

## **Taoist Ecological Ethics and Natural Expression in Arts and Crafts: A Dialogue in Modern Contexts**

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**Abstract:** In the modern context, this paper expresses the Taoist ecological ethics and the natural expression of arts and crafts, and summarizes the existence of a strong role relationship between the two. In order to verify its research viewpoints, the corresponding research program is formulated, which first sets the explanatory variables and the interpreted variables, and then determines the quantitative data sources of each variable and the data analysis methods. After completing a series of research preparations, it was analyzed empirically. It is found that the mean value of the questionnaire data for each variable is greater than 3, that is, the data are in the upper middle level. The variables passed the normal distribution test and correlation verification, confirming that the variables set met the requirements of the study. When the quantitative value of the concept of nature in Taoist eco-ethics changes, the quantitative value of arts and crafts also changes, revealing the influence of Taoist eco-ethics on arts and crafts in the modern context.

**Keywords:** Taoist Eco-Ethics, Arts and Crafts, Nature Expression, Modern Context.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The ideological root of the core value system of Chinese culture is the philosophical thought of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism as a trinity, and from the perspective of culture and art, its fundamental pursuit is the spirit of writing (Alam, 2023). This is the key to grasp the vital importance of Chinese culture and art, which is the most fundamental principle, purpose, and the highest principle and goal of Chinese culture and art (Chen et al., 2018; Chunyuan, 2020). Taking Taoist philosophical thinking as an example, Laozi, as the founder of the Taoist school, put forward a system of thought with “Tao” as the core. Since its birth, its influence has far exceeded the scope of China, and its classic works, Tao Te Ching, I Ching, and Hua Nan Jing, have become one of the most important philosophical works in the world that influence the process of human civilization (Hinton, 2020; Wang & Wang, 2021; Wang et al., 2024; You et al., 2018). Taoist philosophical thought has been deeply rooted in the mind

of every Chinese and plays an important role in the field of traditional Chinese culture (Weiming, 2017; Zhao, 2024). This system of thought not only shone brightly in the art field from the Warring States period to the Qin-Han period, forming an artistic style with the characteristics of the times (Li, 2020). In addition, the profound and simple concepts such as “Taoism follows nature” had a profound influence on the creation of themes, aesthetic orientation, and ideological state of mind of Chinese art works, which made Chinese arts and crafts works form a unique appearance that distinguishes them from the national arts of other countries (Cao & Kong, 2014; Hung & Yeh, 2013; Tian & Zhang, 2022; Wang & Chen, 2021). Starting from the definition of Taoist eco-ethics and arts and crafts, the article conducts an in-depth exploration of Taoist eco-ethics and the natural expression of arts and crafts in the modern context, and finds that there exists a strong influence relationship between the two. In order to verify the theoretical analysis of the above viewpoints, a targeted research program is designed, in which the concept of nature, values, ethical norms, environmental protection awareness, and cross-cultural communication in Taoist eco-ethics are taken as the explanatory variables, while arts and crafts are the explanatory variables. Combining the existing References with the views of experts in related fields, the design of the questionnaire was completed, and the questionnaire was distributed in online forms such as QQ space, circle of friends, and microblogging to obtain the quantitative data of each variable. Descriptive statistical analysis of the research data obtained to understand the distribution of quantitative values of the variables, followed by testing whether the variables meet the correlation and normal distribution, and finally exploring the role of the relationship between the two using multiple linear regression.

## 2. EXPLORATION OF TAOIST ECOLOGICAL ETHICS AND THE EXPRESSION OF ARTS AND CRAFTS

### 2.1 Interpretation of Taoist Ecological Ethics

Taoist thought can be regarded as one of the treasures of traditional culture, and together with Confucianism, it constitutes a central pillar of traditional culture. Taoist thought has its specific social background and content, and the rich ecological and ethical thoughts it contains are still of great practical value.

