

Extensional Characteristics Study of Mental Cultivation

Authors: Zhang, Yingying, Huang, Shihua, Jiang, Yunyi, Huang, Shihua

Date: 2023-05-29T00:00:00+00:00

Abstract

Objective: To enhance understanding of spiritual cultivation levels among the Chinese population and lay the groundwork for developing a mental cultivation accomplishment scale, this study investigated the extended characteristics of spiritual cultivation through face-to-face and online voice interviews with experts in philosophy of mind and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) specializing in the Ming Dynasty period in the Lingnan region, utilizing a researcher-developed interview outline.

Methods: Eight experts on Ming Dynasty studies and TCM from the Lingnan region were recruited as consultation participants. Employing a researcher-developed interview outline, the study conducted both face-to-face interviews and online voice interviews to explore mental cultivation characteristics. The qualitative analysis software NVivo 20 was utilized to analyze the interview transcripts.

Full Text

Preamble

Yingying Zhang: Designed the research protocol, conducted experiments, and drafted the manuscript.

Shihua Huang: Proposed the research perspective that the extensional characteristics of mental cultivation can be divided into distinct dimensions and developed the methodology based on grounded theory.

Yunyi Jiang: Responsible for information collection and access.

Abstract

Objective: To strengthen the spiritual cultivation of the Chinese populace, this study investigated the extensional characteristics of mental cultivation through

semi-structured interviews and online voice interviews with experts in Ming-dynasty philosophy of mind and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) practitioners from the Lingnan region, laying preliminary groundwork for developing a mental cultivation assessment scale.

Methods: Eight experts (specialists in Ming-dynasty philosophy of mind and TCM from the Lingnan region) were recruited as consulting participants. Using a self-developed interview outline, both face-to-face and online voice interviews were conducted to explore the characteristics of mental cultivation. Interview transcripts were analyzed using NVivo 20 qualitative analysis software following grounded theory methodology through open coding, selective coding, and theoretical coding to identify the key extensional characteristics of mental cultivation.

Results: The study constructed a basic structural system comprising five progressive stages of mental cultivation: inner cultivation, reduced desire, firm will, virtue commitment, and true happiness. Analysis of cognitive differences across professional orientations revealed that TCM experts' interviews averaged 10.4 connections to selective codes, while philosophy of mind experts averaged 15.3 connections. The distribution of reference points across mental cultivation characteristics varied significantly by expertise. The most pronounced difference appeared in virtue commitment characteristics: TCM experts contributed 15.37% of reference points versus 84.63% from philosophy of mind experts. In terms of emotional tone, neutral sentiment dominated the five-stage coding framework, accounting for 67.1% overall, with each node exceeding 60% neutrality—virtue commitment showed the highest proportion at 79.5%. Positive and negative emotional tones showed similar overall proportions at 12.4% and 11.7% respectively, while mixed tones comprised 8.9%.

Limitations: Research on mental cultivation remains limited, resulting in an insufficiently solid theoretical foundation. Potential interpretive bias may have occurred during secondary analysis of the eight experts' interview content. The conceptual definition of mental cultivation draws primarily from Ming-dynasty philosophy of mind and TCM theory, potentially constraining future research directions to these two domains.

Conclusion: The five stages of inner cultivation, reduced desire, firm will, virtue commitment, and true happiness generally follow a sequential progression while exhibiting internal crossovers and mutual influences.

Keywords: Physical and mental cultivation; Qualitative research; Interview; Psychology of TCM; Philosophy of mind

1 Introduction

The philosophy of mind and nature represents a crucial concept in philosophical inquiry (Hu, 1993), examining moral practice from the perspective of inner consciousness (Mou, 2005). It fundamentally addresses the basic principles of

