic of Filial Piety • Kaizongmingyi</i>	

Item	Content	Loading	Communality	Source
29	I strive to make others envy me so that my parents feel honored.	0.00	<i>The Book of Rites • Neize</i>	
30	I continuously strive in my studies or career to bring glory to my ancestors.	0.00		
31	I yearn for and am attached to my parents throughout my life.	0.00	<i>Mencius • Wanzhang (Mencius)</i>	
32	Even at age fifty, I will yearn for and be attached to my parents as when I was young.	0.00	<i>Mencius • Wanzhang (Mencius)</i>	
33	I do not excessively interfere in my parents' lives and respect them.	0.00		
34	I can support my parents' will and do not hinder them from realizing their aspirations.	0.00	<i>Mencius • Lilou (Mencius)</i>	

Item	Content	Loading	Communality	Source
35	If my parents engage in unrighteous behavior, I will remonstrate with them to prevent them from making mistakes.	0.00	<i>The Analects</i> • <i>Liren</i> (Confucius), <i>The Classic of Filial Piety</i> • <i>Jianzheng</i> (Confucius)	
36	If my parents make mistakes, I will remind them.	0.00		

Note: The “Source” column in parentheses indicates the originator of the statement from which the item was derived (according to the literature’s own claim).

The results indicate that although filial piety is a single concept, it contains nine factors with different connotations and characteristics. These factors are: (1) **Respecting and providing peace and happiness to parents**, which refers to children respecting their parents and striving to make them feel at ease and happy. This dimension is universally emphasized in all classics. The scale items come from *The Analects*, *The Classic of Filial Piety*, and *The Book of Rites*, and there is also the saying in *Mencius* that “the utmost of filial children is nothing greater than respecting parents,” and in *Zhuangzi* that “not choosing the place to settle them is the utmost filial piety.” Contemporary participants also generated much content in this area. This can be said to be the most important and most consensual factor of filial piety, reflecting continuity between ancient and modern times. (2) **Obeying parents**, which refers to children obeying their parents’ instructions and demands, even if it means violating their own will or reason. The items for this dimension mainly come from *Mencius*, *The Book of Rites* • *Neize*, and *The Book of Rites* • *Yuzao*, and also include content generated by participants. This is very different from the emphasis on “not violating (principles)” in *The Analects* and the statement in *The Classic of Filial Piety* that “following father’s orders, how can that be considered filial piety?” It can be said to be diametrically opposed. (3) **Treating parents with a pleasant countenance**, which refers to children being patient and pleasant when dealing with parents. Items come from *The Book of Rites* • *Neize* and participant free generation, and there is also emphasis on “the difficulty lies in the countenance” in *The Analects*. (4) **Maintaining oneself without bringing shame to parents**, which refers to children preserving themselves and not falling into unrighteousness to avoid shaming their parents. This is also

a relatively common perspective on filial piety in ancient times. Items come from *Mencius*, *The Classic of Filial Piety*, and *The Book of Rites · Quli*, and also include content generated by participants. (5) **Accompanying parents**, which refers to children spending time with parents and communicating and sharing life with them. This dimension was not in the research hypotheses, and items came entirely from contemporary participant generation, with no direct corresponding content found in the selected classics. (6) **Bringing glory to parents through achievements**, which refers to children striving to achieve success to honor their parents. Items come from *The Classic of Filial Piety* and participant-generated content. (7) **Yearning for parents**, which refers to children yearning for and being attached to their parents. This dimension can be said to be a unique perspective of Mencius's discussion of filial piety, different from other classics and not mentioned by contemporary participants. (8) **Not interfering with parents**, which refers to children respecting their parents' will and not interfering in their lives. Items come from *Mencius* and participant-generated content. (9) **Remonstrating with parents**, which refers to children reminding and remonstrating with parents when they make mistakes. This is emphasized in Confucius's discussion of filial piety, with items from *The Analects* and *The Classic of Filial Piety*. Among the 337 descriptions collected from contemporary participants in the pilot study, only one sentence related to this content. These results support Hypotheses 2-9 but do not support Hypotheses 1 and 10.

4. Study 2: Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Criterion-Related Validity

4.1 Research Purpose and Hypotheses

Study 2 had two purposes: confirmatory factor analysis and criterion-related validity analysis. The hypothetical model for confirmatory factor analysis was the structure identified in Study 1. For criterion-related validity analysis, this study focused on examining three aspects: family functioning, parental rearing, and children's personality.

First, regarding family functioning, family self-concept and family resilience were selected as criterion variables. Family self-concept is an individual's perception of their own family (Yao, 2003). Family resilience focuses on family functioning in coping with adversity, involving family communication and problem-solving, utilization of social resources, and holding positive views (Li et al., 2016). Previous empirical studies have found that filial piety positively affects family functioning through parent-child conflict and parent-child cohesion (Li et al., 2014; Sun et al., 2020). The more adolescents value filial piety, the stronger the positive effect of parental control on mother-child relationship quality (Wong et al., 2010). Supportive parenting positively affects family quality of life through children's filial piety (Chen et al., 2016). Accordingly, we predicted that all dimensions of filial piety would be positively correlated with family self-concept

and family resilience (Hypothesis 11).