#### 2.1.1 The Concept of Taoist Ecological Ethics

Ecological ethics refers to a set of moral norms developed by human

beings to deal with their relationship with the ecological environment. Such as how human beings deal with their relationship with animals, plants, nature, etc (Bielčík et al., 2024; Blank & Mesgaran, 2024; Lintern et al., 2025). In short, ecological ethics is a series of ethical relationships and their regulating principles formed by people in carrying out activities related to natural ecology, which is to bring nature into the vision of human moral care, so that nature and human beings want to enjoy the same ethical rights and status. Ecological ethics no longer emphasizes only the ethical center of nature, it emphasizes more on the holistic ethics of human nature, i.e., human beings should respect all existences and evolve in synergy with nature. "Ecological ethics tries to interpret the relationship between man and nature from the worldview and methodology level of philosophy, extrapolates the object and subject of ethics to nature, gives nature an ethical value, and reveals the value significance of the relationship between man and nature." With a new ecological philosophical way of thinking, it re-adjusts human behavioral patterns and practical activities, and promotes the coordination and balance of human behavioral norms and values with the environmental system, so that human beings can develop harmoniously and have a virtuous cycle in the unified system of "ecology-society-economy".

### 2.1.2 Content and Core of Ecoethics

The content of eco-ethics includes all ethical aspects of human activities in nature and ecology. For example, the protection of ecological balance and biodiversity, the rational utilization of natural resources, the rational guidance of ecological activities, the scientific decision-making on natural ecological activities, and the moral quality and responsibility of people to protect plants and animals. In today's increasingly serious ecological crisis, eco-ethics is facing two urgent and complex practical problems: that is, the need to deal with the interests of the present and future generations; and the need to fairly distribute and harmonize the responsibilities and obligations of developing and developed countries in ecological protection. The core of ecological ethics is to protect natural resources and realize ecological balance. In recent years, due to the development of high industrialization, in order to seek more material wealth, people have been asking for resources and energy from nature without scales; destroying the natural environment, resulting in the scarcity of resources, environmental deterioration, endangered biodiversity, and serious air and water pollution, etc. In the end, people's actions have been violated by nature. In the end, people's behavior has been retaliated by nature: global greenhouse effect,

frequent earthquakes, droughts, floods, storms and so on. Human beings have tasted their own bad consequences, and have begun to reflect on their own behavior, and have deeply realized how important it is to maintain and promote the integrity and stability of the ecosystem, which is also the obligation of human beings, and is the core connotation of eco-ethics. It can be said that ecological ethics is closely related to the future survival of mankind.

### 2.1.3 Natural Manifestations of Taoist Ecological Ethics

Taoist eco-ethics advocates that human beings should respect nature, act according to the laws of nature, and pursue the harmonious development of human beings and nature, the essence of which is “Taoism is the law of nature”. Taoist thought clearly defines the importance of “nature” and calls on human beings to identify the laws of their own existence and development from the laws of nature. Since the Industrial Revolution, mankind has utilized advanced high technology to create unprecedented material wealth, but it has also wantonly plundered nature, damaged the natural environment, and led to an imbalance between mankind and nature, resulting in the current ecological crisis. Taoism “know always know and”, “heaven and man are one”, “the law of nature” and other eco-ethical ideas inspire today's mankind, man and nature is a harmonious and unified whole, the survival of mankind Human survival cannot be separated from the foundation of the natural environment, and it is impossible for human beings to transcend nature and stray from it; it is suggested that human beings should carry out their natural activities in accordance with their own laws, and should not pursue their own material wealth without any limitations, while neglecting the capacity of nature. “Human beings should absorb the lessons and learn the principles of Taoism and nature and doing nothing, and in the process of social development and the utilization and transformation of nature, exert themselves in accordance with the laws of nature, choosing modes of production and ways of life that are consistent with the laws of the ecological environment and the nature of nature.” Eliminate anthropocentrism since the industrial revolution, respect the natural order and follow objective laws, thus returning to a state of harmony between human beings and nature. Human action should try to preserve the harmony of life. It is conducive to fostering compassion for all things, shaping the concept of humanistic care, maintaining ecological balance, and viewing the protection of all things natural as a moral responsibility of humankind. Respecting all things natural, protecting the natural environment and caring for all things in production and life is

conducive to bringing mankind back to the time when it was friends with all things natural, thus achieving a balance in the natural ecology.