human existence. Rich perspectives on mind studies appear across the philosophical traditions of various cultures, including Western existential philosophy, Christian theology, and other religious philosophical thoughts. Within the field of ancient Chinese life philosophy, viewpoints related to the theory of mind and nature are extensively distributed across Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism, as well as within TCM philosophy. Traditional Chinese philosophy discusses the mind primarily from the perspective of its transcendence and spiritual development (Gao, 2015). Following the Tang and Song dynasties, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism emerged concurrently and gradually demonstrated a trend toward tripartite integration (Liu, 1996). Buddhism shifted from Chan revolution toward comprehensive truth, Taoism transformed, and Confucianism underwent significant change with Wang Yangming, yet the central focus remained the concept of “mind.” The three traditions intersect in meaning and principle, sharing a common centripetal orientation. Confucian theories of good and evil, Buddhist theories of purity, Taoist theories of movement and stillness, and TCM’s perspective on the relationship between heaven and humanity differ in their specifics. However, grasping their shared purpose reveals that all ultimately return to the mind (Bai, 2014). Simultaneously, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism all address the transcendental mind from a metaphysical perspective rather than discussing the Dao as external to the self. They do not regard the Dao as independent of the human heart but rather view the human heart as connected with Heaven, with Heaven existing inherently within people and within the heart. TCM’s concept of harmony between humanity and nature similarly pursues harmonious unity between individuals and both the natural and social environment. To realize existential freedom, one must cultivate virtue, respect life, take initiative, and emulate the nature of heaven and earth—that is, employ the individual’s creative practical activities to understand the cultivation of heaven and earth, allowing one’s cultivation to resonate with universal principles. Through empathic connection of the heart, one may reach the realm of unity between self and objects, thereby elevating the transcendence of individual spiritual capacity.

TCM philosophy is grounded in the *Huangdi Neijing*, the foremost of TCM’s four classic texts. Its concepts of the integration between humanity and nature and the unity of form and spirit constitute the main tenets of ancient Chinese life philosophy. Despite limitations imposed by natural environmental conditions, embryonic requirements for mental cultivation are evident. The *Neijing Suwen Baoming Xinglun* states: “After heaven and earth, all things are prepared, none more valuable than humanity. Humans are born with the spirit of heaven and earth, and achieve the law of the four seasons.” From monarch to commoner, all wish to preserve bodily health. Here, health represents a perfect state of body and mind, dependent on the qi of heaven and earth and the essence of grains and water, living according to the four seasons’ cycles of growth and collection to achieve the realm of harmony between humanity and nature.

Confucianism holds that moral behavior is grounded in mental cultivation, emphasizing its importance in moral development (Wen, 2012). When Confucian-

ism evolved to the Ming-dynasty stage of philosophy of mind, its moral foundation shifted from the transcendental moral laws of the Song dynasty back to inner experience. Through the Ming-dynasty philosophy of mind's critical perspective on Song Neo-Confucianism and its anti-external authority stance grounded in Confucian values, intellectual resources for constructing new ritual law were explored (Yang, 2015). This transformed the source of human value from Zhu Xi's "nature is reason" to "mind is reason," enabling people to grasp their own values based on their own mind rather than external rational laws, thereby emphasizing and promoting human subjective status. This aligns with the modern spirit of human-centeredness and necessitates emphasizing subjective will in mental cultivation.

Therefore, this study examines mental cultivation based on Ming-dynasty Confucianism and the TCM classic *Huangdi Neijing*, which contains not only the connotation of mental cultivation but also specific requirements and forms of expression in the cultivation process, enabling a relatively comprehensive summary of mental cultivation characteristics. To shape the mental cultivation of a new generation and elevate personality self-realization, we must emphasize humanistic spirit cultivation, vigorously develop research and education in spiritual cultivation, and regard it as a crucial topic in ideological education throughout the long modernization process (Chen, 1994). China is currently undergoing social transformation, with profound changes occurring in moral concepts, including moral vacuum, confusion, pluralism, and suspension (Zhu, 2010).

To consolidate the level of mental cultivation among Chinese people, this study employed a self-developed interview outline to investigate the extensional characteristics of mental cultivation through interviews and online voice interviews with Ming-dynasty philosophy of mind and TCM experts from the Lingnan region, making preliminary preparations for developing a mental cultivation assessment scale.

2.1 Objective

To strengthen the spiritual cultivation level of Chinese people, experts in Ming-dynasty philosophy of mind and TCM from the Lingnan region were interviewed using a self-developed interview outline to investigate the extensional characteristics of spiritual cultivation through both in-person and online voice interviews, preparing for the subsequent development of a mental cultivation accomplishment scale.

2.2 Interviewee Inclusion Criteria

Based on grounded theory and according to research objectives and content, experts from two research directions—philosophy of mind and TCM—were selected as consulting participants. Selection criteria included: (1) Major in psychology or Chinese philosophy with at least 10 years of relevant research ex-

perience, OR major in Chinese medicine or psychosomatic medicine with TCM practitioner qualification and at least 5 years of clinical experience; (2) Doctoral degree or professional title of associate professor (or deputy chief physician) or above; (3) Understanding of the study's purpose with active cooperation and ability to complete the interview fully.