Second, regarding parental rearing, parenting styles and inadequate parent-child boundaries were selected as criterion variables. Parental bonding styles are behavioral tendencies exhibited by parents in their daily lives of educating and raising children, which researchers have divided into care, coldness/rejection, overprotection, and granting autonomy (Jiang et al., 2009). Inadequate parent-child boundaries specifically include inducing guilt in children, lack of parent-child boundaries, parentification of children, use of psychological control on children, and triangulation of parent-child relationships (Maysseless & Scharf, 2009). Previous empirical studies have found that parent-child attachment quality can positively predict reciprocal filial piety (Jin et al., 2011). Reciprocal filial piety mainly includes respect and closeness to parents and supporting and commemorating parents, focusing on parent-child emotions. In the nine-factor model constructed in Study 1, the dimensions roughly corresponding to this connotation are mainly respecting and providing peace and happiness to parents, treating parents with a pleasant countenance, accompanying parents, and yearning for parents. Accordingly, we predicted that the more parental care and the less coldness/rejection, the more children would respect and provide peace and happiness to parents, treat parents with a pleasant countenance, accompany parents, and yearn for parents (Hypothesis 12). Yeh and Bedford (2004) found that individuals with higher authoritarian filial piety had parents with significantly higher frequencies of inappropriate behaviors (i.e., parents' behavioral patterns did not conform to children's role expectations of parents) and were more likely to experience parent-child conflict as a result. Individuals with higher reciprocal filial piety were more likely to experience parent-child conflict due to conflicts between parental demands and personal desires (i.e., they were less willing to give up personal desires to comply with parental demands). Authoritarian filial piety mainly refers to children suppressing their own desires and sacrificing their own interests to meet parental demands, which is similar to the obeying parents dimension in Study 1's model. Accordingly, we predicted that the less parental granting of autonomy, the more serious the lack of parent-child boundaries, and the more parental use of psychological control, the more children would obey parents (Hypothesis 13). Yang (2017), by comparing two different types of filial piety based on "respect" and "yearning," pointed out that respect points to the clarification of individual boundaries, while yearning more points to the transgression and neglect of individual boundaries. Accordingly, combined with factor connotations, we predicted that the more serious the lack of parent-child boundaries, the less children would respect and provide peace and happiness to parents and the more they would yearn for parents (Hypothesis 14).

Third, regarding children's personality, self-supporting personality and compliance tendency were selected as criterion variables. Self-supporting personality is a personality trait that emphasizes the unity of opposites between personal independence, freedom, and interpersonal connection (Xia & Huang, 2008). Yang (2017) pointed out that filial piety based on respect maintains and promotes individual spiritual independence, while filial piety based on yearning, as a con-

tinuation of the attachment tendency to parents in childhood, weakens spiritual independence and delays people's growth and maturity. Accordingly, combined with factor connotations, we predicted that the higher the level of children's self-supporting personality, the more they would respect and provide peace and happiness to parents and remonstrate with parents, and the less they would yearn for parents (Hypothesis 15). Compliance tendency refers to an individual's propensity to easily obey others, describing a trait of fearing conflict and pressure, being unable to cope with authority pressure, desiring to satisfy others and cater to their expectations, and seeking others' approval (Drake & Egan, 2017). Accordingly, combined with factor connotations, we predicted that the stronger the children's compliance tendency, the more they would obey parents and yearn for parents, and the less they would remonstrate with parents (Hypothesis 16).

4.2 Method

4.2.1 Participants The target sample size for confirmatory factor analysis was determined based on the rule that sample size should be greater than 10 times the number of items, requiring a minimum sample size of 360. Sample 1 for confirmatory factor analysis met this target. The target sample size for correlation analysis was determined using G*Power before data collection (Faul et al., 2009). To meet the requirements of a medium effect size $= 0.30$ and power $= 0.95$ for correlation analysis, a minimum sample size of 138 was needed. Both samples in this study met this target.

Sample 1: Questionnaires were distributed through Sojump's sample service, and 634 samples were collected. After excluding samples with incorrect responses to detection items and one sample with abnormal age entry ("2 years old"), 396 valid samples remained. Among them, 44.9% were female, aged 18–60 years ($M = 30.06$, $SD = 7.30$), with highest education levels covering junior high school or below (0.3%), high school or junior college (11.4%), undergraduate (80.8%), and graduate (7.6%). Only 2.0% of participants had lost both parents (or other legal guardians when underage).

Sample 2: Since the criterion variable scales to be measured in Sample 2 had age restrictions, questionnaires were distributed through Sojump's sample service specifically targeting high school and undergraduate students. A total of 274 samples were collected. After excluding samples with incorrect responses to detection items, 206 valid samples remained. Among them, 57.8% were female, aged 16–23 years ($M = 19.23$, $SD = 1.94$), and all participants had at least one legal guardian alive.

4.2.2 Measures Participants in both Sample 1 and Sample 2 completed the 36-item filial piety scale compiled in Study 1.

Afterward, participants in Sample 1 also completed:

Family Self-Concept: The family self-concept subscale of the Chinese version of the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (Chen, 2013; Yao, 2003) was used. It contains 12 items ($\alpha = 0.85$) using a 5-point scale.

