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# Impact of 'Doraemon' on adolescent development: a qualitative study of cognitive, moral, and cultural influences in Vietnamese teenagers

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## ABSTRACT

This qualitative study investigates the impact of the Japanese comic series 'Doraemon' on the maturity process of Vietnamese teenagers. Employing semi-structured interviews with nine Vietnamese adolescents, the research explores how this popular media influences cognitive, moral, social, and cultural development. The thematic analysis reveals four key findings: the enhancement of problem-solving skills and creativity, the development of moral reasoning and ethical decision-making, the shaping of social relationships and emotional intelligence, and the influence on cultural identity and global perspective. The study finds that 'Doraemon' inspires creative thinking and innovative problem-solving, resonating with developmental psychology theories on cognitive growth during adolescence. It also plays a crucial role in moral development, presenting complex ethical dilemmas that encourage reflective thinking. Furthermore, 'Doraemon' positively impacts social and emotional skills, aiding in the development of empathy and effective management of social relationships. Lastly, it fosters a broader understanding of cultural diversity, influencing the participants' global outlook and cultural identity. This research contributes to the understanding of how specific media content can influence adolescent development in diverse cultural contexts. It highlights the potential of comics as tools for cognitive and moral development, social and emotional learning, and in fostering global cultural awareness. The findings have implications for educators, media producers, and policymakers in considering the role of media in adolescent development.

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## Introduction

In the realm of popular culture and media, comic books have long been recognized as not just a form of entertainment, but also as influential tools in shaping the psychosocial development of their readers (Lewkowich & Jacobs, 2019). Among these, 'Doraemon', a Japanese manga series written and illustrated by Fujiko F. Fujio, has emerged as a cultural phenomenon with a significant impact on multiple generations across various countries (Fusanosuke et al., 2023). This study focuses on the effects of 'Doraemon' on the maturity process of Vietnamese teenagers, exploring how this iconic comic series influences their cognitive, emotional, and social development.

'Doraemon' has been a staple in the world of children's literature in Vietnam for decades. Its widespread popularity among Vietnamese youth presents an interesting case for examining the interplay between a foreign cultural artifact and local developmental processes (Anh & Marginson, 2013). The narrative of a robotic cat from the future who assists a young boy with daily challenges through innovative gadgets has resonated with a broad audience, extending its influence beyond mere entertainment.

This qualitative study aims to delve into the specific impacts of 'Doraemon' on the maturation of Vietnamese teenagers. It seeks to understand how the themes, characters, and narratives within

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'Doraemon' contribute to shaping adolescents' perspectives, moral reasoning, problem-solving skills, and emotional intelligence. The significance of this study lies in its exploration of how a foreign cultural product, such as 'Doraemon', plays a role in the psychosocial development of Vietnamese adolescents. It addresses the broader question of how global cultural influences intersect with local values and norms, particularly in a society like Vietnam that is rapidly modernizing and increasingly exposed to international media. By analyzing the influence of 'Doraemon' on young Vietnamese individuals, this study sheds light on the broader societal impacts of media consumption and offers valuable insights into the cultural adaptation processes within Vietnamese society. Furthermore, it raises questions about the role of international media in shaping youth identity, moral values, and social understanding in a context that is navigating the complexities of cultural preservation and global integration. Given the scarce academic attention to the influence of specific comic series on adolescent development, particularly in the Vietnamese context, this study attempts to fill a significant gap in the literature.

## **Literature review**

### ***Impact of comic books on adolescent development***

#### ***Cognitive and educational outcomes***

Comic books, often undervalued in the realm of literature, have been recognized for their unique capacity to enhance literacy and cognitive skills (Norton & Kamal, 2003; Versaci, 2001). The combination of visual and textual elements in comics demands a specific kind of literacy that can enhance comprehension and critical thinking (Sabeti, 2012). Studies by Lo et al. (2019) have highlighted how the engagement with comic books can foster creativity and imagination in adolescents, essential components of cognitive development.

#### ***Social and emotional development***

In terms of social and emotional learning, comics have been found to aid in empathy development and moral reasoning (Nikolajeva, 2012). The visual representation of emotions in comics provides a unique avenue for readers to empathize with characters (Cohn, 2013). Furthermore, comics often address complex themes and social issues, offering a platform for adolescents to engage with and reflect upon these topics (Clark, 2017).