## 2.2 Interpretation of Arts and Crafts

### 2.2.1 Connotation of Arts and Crafts

Arts and crafts can be said to be the crystallization of the wisdom of the working people, and its origin can be traced back to the period when human beings initially made tools, which is a product that came into being in order to meet the needs of people's daily production and life (Newisar et al., 2024). With the development and change of the times, the connotation of arts and crafts in different historical periods showed different characteristics, now mainly refers to the modern social life mainly using traditional production methods for processing and production of handicrafts, is the use of various types of materials in different historical times through the processing of artificial artifacts created by the craft and the production technology in a nutshell. The development of science and technology has given arts and crafts more new forms of presentation, but the uniqueness of arts and crafts lies in the fact that its cumbersome production process is difficult to be replaced by modern production machines, and its greatest value lies in the artisan's heart and special artistic effect presented by handmade production, and it often shows strong regional characteristics, and it is an important carrier for the dissemination of local culture and customs. The regional characteristics of arts and crafts are also a reflection of local cultural traditions and aesthetic interests, conveying the inheritance of traditional culture and development trends. According to research, there are historical materials show that in the ancient ice age people learned to symbols and objects through the shape of certain processing, become jewelry can play a good decorative effect, which also became the initial development of arts and crafts, through the ancients on the continuous pursuit of artistic beauty, gradually accumulated and developed a variety of production techniques, to create the conditions for the development of the arts and crafts, after a long time precipitation of gradual iteration, the development of today's rich arts and crafts, and the development of the arts and crafts. After a long period of precipitation and gradual iteration, the richness of today's arts and crafts has been developed.

### 2.2.2 Natural Expressions of Arts and Crafts

In the process of innovation and development of arts and crafts, the ancient traditional art elements are revitalized, so that the most simple and

primitive aesthetic spirit and historical meaning of the working people can be released, realizing the continuation of the development of ancient skills in the new era, which brings about the natural expression of far-reaching significance, and brings infinite possibilities for arts and crafts to obtain a long and prosperous vitality. The natural expressions of arts and crafts are as follows:

(1) Selection of materials: Arts and crafts works often use natural materials, such as wood, stone, ceramics, etc. The natural examples and colors of these materials are themselves a manifestation of natural beauty.

(2) Modeling design: The styling design of arts and crafts works often imitates the mentality of nature, such as plants, landscapes, etc., and this way of design embodies human's reverence and praise for nature.

(3) Craft Technique: The production process of arts and crafts works often adopts traditional handcraft techniques, such as carving, painting, weaving, etc., which are in themselves a kind of respect and inheritance for nature.

### 2.3 Dialogue between the Two in a Modern Context

(1) Enhancement of environmental protection consciousness: In modern society, people are becoming more and more aware of environmental protection, which is in line with the concept of ecological ethics of the family. As an art form, arts and crafts can arouse people's environmental awareness through its natural expression.

(2) Combination of tradition and modernity: In the modern context, we can combine the ecological ethics of the family with the natural expression of arts and crafts to create works with traditional flavor and modern aesthetics. For example, modern technology can be utilized to combine traditional crafts with modern design to create new and unique arts and crafts works.

(3) Cross-cultural exchanges: In the context of globalization, we are spreading the ecological ethics of the home and the natural expressions of arts and crafts around the world, and engaging in exchanges and dialogues with other cultures. This helps to enhance people's understanding and recognition of traditional Chinese culture and promote the development of cultural diversity in the world. In conclusion, there is a close connection between Taoist ecological theory and the natural expression of arts and crafts. In the modern context, we can realize the dialogue between the two by enhancing environmental awareness, combining tradition and modernity, and cross-cultural communication. This not only helps to promote traditional Chinese culture, but also helps to promote the

development of modern ecological ethics.