Parenting Styles: The Chinese version of the Parental Bonding Instrument (Deng, 2013) was used, requiring participants to recall memories of parent-child interactions before age 16. It contains 25 items divided into care ($\alpha = 0.79$), overprotection ($\alpha = 0.72$), coldness/rejection ($\alpha = 0.73$), and granting autonomy ($\alpha = 0.83$) dimensions, using a 4-point scale.

Compliance Tendency: The Compliance Scale (Drake & Egan, 2017) was used, translated by psychology researchers and subjected to multiple translation-back-translation procedures by researchers in both English and psychology. It contains 20 items ($\alpha = 0.81$), with participants answering “yes” or “no.”

Social Desirability: Same as in Study 1 ($\alpha = 0.73$).

Participants in Sample 2 also completed:

Family Resilience: The Chinese short version of the Family Resilience Assessment Scale (Li et al., 2016) was used. It contains 32 items ($\alpha = 0.89$) using a 4-point scale.

Inadequate Parent-Child Boundaries: The Inadequate Parent-Child Boundaries Questionnaire (Maysseless & Scharf, 2009) was used, translated by psychology researchers and subjected to multiple translation-back-translation procedures by researchers in both English and psychology. It contains 35 items divided into inducing guilt in children ($\alpha = 0.87$), lack of parent-child boundaries ($\alpha = 0.82$), parentification of children ($\alpha = 0.87$), use of psychological control on children ($\alpha = 0.93$), and triangulation of parent-child relationships ($\alpha = 0.87$), using a 5-point scale.

Self-Supporting Personality: The Self-Supporting Personality Scale for Adolescent Students (Xia & Huang, 2008) was used. It contains 40 items divided into personal self-supporting ($\alpha = 0.73$) and interpersonal self-supporting ($\alpha = 0.79$) subscales, using a 5-point scale.

Social Desirability: Same as in Study 1 ($\alpha = 0.74$).

4.3 Results

4.3.1 Reliability Analysis In Sample 1, the internal consistency reliabilities (α) for the nine dimensions of filial piety (respecting and providing peace and happiness to parents, obeying parents, treating parents with a pleasant countenance, maintaining oneself without bringing shame to parents, accompanying parents, bringing glory to parents through achievements, yearning for parents, not interfering with parents, and remonstrating with parents) were 0.90, 0.86, 0.87, 0.83, 0.77, 0.75, 0.83, 0.74, and 0.70, respectively. In Sample 2, the α values were 0.78, 0.80, 0.85, 0.84, 0.78, 0.76, 0.84, 0.71, and 0.71, respectively. The reliability indices were satisfactory.

4.3.2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted on Sample 1. The nine-factor structure showed good fit indices (structural equation model fit indices are shown in Table 3). All items had high loadings on their corresponding factors (standardized loadings ranged from 0.64 to 0.85, all $p < 0.001$), indicating that all measurement items were effective. The average variance extracted (AVE) values for each dimension were 0.51, 0.51, 0.59, 0.55, 0.53, 0.51, 0.72, 0.59, and 0.54, respectively, all greater than 0.50, indicating good convergent validity. The square roots of the AVE values for the nine factors were all greater than the correlation coefficients between factors (see Table 4), indicating good discriminant validity.

We also attempted to reduce the number of factors and compare them with the nine-factor model. As shown in Table 3, the nine-factor model showed better fit than the eight-factor and seven-factor models. Additionally, based on the factor definitions and included connotations of Yang's (2004) four-factor model, we attempted to reduce the nine factors to a roughly corresponding three-factor structure: merging respecting and providing peace and happiness, treating with pleasant countenance, accompanying, and yearning dimensions to correspond to the respect and closeness dimension of that model; merging obeying and not interfering dimensions to correspond to the self-restraint and obedience dimension; and merging maintaining oneself without shame, bringing glory, and remonstrating dimensions to correspond to the protecting and honoring dimension. (Since this study explicitly excluded content involving situations after parents' death, no dimension corresponded to the supporting and commemorating dimension of that model.) The results showed that the three-factor model had poorer fit than the nine-factor model. In summary, the nine-factor model has advantages in describing the multidimensional psychological structure of filial piety.

Table 3 Comparison of Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results (Study 2)

Model	χ^2/df	GFI	RMSEA	CFI	NFI	NNFI	TLI	IFI	Min Standardized Loading	Min AVE
Nine-factor model	1074.9558*	0.95	1.93	0.87						
Eight-factor model	1161.5766*	0.95	2.05	0.86						
Seven-factor model	1445.8373*	0.93	2.52	0.83						
Three-factor model	2727.1591*	0.81	4.61	0.64						

Note: ** $p < 0.001$. The eight-factor model merges the not interfering and remonstrating dimensions based on the nine-factor model. The seven-factor model merges the bringing glory and yearning dimensions based on the eight-factor model. The three-factor model groups: respecting and providing peace and happiness, treating with pleasant countenance, accompanying, yearning; obeying, not interfering; maintaining oneself without shame, bringing glory, remonstrating.*

Table 4 Partial Correlations Among Filial Piety Dimensions (Study 2 Sample 1, $N = 396$)