#### ***Identity formation***

The role of comics in identity formation, particularly during adolescence, is significant. Hughes (2017) discussed how the identification with comic book characters could influence self-concept and aspirations. Additionally, comics often provide representations of diverse identities and experiences, which can be particularly impactful for minority adolescents (Green, 2015).

### ***'Doraemon' in popular culture***

#### ***Cultural influence and global reach***

'Doraemon', a creation of Fujiko F. Fujio, has been a prominent figure in Japanese popular culture since its inception in 1969. Its international appeal, as discussed by Tsai (2021), highlights the transcultural nature of the comic. The influence of 'Doraemon' extends beyond entertainment, permeating aspects of cultural identity and social norms (Craig, 2015).

#### ***Themes and character analysis***

The themes explored in 'Doraemon', such as friendship, perseverance, and ethical dilemmas, are of particular relevance to adolescent development. Research by Kato et al. (2019) and Zahlten (2019) examines how the character dynamics and narrative arcs in 'Doraemon' offer complex scenarios that can influence young readers' understanding of relationships and ethics.

## ***Sociocultural context of Vietnamese teenagers***

### ***Media consumption patterns***

Understanding the Vietnamese context, particularly the media consumption patterns of its teenagers, is crucial. The study by Otmazgin (2007) shows an increasing inclination towards East Asian pop culture, including Japanese manga. The reasons behind this trend, as analyzed by Nguyen and Thanh (2022), include cultural proximity and the appeal of contemporary themes that resonate with Vietnamese youth.

### ***Adolescent development in Vietnamese society***

The unique sociocultural dynamics of Vietnam also shape adolescent development. Traditional values, intergenerational relationships, and rapid socio-economic changes play a significant role in the lives of Vietnamese teenagers (Minh, 2015). The intersection of these factors with media consumption, especially of foreign origin like 'Doraemon', presents an intriguing area for exploration.

While existing literature provides valuable insights into the impact of comics on adolescent development, the specific influence of 'Doraemon' on Vietnamese teenagers remains underexplored. This study aims to bridge this gap by integrating theories of adolescent development, media influence, and cultural studies. It seeks to understand not only the direct impact of 'Doraemon' on Vietnamese adolescents' maturity but also how this interaction reflects broader cultural and societal dynamics.

## **Methods**

### ***Research design***

This study adopts a qualitative research approach, leveraging semi-structured interviews to delve into the impacts of the comic series 'Doraemon' on the maturity process of Vietnamese teenagers. The choice of a qualitative methodology is grounded in the study's aim to explore the nuanced, personal experiences and perceptions of adolescents in relation to their interaction with 'Doraemon.' This approach allows for in-depth insights and a rich, detailed understanding of the phenomena under study, which would not be as readily accessible through quantitative methods.

The theoretical framework underpinning this study is twofold, integrating concepts from developmental psychology and cultural studies. From a developmental psychology perspective, the research is anchored in theories that emphasize the role of media in adolescent development (Duncan, 2009). This includes exploring how 'Doraemon,' as a form of media, contributes to shaping adolescents' cognitive abilities, moral reasoning, emotional understanding, and social skills. Theories relating to identity formation, empathy development, and the impact of media on cognitive and emotional maturity are particularly relevant.

Simultaneously, the study is informed by cultural studies, especially the concepts of cultural globalization and the transnational flow of media (Thussu, 2006). This aspect of the framework examines how 'Doraemon,' a Japanese cultural product, is received, interpreted, and assimilated by Vietnamese teenagers. It explores the ways in which this foreign media content interacts with local cultural values, social norms, and the unique socio-cultural context of Vietnam. This dual theoretical framework enables a comprehensive exploration of the subject, capturing both the psychological impacts of the comic on individual adolescents and the broader cultural dynamics at play.