### 3. STUDY DESIGN

Based on the above subsection 2.3, the connection between home ecological ethics and arts and crafts can be known, in order to further reveal the relationship and connection between the two, this chapter will develop a targeted research program to verify the impact relationship between the two roles. The detailed research design is as follows:

#### 3.1 Variable Design

##### 3.1.1 Explanatory Variables: Taoist Ecological Ethics

Taoist eco-ethics is a philosophical thought based on “Taoism is based on nature” and “doing nothing but ruling” which emphasizes the harmonious coexistence of man and nature. The setting of explanatory variables is an important part of the research process, which determines the depth and breadth of the study. Under the guidance of the definition of Taoist eco-ethics, the concept of nature, values, ethical norms, environmental awareness, and cross-cultural communication are selected as explanatory variables.

##### 3.1.2 Explained Variable: Arts and Crafts

Based on the above dialog between Taoist eco-ethics and arts and crafts in the modern context, with arts and crafts as the explanatory variable, mathematical and statistical analysis will follow to outline the mechanism of their roles and provide new inspiration and guidance for modern design.

#### 3.2 Quantitative Research Data Sources

##### 3.2.1 Questionnaire Design

Generally speaking, there are six major principles in traditional questionnaire design, which are: reasonableness, generality, logic, clarity, non-inductiveness and ease of organization and analysis. According to the commonalities and differences between traditional questionnaires and network questionnaires, we believe that network questionnaire design should also be based on these six principles, but for the specificity of network questionnaires, the design principles of traditional questionnaires and the network environment involved in network questionnaires should be integrated to innovate the relevant design concepts. Under the requirements of the six principles of questionnaire design, the first draft of

the questionnaire is completed. It was found to have many problems, for which experts in related fields were consulted to revise the questionnaire and finalize the final draft of the questionnaire, which consists of two parts, one part is the Taoist eco-ethics scale test, and the other is the Arts and Crafts Scale test, which contains a total of 30 question items.

### 3.2.2 Questionnaire Administration Process and Retrieval

This online survey was conducted by distributing questionnaires through several social networks commonly used by domestic Internet users to obtain quantitative data on the explanatory and interpreted variables. The questionnaire was sampled using snowball non-probability sampling, and the questionnaire was distributed and filled out on social networks through friends seeking friends and friends passing to friends. The questionnaires were distributed through three social networks with a large number of users, including Sina Weibo, Qzone, and Circle of Friends. Over a period of about 10 months, a total of 500 people filled out the questionnaires, i.e., 500 questionnaires in total. Among them, 17 questionnaires were incomplete, the number of valid questionnaires was 483, and the validity rate of the questionnaires was 96.60%, and the reliability and validity of the questionnaires met the requirements of the study.

### 3.3 Statistical Methods

The study mainly made descriptive statistical analysis and multiple linear regression analysis. The questionnaire data were firstly recorded into Excel and statistically analyzed by SPSS data analysis tool. The research data were analyzed by descriptive statistics, then the research variables were tested for normal distribution and correlation, and after a series of tests, the multiple linear regression model was used in the statistical data method to explore the relationship between Taoist eco-ethics and arts and crafts.