Dimension	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Respecting and providing peace and happiness	(0.71)								
2. Obeying parents	0.29***	(0.72)							
3. Treating with pleasant countenance	0.45***	0.21***	(0.77)						
4. Maintaining oneself without shame	0.41***	0.40***	0.29***	(0.74)					
5. Accompanying parents	0.30***	0.16**	0.48***	0.16**	(0.73)				
6. Bringing glory through achievements	0.24***	0.26***	0.21***	0.44***	0.16**	(0.71)			
7. Yearning for parents	0.29***	0.39***	0.33***	0.33***	0.32***	0.28***	(0.85)		
8. Not interfering with parents	0.13**	0.11*	0.17**	0.15**	0.13**	0.17**	0.23***	(0.77)	
9. Remonstrating with parents	0.23***	0.23***	0.10*	0.17**	0.22***	0.39***	0.26***	0.32***	(0.73)
Partial correlation with total score	0.65***	0.74***	0.73***	0.62***	0.58***	0.53***	0.58***	0.26***	0.32***

Note: $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Values in parentheses are square roots of AVE. Control variables: gender, age, highest education, whether parents are alive, social desirability.*

4.3.3 Criterion-Related Validity Analysis Partial correlation analysis results are shown in Table 5 . After controlling for gender, age, highest education (Sample 1 only), whether parents are alive (Sample 1 only), and social desirability, all dimensions of filial piety were significantly positively correlated with family self-concept and family resilience, supporting Hypothesis 11. Parental care was significantly positively correlated with respecting and providing peace and happiness ($r = 0.23, p < 0.001$), treating with pleasant countenance ($r = 0.31, p < 0.001$), accompanying parents ($r = 0.30, p < 0.001$), and yearning for parents ($r = 0.17, p = 0.001$), while coldness/rejection was negatively correlated with them ($r = -0.23, p < 0.001$; $r = -0.12, p = 0.014$; $r = -0.21, p < 0.001$; $r = -0.12, p = 0.016$), supporting Hypothesis 12. Parental granting of autonomy was significantly negatively correlated with obeying parents ($r = -0.20, p < 0.001$), while lack of parent-child boundaries ($r = 0.28, p < 0.001$) and parental use of psychological control ($r = 0.38, p < 0.001$) were significantly positively correlated with it, supporting Hypothesis 13. Lack of parent-child boundaries was significantly negatively correlated with respecting and providing peace and happiness ($r = -0.16, p = 0.021$) and significantly positively correlated with yearning for parents ($r = 0.14, p = 0.045$), supporting Hypothesis 14. Children's self-supporting personality was positively correlated with respecting and providing peace and happiness ($r = 0.32, p < 0.001$; $r = 0.19, p = 0.008$) and remonstrating with parents ($r = 0.22, p = 0.001$; $r = 0.19, p = 0.006$), while interpersonal self-supporting was negatively correlated with yearning for parents ($r = -0.16, p = 0.026$), partially supporting Hypothesis 15. Children's compliance tendency was positively correlated with obeying parents ($r = 0.21, p < 0.001$) and yearning for parents ($r = 0.17, p = 0.001$), and negatively correlated with remonstrating with parents ($r = -0.20, p < 0.001$), supporting Hypothesis 16.

Table 5 Partial Correlations Between Filial Piety Dimensions and Criterion Variables (Study 2)

Criterion Variable	Respecting & Obeying		Pleasant Countenance		Maintaining Self		Bringing Up		Not Interfering		Remonstrating
	Peace	Obeying	Countenance	Maintaining Self	Accompanying	Bringing Up	Yearning	Interfering			
Family self-concept	0.46***	0.16**	0.32***	0.16**	0.33***	0.19***	0.20**	0.16**	0.27***		
Family resilience Parenting styles	0.56***	0.25**	0.35***	0.36***	0.55***	0.43***	0.34***	0.27***	0.33***		

Criterion Variable	Respecting & Peace	Pleasant Counte- nance Obeying	Maintaining Self	Accompanying	Bringing Grieving Yearning	Not Inter- fering	Remonstrating			
• Over- protection	0.23***	0.22**	0.31***	0.16**	0.30***	0.13*	0.17**	0.12*	-	0.23***
• Cold- ness/Rejection	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.15**	-	-
• Grant- ing auton- omy	0.23***	0.12*	0.21***	0.12*	0.18***	0.20***	0.11*	-	-	0.16*
• Inadequate parent- child bound- aries	-	-	-	0.11*	-	-	-	-	-	-
• In- ducing guilt	0.25***	0.20**	0.25***	-	0.25***	0.25***	0.17*	0.15*	-	0.29***
• Lack of bound- aries	0.28***	0.38**	0.21**	0.22**	0.16*	0.22**	0.14*	-	-	0.19**
• Par- entifi- cation	-0.16*	0.28***	0.25***	0.21***	-	-	0.14*	-	-	0.17**
• Psy- cholog- ical con- trol	0.38***	0.21**	0.15*	0.14*	0.22**	0.14*	-	-	-	0.22**
• Tri- angu- lation	-	0.38***	0.25***	0.22**	-	-	0.14*	-	-	0.19**
	0.38***			0.25***	0.25***	0.25***	0.17*			0.17**
	0.21***	0.21**	0.15*	0.14*	0.22**	0.14*	-	-	-	0.22**
							0.17*	0.29***		