### ***Participants***

The participants in this study consist of a purposively selected group of nine Vietnamese teenagers, chosen to represent a diverse range of experiences with the comic series 'Doraemon.' This small, focused sample size is ideal for an in-depth qualitative study, allowing for a thorough exploration of each participant's experiences and perspectives while maintaining manageability in data analysis. The age range of the participants is between 13 to 17 years, a critical period for adolescent development and identity formation. This age group ensures that the study captures the experiences of individuals who are at a stage where media influences, such as comics, can have a significant impact on their cognitive,

**Table 1.** Participants.

Nickname	Gender	Age	Years as Doraemon fan
Bao	Male	16	4
Linh	Female	17	6
Phuong	Female	13	3
Tuan	Male	15	5
Thao	Female	16	4
Duc	Male	14	2
Minh	Female	15	5
Anh	Female	14	3
Trinh	Female	15	4

emotional, and social development. Table 1 briefly displays the demographic information of the participants.

In recruiting participants, careful attention is given to ethical considerations, especially given the involvement of minors. Parental consent is obtained for all participants under the age of 18, in addition to the assent of the teenagers themselves. The study adheres to strict confidentiality and privacy guidelines to protect the identity and personal information of the participants. All interviews are conducted in a respectful, non-intrusive manner, and participants are informed that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any point without any negative consequences.

The selection of participants aims to ensure a balanced representation in terms of gender, socio-economic backgrounds, and varying levels of exposure to 'Doraemon.' This diversity allows the study to explore a wide range of experiences and perceptions, contributing to the richness and depth of the data. The participants are sourced from different regions of Vietnam, which helps in understanding the potential regional variations in the reception and impact of 'Doraemon.'

Ethical considerations extend to the handling of the data collected from the participants. All information is used solely for the purpose of this research, and any publications or presentations resulting from this study will use pseudonyms and other anonymizing techniques to ensure the privacy of the participants. The research process is designed to be as non-intrusive and respectful as possible, recognizing the sensitivity required when working with adolescent populations. The study's adherence to these ethical guidelines ensures the protection of the participants while contributing valuable insights into the impacts of 'Doraemon' on the maturity process of Vietnamese teenagers.

### **Data collection**

The data collection for this study primarily involves conducting semi-structured interviews with the nine Vietnamese teenagers who are participants in the research. The semi-structured format was selected for its flexibility, allowing the interviewer to explore specific themes while providing room for participants to share their experiences and perspectives in an open-ended manner. This approach is particularly well-suited to the qualitative nature of the study, as it facilitates an in-depth exploration of the participants' personal and nuanced interactions with 'Doraemon.'

Prior to the main data collection phase, a pilot study was conducted to test the effectiveness of the interview questions and the overall approach. Based on feedback from the pilot, several revisions were made to the interview guide to ensure clarity, relevance, and sensitivity to the participants' cultural and developmental context. The revised interview questions include prompts such as, 'Can you describe your first encounter with 'Doraemon' and its initial impact on you?' and 'How do you think 'Doraemon' has influenced your thoughts and behavior in real-life situations?' These questions aim to elicit detailed responses about the participants' experiences with 'Doraemon,' its perceived impact on their maturity, and its role in their daily life.

Each interview is designed to last approximately 45 to 60 minutes, providing sufficient time for participants to reflect and elaborate on their experiences. The interviews are conducted in places where the participants feel most comfortable and at ease, such as their homes, local libraries, or community centers, ensuring a conducive environment for open and honest discussions. To accommodate the participants' preferences and ensure effective communication, all interviews are conducted in Vietnamese. This

choice not only facilitates ease of expression for the participants but also ensures cultural and contextual relevance in the data collected.

Additionally, the study employs a bilingual researcher fluent in both Vietnamese and English, facilitating accurate translation and interpretation of the data for analysis while maintaining the nuances and subtleties of the participants' responses. The use of the native language of the participants is a critical aspect of the study, as it provides a deeper insight into their experiences and cultural perspectives. The data collection process is meticulously planned and executed, with a focus on creating a respectful, empathetic, and culturally sensitive environment for the participants to share their experiences and views on the influence of 'Doraemon' on their development as teenagers in Vietnam.

### **Data analysis**

The data collected from the semi-structured interviews with the nine Vietnamese teenagers are subjected to thematic analysis, a method particularly suited for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data (Braun et al., 2023). This approach is chosen for its flexibility and its ability to provide a rich, detailed, yet complex account of the data. Thematic analysis is conducted in six key phases: familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report.