## 4. ANALYSIS OF EMPIRICAL STUDIES

### 4.1 Descriptive Statistical Analysis

The questionnaire used in this study is divided into two parts, one part is the Taoist Ecological Ethics Scale test and the other part is the Arts and Crafts Scale test, with an overall score of 1-5, and the collected questionnaire data were analyzed by descriptive statistics, and the results of the descriptive statistical analysis are shown in Table 1. According to the data in the table, it can be seen that the mean value of the quantitative data



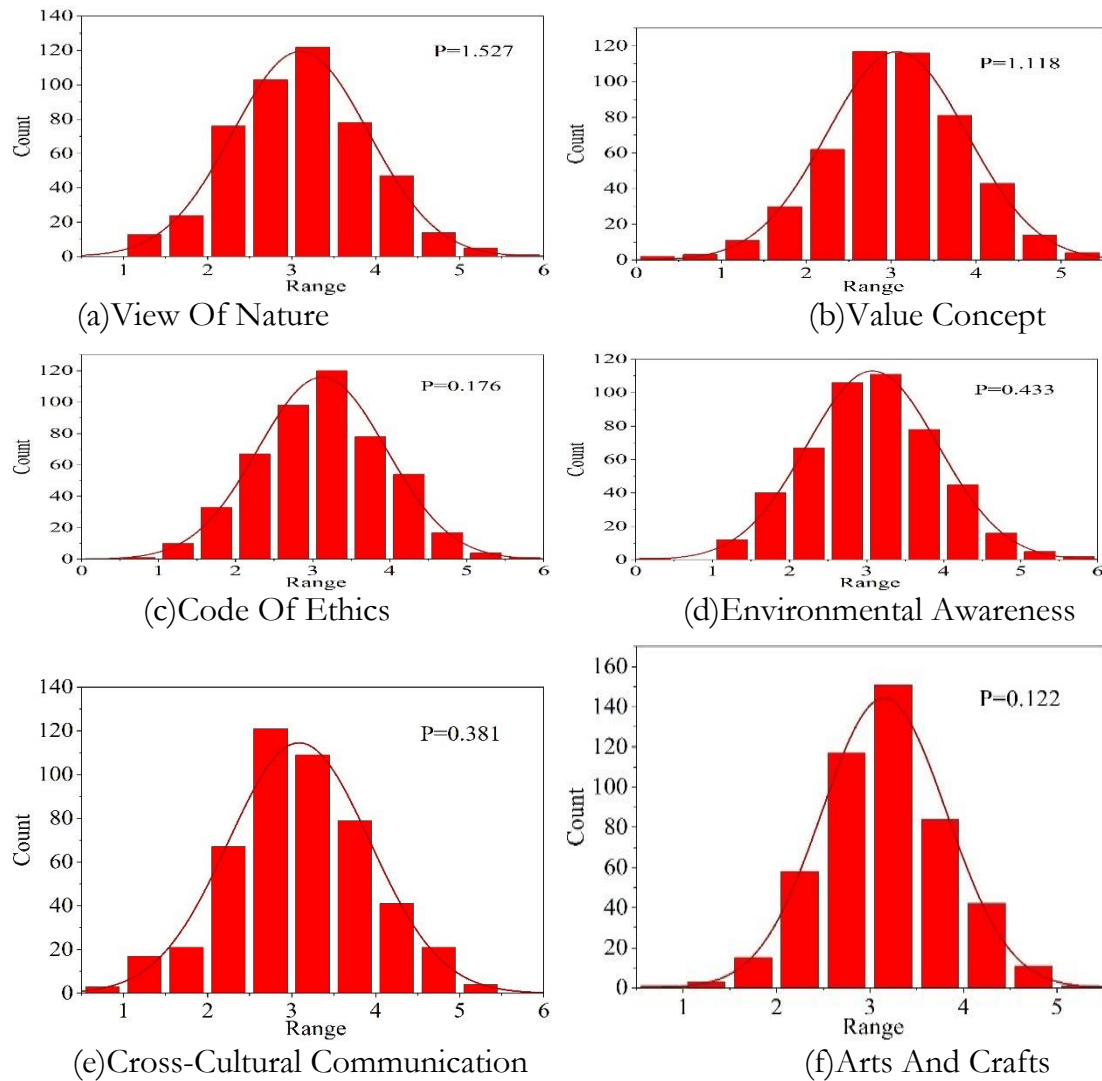
of the explanatory variable Arts and Crafts is 3.109, and the corresponding standard deviation is 0.706, in addition, it can also be seen that the view of nature  $(3.129 \pm 0.819) > \text{ethical norms } (3.124 \pm 0.816) > \text{values } (3.114 \pm 0.809) > \text{Arts and Crafts } (3.109 \pm 0.706) > \text{Environmental awareness } (3.108 \pm 0.811) > \text{Intercultural communication } (3.107 \pm 0.849)$ , i.e., among all the research variables, the quantitative data of nature view is the largest, and the quantitative values of all the variables are above 3.1, which indicates that all the research variables are of intermediate to high level.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistical Analysis Results

