

Abstract

Past research has attempted to conceptualize anxiety development from a learning perspective. The importance of three pathways of anxiety acquisition was highlighted: namely, instrumental learning, vicarious transmission and verbal acquisition. The present study aimed to further investigate these possible antecedents of anxiety disorders across cultures. The Spence Children's Anxiety Scale and the Learning History Questionnaire were completed by 594 German students and 415 Chinese students. In line with prior studies, the Chinese adolescents reported higher scores on anxiety symptoms. Results either revealed that the two samples were subjected to the influence of different learning experiences. Culture-specific links between learning history factors and anxiety were suggested. Findings have underscored the importance of culture in the development of anxiety.