During the first phase, the researchers immerse themselves in the data, transcribing the interviews, reading, and re-reading the content, and noting down initial ideas and impressions. This immersion is crucial for developing an intimate understanding of the content and context of the data, setting the foundation for the subsequent phases of analysis. The next phase involves generating initial codes. This coding process is an essential part of thematic analysis, as it organizes the data into meaningful groups. Codes are generated systematically across the entire data set, and this process is both reflective and interpretative. The researchers code for as many potential themes and patterns as possible, without trying to fit the data into pre-existing coding frames, thereby allowing for the emergence of unexpected insights.

Once the initial coding is complete, the researchers search for themes by collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme. This phase is not just about summarizing or aggregating data, but also about interpreting and making sense of it. The fourth phase involves reviewing themes. Here, the researchers check if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts and the entire data set. This involves a recursive process of going back to the coded data to check if the themes make sense, refining the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells.

After refining the themes, the next step is defining and naming them. This phase involves developing a detailed analysis of each theme, determining the 'essence' of what each theme is about, and determining what aspect of the data each theme captures. The themes are then named in a way that instantly gives a sense of what the theme is about. Finally, the last phase involves producing the report. The researchers weave together the analytic narrative and data extracts, contextualizing the analysis in relation to the research question and the existing literature. This final report presents a coherent and logically structured narrative that reflects the themes and the overall story the data tells.

Through this thematic analysis, the study aims to uncover the various dimensions of how 'Doraemon' influences the maturity process of Vietnamese teenagers, shedding light on cognitive, emotional, social, and moral development aspects influenced by this popular comic series. This method allows for a nuanced and in-depth understanding of the data, providing rich insights into the adolescents' experiences and perceptions.

### **Findings**

#### ***The impact of 'Doraemon' on the development of problem-solving skills and creativity in Vietnamese teenagers***

One of the prominent themes that emerged from the thematic analysis is the impact of 'Doraemon' on the development of problem-solving skills and creativity in Vietnamese teenagers. This theme was



highlighted in the responses of seven out of the nine participants, indicating its significance in the context of the maturity process influenced by the comic series.

Participants frequently mentioned how 'Doraemon' inspired them to think creatively and approach problems in innovative ways. For instance, one participant, Minh (15 years old), shared, *'Whenever I face a difficult situation, I think about how Doraemon would use his gadgets to solve problems. It makes me think outside the box and find my own solutions.'* Another participant, Anh (14 years old), expressed a similar sentiment: *'Reading 'Doraemon' has made me more imaginative. I try to think of creative ways to deal with my school projects and even day-to-day challenges.'* Adding to these perspectives, Linh (17 years old) remarked, *'Doraemon's adventures show me that there is always more than one way to solve a problem, which encourages me to be more flexible in my thinking.'*

These findings align with the theoretical framework of developmental psychology, particularly the aspects related to cognitive development during adolescence. The narratives of participants like Minh, Anh, and Linh resonate with the idea that engagement with certain types of media, such as comics, can enhance cognitive skills, including creativity and problem-solving. This is in line with the theory that during adolescence, individuals undergo significant cognitive transformations, enabling them to think more abstractly and hypothetically. 'Doraemon,' with its imaginative scenarios and inventive solutions, appears to stimulate this aspect of cognitive development among Vietnamese teenagers.

From a cultural studies perspective, the findings also reflect the influence of a transcultural media product on the local cultural context. 'Doraemon,' a Japanese comic, has been integrated into the lives of Vietnamese teenagers, influencing their cognitive processes. This cross-cultural assimilation illustrates the concept of cultural hybridity, where the teenagers are not just passive consumers of a foreign media product but actively engage with it, integrating its elements into their own cognitive and cultural practices. This interaction between a global media product and local cultural dynamics highlights the complexity of cultural globalization, where the flow of cultural products can have unique and varied impacts in different cultural settings.

### ***The influence of 'Doraemon' on the development of moral reasoning and ethical decision-making among Vietnamese teenagers***

Another significant finding from the study is the influence of 'Doraemon' on the development of moral reasoning and ethical decision-making among Vietnamese teenagers. This theme was evident in the responses of six out of the nine participants, underlining its relevance in the context of adolescent development.