Study Variable	Sample Size	Minimum Value	Maximum Value	Mean Value	Standard Deviation
View of Nature	483	1	5	3.129	0.819
Value Concept	483	1	5	3.114	0.809
Code of Ethics	483	1	5	3.124	0.816
Environmental Awareness	483	1	5	3.108	0.811
Cross-Cultural Communication	483	1	5	3.107	0.849
Arts and Crafts	483	1	5	3.109	0.706

#### 4.2 Normal Distribution Test

The normal distribution test is a statistical hypothesis test whose purpose is to determine whether the questionnaire data are significantly different from the theoretical normal distribution. Histograms, P-P charts and Q-Q charts can be drawn to show the distribution pattern of the observed data to determine whether it is close to normal distribution. According to the requirements of the content of this study, the histogram is selected to demonstrate the normal distribution of the research variables, and the test results are shown in Figure 1, where (a) ~ (f) are the view of nature, values, ethical norms, environmental awareness, cross-cultural communication, and arts and crafts, respectively. To determine whether the research variables meet the requirements of normal distribution, if the histogram is superimposed on the normal curve, it can be determined by determining whether the P value is greater than 0.05, if greater than to satisfy the normal distribution, otherwise it does not satisfy. Comprehensive Figure 1 (a)~(b) shows that the P-value of natural outlook, values, ethical norms, environmental awareness, cross-cultural communication, and arts and crafts is 1.527, 1.118, 0.176, 0.433, 0.381, 0.122 in order, which satisfy the judgment condition of normal distribution that P is greater than 0.05, and indicate that the quantitative data conforms to the normal distribution.



**Figure 1.** The Test Results of Normal Distribution of Variables Are Studied

#### 4.3 Correlation Test

In this paper, Pearson's correlation coefficient is used to test whether the five selected explanatory variables are correlated with the explained variables. Pearson's coefficient is widely used in scientific research to measure the direction and strength of correlation between two variables, and its value is between -1 and 1, which is expressed by CP. When Pearson's coefficient is greater than 0 and closer to 1, it means that the two variables are positively correlated and the linear relationship is stronger. When the value of Pearson's coefficient is less than 0 and closer to -1, it indicates that the two variables are negatively correlated and the stronger the linear relationship: when the value of Pearson's coefficient is 0, it indicates that there is no linear relationship between the two variables, and the results of the correlation test are shown in Table 2, in which CP indicates Pearson's correlation coefficient, Sig indicates the coefficient of

significance, and N indicates the sample size. Based on the data in the table, it can be seen that the Pearson's correlation coefficients of the view of nature, values, ethical norms, environmental awareness, and cross-cultural communication on Arts and Crafts are 0.515 (0.032), 0.674 (0.041), 0.641 (0.033), 0.327 (0.009), and 0.412 (0.035), and the five explanatory variables and the explained variables have a significant positive correlation, detecting that the set of explanatory and interpreted variables can be used for regression analysis.