2.3 Time and Form of Interview

From September 2022 to March 2023, interviews were conducted in two formats: face-to-face interviews and WeChat voice communication. Each interview lasted no less than 30 minutes.

2.3 Interview Outline

The interview objectives were explained to participants, and informed consent was obtained. The conceptual definition of mental cultivation was introduced. The interview outline comprised three questions: First, experts were asked about mental cultivation and related terminology. Second, experts were requested to summarize characteristics and daily specific behaviors of individuals with high-level mental cultivation. Finally, experts were asked about mental cultivation in their own lives.

2.4 Analysis Tool

The study utilized NVivo 20 qualitative analysis software to analyze interview transcripts.

3 Results

3.1 Interviewee Characteristics

A total of 8 experts completed interviews (4 male, 4 female). Experts ranged in age from 33 to 83 years (mean = 54.3 years). Four experts specialized in psychology and Chinese philosophy, while four specialized in TCM and psychosomatic medicine. Interview duration ranged from 30 to 60 minutes (mean = 46 minutes 17 seconds). Three interviews were conducted face-to-face and five via WeChat voice communication.

3.2 Extensional Characteristics of Mental Cultivation

Based on expert interviews and preliminary research on conceptual similarities between the *Neijing* and Ming-dynasty philosophy of mind, mental cultivation characteristics were summarized across five stages: inner cultivation, reduced desire, firm will, virtue commitment, and true happiness. Each stage possesses distinct features. Following the research process from open coding through selective coding to theoretical coding, a basic structural system of mental cultivation

characteristics was constructed. The five stages progress sequentially while also intersecting, influencing, and mutually reinforcing one another.

Inner cultivation refers to taking inner experience as the foundation of spiritual cultivation, emphasizing the importance of internal experience and shifting focus from the external world to one's own mind. It encompasses three aspects: self-examination, enriching knowledge through self-experience, and enhancing self-awareness.

Reduced desire involves, after attending to inner experience, beginning to relinquish pursuit of external things and gradually diminishing incessant worldly demands. Rather than completely eliminating desire, this involves removing unreasonable attachments and clarifying the mind—a state of inner simplicity that includes reasonable desire expression, indifference to fame and fortune, and simple living.

Firm will denotes a state of inner stability undisturbed by external matters, free from anxiety or fear after examining selfish desires. It emphasizes the importance of the present moment, nourishing feelings, and maintaining composure.

Following firm will, **virtue commitment** enters the stage of establishing morality, consistently acting with benevolence. High-level mental cultivation requires virtues such as benevolence and kindness, justice, courtesy and honesty, responsibility, high aspiration, unity of knowledge and action, and achieving conscience.

After traversing and mutually influencing these stages, virtue becomes established and culminates in the realm of **true happiness**—a happiness spontaneously generated from internal emotions arising from the establishment of moral personality. In this state, the mind is free and has its own place, manifesting as helping pleasure, aesthetic pleasure, ordinary pleasure, or self-derived pleasure. Detailed characteristics are presented in Table 1 .

3.3 Cognitive Differences Across Professional Directions

To explore cognitive differences between professional orientations regarding mental cultivation's extensional characteristics, interview transcripts were classified by expertise: TCM experts' manuscripts were coded with "Z" and philosophy of mind experts' with "X." These were grouped into TCM and philosophy of mind categories respectively. Eight interview cases were combined with 20 selective coding nodes, and relationships between reference points and selective coding were examined for each expert (see connection diagram in Figure 1 [Figure 1: see original paper]). TCM experts averaged 10.4 connections to selective codes, while philosophy of mind experts averaged 15.3. Open codes were evenly distributed across the 20 optional codes overall.

To further explore cognitive differences, matrix coding queries were conducted using attribute classification and theoretical coding nodes. The coding intersections between mental cultivation extensional characteristics and professional

directions were examined, and a radar map of cognitive differences was constructed based on theoretical coding ratios across professional directions (Figure 2 [Figure 2: see original paper]). TCM experts' reference points concentrated primarily in firm will, reduced desire, and true happiness characteristics, while philosophy of mind experts' reference points concentrated in virtue commitment and inner cultivation. The most significant difference appeared in virtue commitment distribution: TCM experts contributed 15.37% versus 84.63% from philosophy of mind experts, followed by firm will (TCM: 15.38%; Philosophy: 84.62%).