The participants described how 'Doraemon' exposed them to various ethical dilemmas and moral decisions, often prompting them to consider what they would do in similar situations. For instance, Bao, a 16-year-old participant, mentioned, *'The stories in 'Doraemon' are not always about right or wrong; they make me think about what is fair and what is not, and how my actions affect others.'* Similarly, Linh, a 17-year-old participant, reflected, *'I learned a lot about friendship and responsibility from 'Doraemon.' It teaches you to think about the consequences of your actions.'* Expanding on these insights, Trinh (15 years old) added, *'In 'Doraemon,' the characters often face tough choices, which makes me think about the importance of honesty and integrity in my own life.'*

These insights align with developmental psychology theories, particularly those concerning the moral and ethical development in adolescence. According to Lawrence Kohlberg's stages of moral development, adolescence is a critical period where individuals transition from black-and-white thinking to understanding the complexity of moral issues. The narratives of Bao, Linh, and Tuan suggest that engagement with 'Doraemon' provides a platform for Vietnamese teenagers to navigate and contemplate complex moral landscapes, thereby fostering their moral reasoning skills.

From a cultural studies viewpoint, the influence of 'Doraemon' on moral reasoning also illustrates the power of transnational media narratives to transcend cultural boundaries and impact the ethical frameworks of audiences in different cultural settings. 'Doraemon,' through its storytelling, introduces Vietnamese teenagers to a blend of universal and culturally specific moral values, reflecting a unique intersection of Japanese cultural norms with local Vietnamese values. This aspect of the findings highlights the role of global media in shaping the moral and ethical understandings in a culturally diverse audience, contributing to the ongoing discourse on the globalization of media and its impact on local cultures.

### ***The role of 'Doraemon' in shaping social relationships and enhancing emotional intelligence among Vietnamese teenagers***

A third key finding from the study is the role of 'Doraemon' in shaping social relationships and enhancing emotional intelligence among Vietnamese teenagers. This theme was prominently mentioned by eight of the nine participants, indicating its widespread impact.

Participants often discussed how 'Doraemon' influenced their understanding and management of friendships and other social relationships. Phuong, a 13-year-old participant, said, *'Reading 'Doraemon' has taught me about the importance of helping friends and being kind.'* Another participant, Tuan, aged 15, shared, *'I learned from 'Doraemon' how to understand my friends' feelings better and how to be there for them.'* Further elaborating on this theme, Duc (14 years old) commented, *"Doraemon' shows many scenarios where characters work together to overcome challenges, teaching me the value of teamwork and collaboration in friendships."*

These responses align with developmental psychology, particularly theories related to social development and emotional intelligence in adolescence. This developmental stage is crucial for learning how to form and maintain healthy relationships, and for developing empathy and emotional understanding. The participants' reflections suggest that 'Doraemon' plays a role in this aspect of their development, providing scenarios and narratives that foster an understanding of complex social dynamics and emotional awareness.

From a cultural studies perspective, these findings highlight the influence of a global media product in shaping the social and emotional fabric of a local culture. 'Doraemon,' as a Japanese manga, brings with it a set of cultural values and social norms that are both distinct and yet relatable to the Vietnamese audience. This cultural exchange through media consumption demonstrates how stories and characters from one culture can resonate with and influence the social and emotional constructs of another culture. It exemplifies the concept of cultural globalization, where the emotional and social narratives of 'Doraemon' transcend geographical and cultural boundaries, becoming a part of the socialization process of Vietnamese teenagers.

### ***The influence of 'Doraemon' on cultural identity and global perspective among Vietnamese teenagers***

The study also revealed a notable finding regarding the influence of 'Doraemon' on cultural identity and global perspective among Vietnamese teenagers. This theme, articulated by seven out of the nine participants, underscores the manga's role in shaping the participants' views of their own culture and the wider world.