Table 2: Correlation Test Result

Study Variable		View of Nature	Value Concept	Code of Ethics	Environmental Awareness	Cross-Cultural Communication	Arts and Crafts
View of Nature	CP	1	0.683	0.478	0.688	0.441	0.515
	Sig		0.033	0.031	0.025	0.031	0.032
	N	483	483	483	483	483	483
Value Concept	CP	0.683	1	0.328	0.507	0.426	0.674
	Sig	0.033		0.006	0.017	0.028	0.041
	N	483	483	483	483	483	483
Code of Ethics	CP	0.478	0.328	1	0.631	0.684	0.641
	Sig	0.031	0.006		0.026	0.026	0.033
	N	483	483	483	483	483	483
Environmental Awareness	CP	0.688	0.507	0.631	1	0.362	0.327
	Sig	0.025	0.017	0.026		0.044	0.009
	N	483	483	483	483	483	483
Cross-Cultural Communication	CP	0.441	0.426	0.684	0.362	1	0.412
	Sig	0.031	0.028	0.026	0.044		0.035
	N	483	483	483	483	483	483
Arts and Crafts	CP	0.515	0.674	0.641	0.327	0.412	1
	Sig	0.032	0.041	0.033	0.009	0.035	
	N	483	483	483	483	483	483

#### 4.4 Regression Analysis

In order to reveal the mechanism of action generated by the dialogue between Taoist eco-ethics and arts and crafts in the modern context, this subsection carries out a comprehensive regression analysis of Taoist eco-ethics and arts and crafts with the help of the SPSS26.0 statistical analysis software, and the final data obtained have been listed in detail in the table, and the results of the regression analysis of the research variables are shown in Table 3. According to the analysis of the data in the table, the results show that there is a strong mechanism of action between the explanatory variables and the explained variables. The VIF value of each research variable does not exceed 5, which means that there is no multicollinearity between different variables. The regression equation of Taoist eco-ethics and arts and crafts is  $= 0.912 + 0.027 * \text{Nature View} + 0.046 * \text{Values} + 0.111 * \text{Ethical Norms} + 0.037 * \text{Environmental Protection Awareness} + 0.158 * \text{Intercultural Communication}$ , which reveals the mechanism of the role of Taoist eco-ethics and arts and crafts in the modern context, e.g., by enhancing environmental protection awareness, combining tradition and modernity, intercultural communication etc., to realize the dialogue between the two, which is of great significance to the promotion of Chinese traditional culture and the development of modern eco-ethics.

Table 3: Study the Results of Regression Analysis of Variables

Study Variable	Unnormalized		Standardization		Collinearity		
	Coefficient		Coefficient		T-	P-	Statistics
	B	Standard Error	Beta		Value	Value	VIF Allowance Value
Constant	0.912	0.149			5.734	0.002	
View of Nature	0.027	0.006	0.436		6.769	0.004	0.335 2.936
Value Concept	0.046	0.038	0.054		1.114	0.008	0.509 1.928
Code of Ethics	0.111	0.044	0.108		2.137	0.009	0.501 1.989
Environmental Awareness	0.037	0.036	0.049		1.055	0.007	0.516 1.964
Cross-Cultural Communication	0.158	0.038	0.185		3.625	0.005	0.519 1.887

## 5. CONCLUSION

This paper describes and analyzes the Taoist eco-ethics and the natural expression of arts and crafts in a modern context, and finds that there is a strong role relationship between the two. In order to further confirm whether there is a mechanism of action between the two, the concepts of

nature, values, ethical norms, environmental awareness, and cross-cultural communication in Taoist eco-ethics are taken as explanatory variables, while arts and crafts are taken as explanatory variables. Determine the research data sources and research methods, and analyze the two empirical research. The multiple linear regression equation of the explanatory variables and the explained variables is  $0.912+0.027*\text{View of Nature}+0.046*\text{Values}+0.111*\text{Ethical Norms}+0.037*\text{Environmental Protection Awareness}+0.158*\text{Cross-cultural Communication}$ , which is in the form of numerical quantification and perfectly interprets the influence of Taoist eco-ethics on Arts and Crafts in the modern context.

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