3.4 Emotional Tone Analysis of Mental Cultivation

The five core nodes in the mental cultivation extensional structure were auto-coded for emotional tone: positive nodes assigned green, negative red, mixed orange, and neutral gray. Neutral tone dominated the five-stage coding framework, comprising 67.1% overall, with each node exceeding 60% neutrality—virtue commitment showed the highest proportion at 79.5%. Positive and negative emotional tones showed similar overall proportions (12.4% and 11.7% respectively), while mixed tones accounted for 8.9%.

Several extreme distributions appeared within nodes: inner cultivation contained only 3.3% negative tone reference points, with support primarily neutral and positive. Negative reference points mainly involved self-examination and self-criticism (e.g., “I examine myself three times daily”; “Matters not criticized, reflected upon, or considered are not worth pursuing”). The virtue commitment node contained 4.8% mixed tone reference points, with relatively few mixed tones for morality-related emotional coding—most showed clear positive/negative tendencies or neutral views. Mixed tone reference points often contained both positive and negative perspectives (e.g., “People’s benevolence is lost. Without benevolence, the world falls into chaos, but people should possess benevolence and care for one another”). The reduced desire node showed 6.3% positive tone reference points, with desire restraint descriptions primarily neutral or negative, while positive examples drew from sages and great figures or emphasized indifference to fame and fortune (e.g., “Mencius said that people like Shun rise at cock’s crow to tirelessly do good deeds. When the rooster crows, we rise and clean the courtyard—diligent and kind, thus we too can become sages”) (Figure 3 [Figure 3: see original paper]).

4.1 The Development of Mental Cultivation

Mind-nature studies are primarily discussed within the framework of traditional Chinese philosophy, with Confucian perspectives on mind and nature as the mainstream (Wang, 2006). The theory of mind and nature constitutes the most fundamental core of Confucianism, with other Confucian aspects representing its development and extension. Through Confucius and Mencius’s founding contributions and subsequent enrichment by scholars across dynasties, Confucianism evolved into a vast ideological system concerned with life happiness

and social harmony. The basic categories of Confucian mind-nature theory are the concepts of mind and nature, with exploration beginning with Confucius (Huang, 2009). In the *Analects* (Yang Huo), Confucius stated: “Similar by nature, divergent through practice,” initially touching upon fundamental mind-related problems without full elaboration. Confucius’s focus centered on loyalty, forgiveness, and harmony with heaven and earth—the former affirming self-mind, the latter correcting it. Mencius’s theory of mind, particularly the good nature theory, represents significant recognition of human nature, advocating understanding one’s mind through psychological experience. Mencius stated: “Preserve the heart, nurture the nature, and serve Heaven,” emphasizing self-knowledge, self-consciousness, self-caution, introspection, recognizing mind-heaven unity, realizing heavenly principles through human nature, and comprehending universal principles through observing the original mind. Mencius advocated that spiritual realm and natural world could be integrated through self-cultivation from inner to outer. He systematically detailed the theory of mind and nature, opening a new stage in Confucian mind-nature thought.

When Confucianism developed to the Song-Ming Neo-Confucianism stage, the theory of mind and nature absorbed numerous Daoist and Buddhist mind-centered thoughts from Laozi, such as “Dao follows nature” and “non-action leads to self-improvement,” moving toward constructing Confucian cosmic and spiritual ontology. At this point, the theory integrated moral mind ontology with nature theory (Zhang, 1998). Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi proposed that “nature means justice” and “the mind is the god of humans, possessing all reasons for all things,” thus distinguishing “mind” from “nature.” When Confucianism evolved to Ming-dynasty philosophy of mind, Lu Jiuyuan advocated “mind is reason,” viewing “mind” and “nature” as identical. Wang Yangming provided concrete explication of mind-nature, establishing a systematic monistic system, proposing new viewpoints on unity of knowledge and action and innate knowledge, and elevating mind-body theory to cosmic ontology height, reaching the peak of ancient Chinese mind-nature theory. He identified the heart as the body’s master, with everyone possessing innate conscience—conscience being the mind, whose master is justice and nature. Yangming believed “the heart is not merely flesh and blood,” referring on one hand to a perceptual heart encompassing perception, thought, emotion, and intention (Yang, 1996), and on the other hand to moral conscience including good-evil value orientation (Duan, 1997). “Cultivation” refers to developing noble qualities, correct life attitudes, or perfect behavioral codes. In *Shuowen Jiezi Zhu*, “Xiu” (cultivate) extends to mean “removing its dirt to repair” (Chen, 2015). Confucian mind-nature cultivation formation and development roughly underwent three stages: the ideological foundation of Confucius, Mencius, Xunzi, and the *Book of Rites*; inheritance and dissemination by Han and Tang dynasty scholars; and theoretical refinement during the Song and Ming dynasties.