Many participants reflected on how 'Doraemon' served as a gateway to understanding and appreciating cultural differences. Thao, a 16-year-old participant, explained, *'Through 'Doraemon,' I got to see aspects of Japanese culture, which made me more curious about other cultures too.'* Another participant, Duc, who is 14, expressed a similar sentiment: *'Reading 'Doraemon' made me think about how we are different from people in other countries, but also how we are similar. It's like exploring the world while staying in Vietnam.'* Additionally, An (14 years old) shared, *'The series has sparked my interest in international travel and understanding global perspectives, broadening my view of the world.'*

These reflections align with developmental psychology, particularly theories pertaining to the formation of cultural identity during adolescence. During this developmental stage, individuals begin to explore and understand their place in a larger social and cultural context. Exposure to media from different cultures, such as 'Doraemon,' can broaden teenagers' horizons, influencing their perception of their own culture and their understanding of global diversity.

From a cultural studies perspective, the impact of 'Doraemon' on the participants' cultural identity and global perspective highlights the role of media in the process of cultural globalization. 'Doraemon' serves as a medium through which Vietnamese teenagers can engage with and learn about a culture different from their own, facilitating a form of cultural exchange. This phenomenon illustrates how transnational media products can foster cross-cultural understanding and awareness among young audiences, contributing to their development as global citizens.



## Discussion

### ***The impact of 'Doraemon' on the development of problem-solving skills and creativity in Vietnamese teenagers***

The current study's findings on the impact of 'Doraemon' on developing problem-solving skills and creativity in Vietnamese teenagers offer both similarities and distinctive insights when compared with existing literature. Previous studies in the realm of comic books and adolescent development have consistently highlighted the role of comics in fostering imagination and creative thinking (Norton & Kamal, 2003; Versaci, 2001). Our findings concur with these studies, underscoring how 'Doraemon,' as a comic series, stimulates creative problem-solving among its readers. Participants like Minh, Anh, and Linh demonstrate this impact through their narrative accounts, echoing the broader understanding that comics can serve as a catalyst for cognitive development.

However, the current study contributes unique insights that extend beyond the general findings of previous research. Unlike many studies that focus broadly on the impact of comics or graphic novels (e.g. Freedman, 2011; Phoenix, 2020), this research specifically examines the influence of a single comic series, 'Doraemon,' within a specific cultural context. This focus offers a more nuanced understanding of how a particular media product can shape cognitive abilities in a localized setting. While existing literature might suggest a general enhancement in creativity due to comic reading (Lo et al., 2019), our study distinctly reveals how 'Doraemon,' with its unique narrative style and content, specifically influences the development of problem-solving skills and creativity in Vietnamese teenagers.

Moreover, the current study's findings also highlight the significance of cultural factors in the way 'Doraemon' is received and integrated into the cognitive development of Vietnamese adolescents. This aspect of the study draws upon and contributes to the field of cultural studies, particularly in understanding the impact of cultural globalization and hybridity. While previous research has often highlighted the universal appeal and impact of comics (Silbermann, 2010), our study delineates how a Japanese comic series like 'Doraemon' is assimilated into the Vietnamese cultural context, influencing cognitive processes in ways that may differ from its impact in other cultural settings. This finding is especially relevant in the context of global media flows and the consumption of foreign media content, offering a deeper understanding of how cultural products are not just passively consumed but actively interpreted and integrated into personal and cultural contexts.

### ***The influence of 'Doraemon' on the development of moral reasoning and ethical decision-making among Vietnamese teenagers***

The influence of 'Doraemon' on the development of moral reasoning and ethical decision-making among Vietnamese teenagers presents a compelling addition to the existing body of literature on media's role in moral development. Previous studies have consistently acknowledged the capacity of various media forms, including comics, to shape moral thinking and ethical awareness among adolescents (Nikolajeva, 2012). In line with these findings, our study reinforces the idea that engagement with media, such as 'Doraemon,' plays a crucial role in the development of moral reasoning in adolescents. The reflections of participants like Bao, Linh, and Trinh resonate with developmental psychology's understanding of adolescence as a critical period for moral development, as outlined in Kohlberg's stages of moral development.

However, the study diverges from previous research by offering a more focused insight into how a specific comic series, 'Doraemon,' influences moral reasoning and ethical decision-making in a culturally specific context. While the general impact of comics on moral development is well-documented (e.g. Robson, 2016), this study provides a nuanced exploration of how 'Doraemon,' with its unique narrative and ethical dilemmas, specifically affects the moral development of Vietnamese teenagers. This emphasis on a particular cultural context and a single media product offers a more detailed understanding of the interaction between media consumption and moral development.