Criterion Variable	Respecting & Peace	Pleasant Counte-nance Obeying	Maintaining Self	Bringing Accomplishing	Not Interfering	Remonstrating
Children's self-supporting personality	0.32***	0.17* 0.19**	- 0.25***	0.21*** 0.15*	0.14* - 0.17*	0.19**
• Personal self-supporting	0.19**	- 0.16*	0.22** 0.16*	0.19** 0.17**	- - 0.20** 0.15*	0.17**
• Interpersonal self-supporting	0.15*	0.21** 0.17**	0.17** 0.17**	0.17** 0.17**	- 0.17** - 0.20***	- 0.20***
Children's compliance tendency						

Note: p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001. Control variables: gender, age, highest education (Sample 1 only), whether parents are alive (Sample 1 only), social desirability. Data for family self-concept, parenting styles, and compliance tendency came from Sample 1 (N = 396). Data for family resilience, inadequate parent-child boundaries, and self-supporting personality came from Sample 2 (students aged 16-23, N = 206).*

5. Study 3: Descriptive Study of Ideal Filial Piety

5.1 Research Purpose

Study 3 is a descriptive study whose main purpose is to examine the changes in the connotation of filial piety across ancient and modern times. It includes two specific aspects: first, examining the extent to which each dimension of filial piety identified in Study 1 conforms to the ideal filial piety in the minds of contemporary people; second, since filial piety is the proper way to treat parents, whether children's perception of the proper way to treat parents conforms to parents' expectations of how children should treat them is a question worth exploring, which Study 3 also investigates.

5.2 Method

5.2.1 Participants Sample 1: Questionnaires were distributed through Sojump's sample service, and 304 samples were collected. After excluding samples with incorrect responses to detection items and one sample with abnormal age entry ("128 years old"), 221 valid samples remained. Among them, 54.8% were female, aged 18-61 years ($M = 30.89$, $SD = 7.77$), with highest education levels covering junior high school or below (0.5%), high school or junior college (12.2%), undergraduate (80.5%), and graduate (6.8%).

Sample 2: Questionnaires were distributed through Sojump's sample service specifically targeting parents with children aged ten and above, and 343 samples were collected. After excluding samples with incorrect responses to detection items, 213 valid samples remained. Among them, 51.2% were female, aged 31-59 years ($M = 41.29$, $SD = 5.49$), with children aged 10-33 years ($M = 14.72$, $SD = 4.10$), and highest education levels covering junior high school or below (3.3%), high school or junior college (25.4%), undergraduate (67.1%), and graduate (4.2%).

5.2.2 Measures Participants in Sample 1 were asked to respond to each item of the filial piety scale compiled in Study 1 by answering "To what extent does the following statement conform to your ideal 'filial piety' in your mind?" However, all items were changed from first-person to third-person (e.g., item 1 "I respect my parents" was changed to "He/she respects his/her parents"). A 7-point scale was used, where "1" indicated "completely inconsistent" and "7" indicated "completely consistent." The α values for each dimension were 0.77, 0.83, 0.77, 0.84, 0.75, 0.75, 0.87, 0.82, and 0.76, respectively.

Participants in Sample 2 were asked to respond to each item of the filial piety scale by answering "To what extent does the following statement conform to your expectations for your children?" However, all items were changed from first-person to third-person and "parents" was changed to "me" (e.g., item 1 "I respect my parents" was changed to "He/she respects me"). A 7-point scale was used, where "1" indicated "very unexpecting" and "7" indicated "very expecting." The α values for each dimension were 0.79, 0.86, 0.82, 0.82, 0.80, 0.81, 0.83, 0.83, and 0.76, respectively.

5.3 Results

The results are shown in Table 6 and Figure 1 [Figure 1: see original paper]. First, the factors that best conform to the idealized filial piety in the minds of contemporary people are, in order: respecting and providing peace and happiness to parents ($M = 6.21$, $SD = 0.41$), accompanying parents ($M = 6.04$, $SD = 0.71$), remonstrating with parents ($M = 6.01$, $SD = 0.72$), not interfering with parents ($M = 5.67$, $SD = 0.87$), treating with pleasant countenance ($M = 5.49$, $SD = 0.84$), and bringing glory through achievements ($M = 5.26$, $SD = 0.96$). Parents' expectations for their children are roughly similar ($M = 5.83$, $SD =$

0.63; $M = 5.64$, $SD = 1.02$; $M = 5.83$, $SD = 0.83$; $M = 5.46$, $SD = 0.92$; $M = 5.25$, $SD = 0.99$), reflecting the continuity and consistency between ancient and modern discussions of filial piety. Second, for the dimension of maintaining oneself without bringing shame to parents, its degree of conformity with idealized filial piety in contemporary minds is not high ($M = 4.91$, $SD = 1.18$), but many parents expect their children to treat them this way ($M = 5.28$, $SD = 1.03$). Finally, yearning for parents ($M = 4.48$, $SD = 1.44$) and obeying parents ($M = 3.91$, $SD = 1.05$) seem somewhat inconsistent with contemporary views, and parents also relatively less expect their children to treat them this way ($M = 4.03$, $SD = 1.49$; $M = 3.54$, $SD = 1.17$). However, it is worth noting that they are still components of filial piety, with 49.8% and 17.2% of participants still believing that yearning for parents and obeying parents conform to their ideal filial piety. These results are consistent with previous research. For example, Yang (2016) found that contemporary urban elderly people's expectations for children's filial behavior have shifted from obedience to respect, with filial behaviors characterized by "self-restraint and obedience to parents" or "parental authority" receiving less expectation, while spiritual and emotional interaction is valued more.