Unlike Daoism and Buddhism, Confucianism emphasizes both “mind” and “achievement,” both “inner sagehood” (mental cultivation) and “outer kingship” (political achievement). The Confucian theory of mind cultivation

exhibits idealistic tendencies exaggerating spiritual function, warranting exposure and critique of this theoretical deviation. However, it also develops positive self-awareness aspects—guiding people to actively address external influences in moral and spiritual life while emphasizing correct conceptual and moral influences, with focused attention on spiritual cultivation as the most concentrated expression of moral self-discipline and consciousness.

4.2 The Connotation Definition of Mental Cultivation

Based on Ming-dynasty Confucianism and the classic *Huangdi Neijing*, this study defines mental cultivation as follows: “Mental cultivation” refers to a psychological state wherein an individual’s spirit, consciousness, thinking, emotional activities, and morality undergo developmental processes through continuous discovery of inner thoughts, introspection, and ongoing transformation of moral behavior. “Mind” combines mind and nature as categorical concepts—mind as thought, nature as human nature, with mind representing the inner spiritual quality formed through integration of spirit, consciousness, emotion, thinking, and morality. “Self-cultivation” refers to the process of cultivating moral quality or perfecting behavioral norms; “cultivation” denotes self-recovery and perfection through rectification; and “nurturing” signifies nourishing body and mind through education and training to foster growth.

Ming-dynasty philosophy of mind began with Chen Baisha’s establishment of Baisha Mind Theory. After his disciple Zhan Ganquan’s perfection and development, it became known as Ganquan’s mind theory, profoundly influencing Wang Yangming. Wang Yangming’s synthesis of Lu Jiuyuan’s and Chen-Zhan’s mind theories formed Yangming Mind Theory. Ming-dynasty mind theory development roughly divided into three stages: from Baisha to Ganquan to Yangming, forming two academic pearls—Chen-Zhan’s and Yangming’s mind theories—closely interconnected.

Chen-Zhan’s mind theory holds that “mind” is the noumenon, giving the concept clear meaning of “integration into one” (Huang, 2018), emphasizing that ontological heart and ethical heart are two sides of a whole. The ontological heart rests on the universe as a whole, while the ethical heart focuses on individual subjective cognitive capacity, developing the ideal state of self-cultivation to reassure others. What is experienced in this process is the projection of ethical feelings, further sublimated to morality’s highest level—the aesthetic realm of supra-morality (Huang, 2019). Zhan Ganquan’s theory of “recognizing natural principles everywhere” more completely and accurately expresses Baisha’s self-cultivation method. Self-cultivation is not limited by time, space, or dynamic/static modes—“meditation” is merely one approach. Thus he proposed “recognizing everywhere” to perfect Baisha’s “meditation” theory, believing that “so-called people who know natural principles everywhere, with hair not yet sent, with static follow-up” (Huang, 2015). Essentially, this concept represents a self-cultivation process of continuously discovering, self-cultivating, observing, and introspecting everything.

Wang Yangming's mind theory originated from Lu Jiuyuan, holding that "mind" is the origin of all things and advocating the "innate knowledge" theory. In *Chuanxi Lu*, he stated: "If you want to cultivate yourself, you should cultivate your mind first." "Mind" is the origin of all things and the master that restricts all things. This master is justice and nature, identical to the "mind" and "nature" in Lu Jiuyuan's theory. Yangming also relocated Zhu Xi's "Heavenly Principle" into people's minds, existing within human consciousness, thus making "human mind" equivalent to "Heavenly Principle" and fully affirming human subjective consciousness. This parallels *Huangdi Neijing's* full affirmation of human value, which emphasizes human life's positivity—for example: "Everything between heaven and earth is available, but nothing is more precious than people." The "mind" Yangming refers to encompasses both perceptual heart (including perception, thinking, emotion, will) and moral conscience (including good-evil value orientation), sharing common ground with the narrow sense of spirit, where mind governs consciousness—a generalized spirit dominating human life activities and their external manifestations, as well as the spirit, consciousness, thinking, and emotional activities of the master.

Therefore, "mind" represents the inner spiritual quality formed through combining spirit, consciousness, thinking, emotional activities, and morality. Consequently, "mental cultivation" connotes a psychological state wherein one's spirit, consciousness, thinking, emotional activities, and morality experience developmental processes of continuously discovering inner thoughts, introspection, observation, and transforming moral behavior.