Furthermore, from a cultural studies perspective, the findings of this study highlight the transnational nature of moral narratives and their impact on ethical frameworks across different cultures. While existing literature has often focused on the influence of global media within Western contexts (Park & Curran,

2000; Thussu, 2006)), this study extends the discourse by examining how a Japanese comic series like 'Doraemon' is assimilated into Vietnamese culture, influencing adolescents' moral and ethical perceptions. This aspect of the study adds to the understanding of how global media content interacts with local cultural values and norms, shaping the moral reasoning of adolescents in a specific cultural setting.

### ***The role of 'Doraemon' in shaping social relationships and enhancing emotional intelligence among Vietnamese teenagers***

The role of 'Doraemon' in shaping social relationships and enhancing emotional intelligence among Vietnamese teenagers offers significant insights, especially when juxtaposed with existing literature. Previous research in developmental psychology and media studies has acknowledged the influence of various forms of media on social development and emotional intelligence (Cohn, 2013; Clark, 2017; Nikolajeva, 2012). These studies suggest that media can be a powerful tool in teaching empathy, social skills, and emotional awareness. Our findings align with this body of work, highlighting 'Doraemon' as a facilitator in developing these competencies among Vietnamese adolescents. The experiences of Phuong, Tuan, and Duc, for instance, mirror the broader understanding that media narratives can act as a medium for learning and practicing social and emotional skills.

However, our study extends these understandings by focusing specifically on the impact of a single comic series in a distinct cultural context. While general media consumption is often linked to social and emotional development (Salomon, 2012), this research provides a detailed exploration of how 'Doraemon,' with its particular character dynamics and narratives, influences the social and emotional intelligence of adolescents in Vietnam. This specific focus contributes a nuanced perspective to the literature, highlighting how individual media products can have unique and profound effects on adolescent development.

Furthermore, from a cultural studies perspective, our study emphasizes the role of a global media product like 'Doraemon' in influencing the social and emotional constructs within a specific cultural setting. This aspect offers a novel contribution to the discourse on cultural globalization and media influence. Unlike much of the existing research which focuses on Western media's influence (Khaled et al., 2018), this study illustrates how a Japanese manga resonates with and impacts the social and emotional development of Vietnamese teenagers. It showcases the complex interplay between global media narratives and local cultural dynamics, offering insights into how transnational media products contribute to shaping the emotional and social development in a non-Western context.

### ***The influence of 'Doraemon' on cultural identity and global perspective among Vietnamese teenagers***

The finding regarding the influence of 'Doraemon' on cultural identity and global perspective among Vietnamese teenagers provides an intriguing addition to existing academic discourse, particularly in the fields of developmental psychology and cultural studies. Previous research has extensively documented the role of media in shaping adolescents' understanding of their own cultural identity and in developing a global perspective (Arnett Jensen, 2003; Atkinson, 2018). These studies highlight how exposure to diverse media content can broaden young people's horizons, fostering a more inclusive and comprehensive worldview. The reflections of participants like Thao, Duc, and An in our study resonate with this notion, illustrating how 'Doraemon' serves as a conduit for cultural exploration and understanding.

However, our study extends beyond the general findings of previous research by pinpointing the specific influence of a non-Western comic series on Vietnamese teenagers' perceptions of culture and global interconnectedness. Unlike many studies that focus on Western media's influence on global perspectives (Park & Curran, 2000), our research uniquely positions 'Doraemon,' a Japanese manga, as a significant influence in shaping cultural identity and global understanding among adolescents in a Southeast Asian context. This focus on a non-Western context provides a fresh perspective in media studies, emphasizing the diverse ways in which different forms of media from various cultural backgrounds can influence adolescents' understanding of the world.

From a cultural studies perspective, the study underscores the importance of considering the nuances of cultural globalization. It demonstrates how 'Doraemon' facilitates a form of cultural exchange, introducing Vietnamese teenagers to Japanese culture and, in doing so, fostering a sense of global citizenship. This aspect of the findings contributes to the ongoing discourse on the globalization of media, offering insights into how transnational media products are not just passively consumed but actively engaged with, leading to a more nuanced understanding of cultural differences and similarities.