Table 6 Participants' Ideal Filial Piety and Parents' Expectations for Children (Percentages) (Study 3)

Dimension	Ideal Filial Piety (Score ≥ 4)	Not Ideal (Score ≤ 3)	Parents' Expectations (Score ≥ 5)	Not Expecting (Score ≤ 3)
Respect	99.5%	0.5%	92.5%	7.5%
& peace				
Obeying	17.2%	82.8%	21.7%	78.3%
Pleasant	92.5%	7.5%	80.3%	19.7%
countenance				
Maintain self	78.3%	26.7%	80.8%	19.2%
Accompanying	99.5%	0.5%	91.5%	8.5%
Bringing glory	66.7%	33.3%	73.3%	26.7%
Yearning	49.8%	50.2%	39.0%	61.0%
Not interfering	88.2%	11.8%	94.1%	5.9%
Remonstrating	75.6%	24.4%	80.8%	19.2%

Figure 1 Participants' Ideal Filial Piety and Parents' Expectations for Children

(Means) (Study 3)

6. General Discussion

This study examined the internal structure of filial piety through factor analysis, criterion analysis, and other methods. The results found that the internal factors of filial piety include respecting and providing peace and happiness to parents, obeying parents, treating parents with a pleasant countenance, maintaining oneself without bringing shame to parents, accompanying parents, bringing glory to parents through achievements, yearning for parents, not interfering with parents, and remonstrating with parents. The nine-factor structure has good reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity, criterion-related validity, and content validity. Compared with previous scales (e.g., Yang, 2004; Fan et al., 2009), this study identified some important factors omitted in previous research. The study also found that different factors have different association patterns with criterion variables, and different factors have different degrees of conformity with ideal filial piety in the minds of contemporary people. Therefore, it is indeed necessary to construct a refined factor structure, which helps us more accurately grasp the multifaceted connotation of filial piety and be less ambiguous or biased when criticizing or promoting filial piety.

6.1 Different Orientations in Confucian Discussions of Filial Piety

Within Confucianism, many issues do not have complete consensus, in addition to affirming the value of benevolence and righteousness. The same is true for filial piety. Therefore, simply and generally discussing Confucian filial piety is harmful and unbeneficial for academic discussion. This study used empirical factor analysis methods to confirm the orientational differences in Confucian discussions of filial piety, representing an attempt to approach Confucian intellectual research using modern psychological paradigms. The issues involved in this topic are extensive. Below, we only discuss three aspects of orientational differences around the main findings of this study.

First, the divergence between “respect” and “yearning.” Yang (2017) pointed out that Confucius’ s discussion of filial piety takes respect as fundamental, while Mencius’ s discussion of filial piety focuses on yearning, placing people’ s concerns and desires at different ages under the emotion of yearning for and attachment to parents. This constitutes the difference in the psychological foundation between Confucius’ s and Mencius’ s understanding of filial piety. This study also clearly distinguished the dimensions of respecting and providing peace and happiness to parents and yearning for parents through empirical factor analysis. Yang (2017) believed that filial piety based on the emotion of respect clarifies an individual’ s specific position and responsibilities and rights in nature-society-history, pointing to the clarification of boundaries between individuals. In contrast, filial piety based on the emotion of yearning is a continuation of the attachment tendency to parents in childhood, easily making children refuse to mature spiritually, reject growth and maturity, and weaken spiritual independence. It projects a kind

of emotion close to that between opposite sexes onto the relationship with parents, pointing to the transgression and neglect of individual boundaries. This study also confirmed that individuals with higher scores on the yearning for parents dimension have more serious problems with lack of parent-child boundaries and lower levels of interpersonal self-supporting, while individuals with higher scores on the respecting and providing peace and happiness dimension show the opposite pattern. Chen (2019) also pointed out that Confucius' s discussion of filial piety has duality, while Mencius' s discussion of filial piety no longer prominently emphasizes "ritual." The orientational difference between Confucius' s and Mencius' s discussions of filial piety plays an important role in understanding parent-child relationships and interpersonal boundaries in Chinese society, but has been conflated in previous psychological research on filial piety. This kind of yearning filial piety is not just an academic construct. According to Li' s (2015) research, it has very realistic manifestations in ancient social customs, such as infantilization in speech and behavior, and the custom of children imitating infantile states in parental funeral rituals. Wang (2005) also pointed out the infantilization phenomenon of mourning subjects. Although Mencius would certainly not agree with the Twenty-Four Filial Exemplars, his introduction of the emphasis on yearning into the discussion of filial piety is hard to say is completely unrelated to later forms of filial piety such as Lao Laizi acting like an infant and entertaining parents with colorful clothes. Mencius' s discussion of filial piety through yearning has its own academic intentions, but it indeed opened up such intellectual dangers. Therefore, distinguishing and clarifying these two different factors is crucial for us to re-examine the connotation of filial piety.