4.3 The Extended Definition of Mental Cultivation

The five-stage sequence of mental cultivation generally follows a gradual progression. **Inner cultivation** involves taking inner experience as the starting point, emphasizing its importance, and shifting focus from external world to one's own mind, encompassing self-examination, enriching knowledge through self-experience, and enhancing self-awareness. **Reduced desire** means that after attending to inner experience, one begins relinquishing pursuit of external things, gradually diminishing incessant worldly demands. Rather than completely eliminating desire, this involves removing unreasonable attachments and clarifying the mind—a state of inner simplicity including reasonable desire expression, indifference to fame and fortune, and simple living. **Firm will** refers to inner stability undisturbed by external matters, free from anxiety or fear after examining selfish desires, emphasizing presence, nourishing feelings, and composure. Following firm will, **virtue commitment** enters the stage of establishing morality, consistently acting with benevolence. High-level mental cultivation requires virtues such as benevolence and kindness, justice, courtesy and honesty, responsibility, high aspiration, unity of knowledge and action, and achieving conscience. After development through the first three stages, virtue becomes established and culminates in **true happiness**—happiness spontaneously generated from internal emotions through establishment of moral personality,

wherein the mind is free and has its own place, manifesting as helping pleasure, aesthetic pleasure, ordinary pleasure, or self-derived pleasure (Figure 4 [Figure 4: see original paper]).

Conclusion

The five stages of mental cultivation—inner cultivation, reduced desire, firm will, virtue commitment, and true happiness—generally follow a sequential progression while exhibiting internal crossovers and mutual influences. Inner cultivation, reduced desire, and firm will impact virtue commitment development, while true happiness formation is influenced by all four preceding stages and can reciprocally affect psychological cultivation characteristics at each stage.

References

- Hu Weixi. Definition, historical development and prospect of Confucian ‘the study of mind’ [J]. *Confucius Studies*, 1993(03):22-24.
- Mou Zongsan. The knowledge of life [M]. Guilin: Guangxi Normal University Press, Gao Yuanyuan and China’s traditional theory and process of mind. 2015 (04): 50-54+82.
- Liu Xuezhong. Theory of Mind and Nature: the trend of the integration of the three religions — Also talking about the theory of mind and contemporary ethical practice [J]. *Humanities Journal*, 1996(02):58-62.
- Bai Yukai. Knowing the sky with all his heart — from Mencius’ theory of mind and nature.
- Wen Keqin. On the Confucian Theory of Mind Cultivation [J]. *Morality and Civilization*, 2012 (05): 49-54. DOI: 10.13904/j.cnki.1007-1539.2012.05.014.
- Yang Wanjiang. Confucian Mind. 2015(03):285-293. Chen Lisi. Mind cultivation — an important topic of ideological education in the process of modernization [J]. *China Youth Studies*, 1994(03):58-62.
- Zhu Hong. Confucian Mind Theory and Contemporary Ethical Practice [J]. *Journal of Shaanxi Administration College*, 2010.01.001.
- Wang Ying. Research on Confucian Psychology of Mind [D]. Jilin University, 2006.
- Huang Cheng. The system structure and thought development of Confucian ‘Theory of Mind and Nature’ [J]. *Jiangxi Social Sciences*, 2009(06):62-65.
- Zhang Maoze. The Meaning of Mind — Comment on Cai Fanglu’s Theory of Mind in Song and Ming Dynasties [J]. *Chinese Culture Forum*, 1998(01):125-126.
- Yang Guorong. Wang Yangming and the Differentiation of Mind [J]. *Confucius Studies*, 1996(02):49-56.

Hu Linying. On Wang Yangming's Moral Internalization Thought [J]. Academic Journal, 2003(02):144-146.

Duan Yucai. Explaining Chinese Characters [M]. Shanghai: Shanghai Ancient Books Publishing House, 1997.

Chen Jianhua, Cao Chunliang. Guangzhou Grand Ceremony: Volume 422 [M].

Guangzhou: Guangzhou Publishing House, 2015. Huang Mingxi. An analysis of the theoretical characteristics of Chen Zhan's school of mind education [J]. Journal of Shangrao Teachers College, 2018,38(05):32-40.

Huang Mingtong. Mind Studies in Ming Dynasty: Baisha-Ganquan-Yangming — On the Development Process of Mind Studies in Ming Dynasty [J]. China Philosophy History, 2019(01):87-93.

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

Source: ChinaXiv — Machine translation. Verify with original.