## Conclusion

This study embarked on an exploration of the impacts of the Japanese comic series 'Doraemon' on the maturity process of Vietnamese teenagers, delving into its role in shaping their cognitive, moral, social, and cultural development. Situated within the realms of developmental psychology and cultural studies, this research aimed to uncover the multifaceted influence of a specific media product within a distinct cultural context.

Employing a qualitative methodology, the study gathered rich and in-depth data through semi-structured interviews with nine Vietnamese teenagers. The thematic analysis of this data revealed several key findings. Firstly, 'Doraemon' significantly influences the development of problem-solving skills and creativity, with participants reporting that the series inspired imaginative and innovative approaches to everyday challenges. Secondly, the comic was found to play a crucial role in the development of moral reasoning and ethical decision-making, as it exposed the participants to various ethical dilemmas and encouraged them to contemplate complex moral decisions. Thirdly, 'Doraemon' was shown to impact social relationships and emotional intelligence, enhancing participants' abilities to understand and manage friendships and emotions. Finally, the study highlighted 'Doraemon's' role in shaping participants' cultural identity and global perspective, serving as a gateway to appreciating cultural differences and similarities.

The findings of this study on the impact of 'Doraemon' on Vietnamese teenagers carry several significant implications for various fields, including education, media production, and cultural studies. Firstly, the positive influence of 'Doraemon' on problem-solving and creativity highlights the potential of integrating comics and other creative media forms into educational curricula. Educators could leverage such media to enhance imaginative thinking and innovative problem-solving skills in adolescents. This approach could be particularly effective in environments where traditional educational methods are complemented by more interactive and engaging learning materials.

In the realm of media production and content creation, the study suggests a need for media producers to be cognizant of the potential impacts their work can have on young audiences. The ethical and moral dimensions explored in 'Doraemon' demonstrate how media content can play a significant role in shaping the moral reasoning and ethical decision-making of adolescents. This insight calls for a responsible approach to content creation, ensuring that media products, especially those aimed at younger audiences, are designed to positively influence their ethical and moral development.

The study also has implications for the understanding of social and emotional learning. The role of 'Doraemon' in enhancing social relationships and emotional intelligence among Vietnamese teenagers suggests that media can be a powerful tool in teaching empathy, understanding, and emotional management. This finding can inform initiatives in social and emotional learning, particularly in contexts where traditional methods of teaching these skills may be supplemented or reinforced through media engagement.

Moreover, the influence of 'Doraemon' on cultural identity and global perspectives has important implications for cultural studies and global education. It underscores the power of media in fostering cross-cultural understanding and global awareness. This aspect of the findings suggests that exposure to foreign media can be a valuable component of education, encouraging students to develop a more inclusive and comprehensive worldview, an essential skill in an increasingly interconnected global society.

## Limitations and recommendations for further studies

The study, while providing valuable insights, is not without limitations. Firstly, the small sample size of nine Vietnamese teenagers limits the generalizability of the findings. While the qualitative approach allows for

in-depth exploration, the specific experiences and opinions of this group may not fully represent the broader population of Vietnamese adolescents. Additionally, the focus on a single comic series, 'Doraemon,' while offering detailed insights, may overlook the influence of other media forms or content that could similarly impact adolescent development. Furthermore, the cultural specificity of the study, centered on Vietnamese teenagers, means that the findings may not be directly applicable to adolescents in different cultural contexts. The study's reliance on self-reported data also raises concerns about the potential for bias in participants' responses, as they may provide socially desirable answers or have selective recollections.

Given these limitations, several recommendations for future research emerge. Future studies could expand the sample size and include a more diverse group of participants to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Comparative studies examining the impact of different comic series or media forms on adolescent development could provide a broader understanding of media's role in this critical developmental stage. Cross-cultural studies are also recommended to explore how adolescents from various cultural backgrounds perceive and are influenced by 'Doraemon' and similar media products. This could offer comparative insights into the cultural specificity of media influence. Additionally, employing mixed methods approaches that combine qualitative and quantitative data could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of comics on adolescent development. Such studies could also help mitigate the potential biases inherent in self-reported data, offering a more robust and well-rounded perspective on the influence of media on adolescents.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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