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## **Exploring the intrinsic influence of Confucianism on Chinese women's agency: a Malaysian perspective**

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### **Abstract**

This explorative study examines how three salient Confucian principles influence Chinese women's agency in fulfilling multiple roles, forming an interdependent and independent self-construal simultaneously. The feelings, behaviour and attitude of a specific demographic as a result of their identity and roles are explored through the researcher's own interpretive lens based on her personal ethnographic position. The visual metaphoric technique of Zaltman Metaphorical Elicitation Technique (ZMET) adopted in the current study explores the innate influence of salient Confucian principles of filial piety towards one's parents, the need to fulfil obligations to others and the preservation of harmony within relationships and self.

Findings suggests that four (4) drivers motivate their agency: personal expectations of self, the emotional bonds within significant relationships tied to others; women's personal motivations as well as their personal aspirations. The interconnectivity of these drivers reflects the interdependent nature of self with one's surrounding influences and suggests that individuals are innately connected socially and within multiple relationships with others.

This reflexive exercise embodies an ethnographic exploration of identity and values by comparing the parallel experiences, thoughts, feelings and values between researcher and participants. Hence, the study provides a micro level perspective on how roles are intrinsically informed by Chinese women's self-construal that embodies the associated values and beliefs that are intrinsically Chinese and gendered.

**Keywords:** agency, ethnographic, reflexive, self-construal, ZMET