Second, the divergence between "respect" and "obedience." Zhang (2019) pointed out that there was an authoritarian process in ancient Chinese filial piety concepts where "respect" mutated into "obedience." From the empirical factor analysis results of this study, it can also be seen that the items of the obeying parents dimension come from *Mencius* • *Lilou*, *The Book of Rites* • *Neize*, and *The Book of Rites* • *Yuzao*. According to previous scholars' textual research, these three documents were likely all works from the mid-Warring States period (Wang, 2004; of course, the dating of each chapter in *The Book of Rites* cannot be completely determined). This shows that the orientation of discussing filial piety in the mid-Warring States period was already very different from that in the Spring and Autumn period. Different from obeying parents, remonstrating with parents is emphasized in *The Analects* and *The Classic of Filial Piety*. *The Classic of Filial Piety* records that Confucius said: "When there is unrighteousness, the son must contend with his father." Zengzi advocated "remonstrating without disobedience," meaning that even if parents do not listen to remonstrations, one should not disobey them. By the time of Mencius, he began to emphasize that "between father and son, there should be no demanding of goodness," and proposed that "if the parent' s fault is great and one does not resent it, this is to become more distant; if the parent' s fault is small and one resents it, this is being overly sensitive," meaning that if parents' faults are not major, one should not complain.

By *The Book of Rites*·*Neize*, the view had emerged that “when parents are angry, displeased, and beat one until blood flows, one dares not harbor resentment but instead shows respect and filial piety.” When parents beat to the point of causing bleeding, one should not even resent, let alone talk about disobedience. It is hard to say that these scholars do not recognize each other’s views, but the differences in their emphases are quite obvious. For example, Zeng (2007) pointed out that Mencius overemphasized “obedience” and advocated “obtaining the parents’ favor,” meaning unconditional obedience to parental will regardless of right or wrong. Zhang (2019) pointed out that one reason for the alienation of filial piety from respect to obedience is that the private ethics of the family were continuously elevated to public ethics of the state. The most typical case in this process is Emperor Xuanzong of Tang’s annotation of *The Classic of Filial Piety*. To promote “shifting filial piety to loyalty,” he added, deleted, and arbitrarily altered the text, causing “the way of father and son” to align with “the righteousness of ruler and subject,” which fundamentally changed the study of *The Classic of Filial Piety* (Chen, 2012). Consequently, filial piety toward parents increasingly became a metaphor for loyalty to the ruler, and obedience, which originally belonged to political ethics, began to seep into the requirements of filial piety. This kind of filial piety that demands children obey parents was not limited to academic discussion but was implemented through a whole set of extremely unfair penal systems for children (Li, 2004; Ma, 2004). This social institutionalization of obedience cultivation had a great influence on the character of people in Chinese society. This study also confirmed that individuals with higher scores on the obeying parents dimension have more serious compliance tendencies and poorer interpersonal self-supporting personality, supporting the harmfulness of obedience-based filial piety. In contrast, individuals with higher scores on the remonstrating with parents dimension show the opposite pattern.

Third, different from *The Analects* and *Mencius*, *The Classic of Filial Piety* particularly highlights the emphasis on bringing glory to parents through achievements. This study also extracted this unique factor represented by chapters from *The Classic of Filial Piety* through empirical factor analysis. This orientation in discussing filial piety transforms filial piety from the practice of internal virtue into the pursuit of external achievements. Zhu Xi criticized *The Classic of Filial Piety* for “arousing people’s usurping and rebellious hearts” (Li, 1994). Zeng (2019) pointed out that *The Classic of Filial Piety*’s discussion of filial piety makes the evaluation of filial piety differ according to social status, which is why Zhu Xi criticized it as “harming principle.”

The above discussion focuses specifically on differences. The similarities in Confucian discussions of filial piety are obviously more numerous than the differences, such as the common affirmation of discussing filial piety through respect. Therefore, one cannot deny the positive contributions of these classical texts to academic discussion of filial piety based solely on their differences.

6.2 Changes in the Meaning of Filial Piety Across Ancient and Modern Times

Since there is no data from ancient times that matches contemporary data, there are many limitations to examining the issue of cultural-psychological changes across ancient and modern times using quantitative methods. This study balanced ancient and contemporary language resources in the scale compilation process, used contemporary individuals as participants to verify hypotheses summarized from ancient texts in the scale analysis process, and examined the extent to which each extracted factor conforms to contemporary views after scale compilation. This research approach is an attempt at studying cultural-psychological changes across ancient and modern times. From the factor analysis results, most latent variables are jointly predicted by items adapted from classical texts and items freely generated by participants, reflecting the continuity and consistency between ancient and modern discussions of filial piety. Among them, we are more concerned with those aspects that are not entirely consistent, mainly including the following four points.

First, the accompanying parents dimension is a latent variable completely predicted by items freely generated by contemporary participants. It may be spiritually connected with classical texts, but it is indeed difficult to find direct sources in the four classics selected for this study. This reflects not only changes in contemporary social mobility, family structure, and life pace, but also that contemporary individuals place more emphasis on practicing filial piety through spiritual companionship, emotional communication, and sharing daily life. Previous research has also listed spiritual communication and concern as prominent features of the transformation of contemporary elderly people's expectations for children's filial behavior (Yang, 2016).

Second, contemporary people do not highly endorse practicing filial piety through obeying parents and yearning for parents. This is consistent with findings from previous research (Chen & Qing, 2019; Fu et al., 2016). This change may have multiple causes. On the one hand, since the New Culture Movement, filial piety culture centered on patriarchal consciousness has been criticized, and the spirit of equality has become increasingly deeply rooted in people's hearts (Wu, 2001). For example, Lu Xun pointed out in "How We Should Be Fathers Now" that "children are people who are both me and not me, but since they have become independent, they are also people among humanity...Because they are not me, they should also be liberated at the same time, entirely owned by themselves, and become independent people" (Lu, 2015). On the other hand, as Fei (2012) pointed out in *Rural China*, ancient society changed little, and tradition was powerful, making parents' 教化 power more coercive. In modern society, change is extremely rapid, and people can no longer rely on accumulated ancient experience as guidance. When parents' experience is no longer reliable, the demand for obeying parents itself also decreases.

Third, although remonstrating with parents received high endorsement in Study 3, only 1 of the 337 descriptive statements generated by participants (0.03%) involved remonstrating with parents. It can be inferred that when people freely discuss filial piety without guidance, they still do not prioritize remonstrating with parents but are more likely to place obedience to parents first. In addition, the hypothesized “not violating principles” dimension (Hypothesis 1) in Study 1 was not extracted in factor analysis. These reflect that the influence of obedience-based filial piety remains deep in contemporary times.

Fourth, the hypothesized “continuing parents” dimension (Hypothesis 10) in Study 1 was not extracted in factor analysis, and in Study 3, the degree of endorsement for maintaining oneself without bringing shame to parents was not as high as for other factors. This may reflect changes in the concept of self between ancient and modern times. Contemporary individuals are less likely to view themselves as “parents’ remains” as *The Classic of Filial Piety* suggests, but rather view themselves as themselves and parents as parents. Study 2 also confirmed that individuals with higher scores on the maintaining oneself without shame dimension have more serious problems with lack of parent-child boundaries. In sharp contrast, parents have relatively high expectations for children to practice filial piety through maintaining oneself without bringing shame to them, possibly because parents are more likely to view children as part of themselves (while children are less likely to view themselves as part of their parents). Overall, the findings of this study provide some thought-provoking insights for research on parent-child relationships, family life, and interpersonal boundaries in Chinese culture, which await further confirmation and exploration in future research.

6.3 Limitations and Future Directions

Yang (2017) pointed out that filial piety profoundly shapes the basic character of Chinese people. In future cultural construction, filial piety will undoubtedly remain the core of constructing moral order, but what emotional foundation should be used to establish modern social ethical norms deserves careful consideration. Based on distinguishing different factors of filial piety, this study found different association patterns between different factors and parental rearing and children’s personality. In the future, we should further examine the associations between different factors of filial piety and antecedent variables such as growth environment, educational background, social roles, and community culture, as well as their different roles in personality development, adult attachment, family relationships, interpersonal boundaries, creativity and innovation ability, and social functioning, to avoid being vague and biased when criticizing or promoting filial piety and to enable the positive factors of filial piety to exert their positive value.

It should be noted that the nine-factor structure in this study does not include a factor of “supporting parents” or similar factors, which is consistent with previous results. Neither the four-factor models proposed by Yang (2004) nor

Fan et al. (2009) included such content in their scale items. This may be because this aspect is relatively basic and lacks discriminating power, failing to form a relatively independent factor. This issue awaits further in-depth examination in future research.

One limitation of this study is that it used classical texts to indirectly obtain information about ancient people's real lives, but classical texts likely contain some theorists' theoretical designs that cannot fully reflect the original appearance of ancient people's life world and do not completely correspond to content freely generated by contemporary participants. Of course, the theories in these classical materials are not completely separate from real behavior. They had profound influence in later generations, with many institutional implementations and folkloric sedimentations, becoming guidelines for people's life practices and can to some extent reflect the characteristics of ancient life practices. Later social governors promoted filial piety theories to become real behavioral guidelines through penal laws and judicial systems, commendation and reward of filial behavior, and selection of officials based on filial piety (Li, 2004; Ma, 2004). Many folk filial acts became legendary stories passed down through generations, children's 启蒙 readers also generally emphasized establishing oneself through filial piety, and ritual and music education based on filial piety 感化 continuously penetrated society, influencing people's social behavior (Wang, 2003). Nevertheless, the classical materials selected in this study may still confuse some differences between theory and reality and have certain differences from content freely generated by contemporary participants.

Additionally, this study has other limitations. This article defines filial piety as the proper way to treat parents, which is proposed according to its original meaning. However, in today's world of multicultural coexistence, it must be pointed out that different civilizational systems have different views on the proper way to treat parents, which are not necessarily included in the category of filial piety. Therefore, the specific connotation and factor structure of filial piety mainly reflect the cultural characteristics within the East Asian civilizational circle. Items adapted from classical texts only came from *The Analects*, *Mencius*, *The Classic of Filial Piety*, and *The Book of Rites*, and cannot fully reflect the understanding of filial piety by other Confucian scholars and other schools of thought. The study mainly used convenience sampling, which may have bias in sample selection.

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Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.

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