

State-Trait and Separation Anxiety Among Mothers with an Only Child Entering Kindergarten

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Abstract: Parents are the first and best teachers for their children. In homeschooling, the level of separation anxiety in kindergarten children is closely related to the level of anxiety in their mothers. The mother's behavior has a greater impact on the child than the father's. Parents' attitudes toward their children, their attitudes toward kindergarten, their own level of education, and their ability to regulate their emotions all affect the level of separation anxiety of children with their mothers. Therefore, it is particularly important to study the anxiety state of mothers when studying kindergarten anxiety in younger children. Since children spend most of their time with their mothers after leaving kindergarten, they chose to study the state-traits and separation anxiety of mothers of only children entering kindergarten". As early as Bowlby's attachment theory, the infant's emotional attachment to the caregiver was mentioned. Hawke et al. argued that, based on Spielberg's theory of state-trait anxiety, the mother's parent-child separation anxiety is a state of infant anxiety caused by short-term separation. When mothers experience occasional separation anxiety, the mother's state emotions include the following three perceived levels: the mother's self-anxiety, the mother's awareness of her child's anxiety, and the mother's anxiety about her child's lack of maternal care.

Keywords: Maternal anxiety, State anxiety, Trait anxiety.

1. Introduction

People experience many separations throughout their lives, and separation anxiety is a process that almost everyone must go through. Kindergarten is the first group living environment a child must face after leaving the home environment. At this time, children must leave their closest upbringing every day and enter a completely unfamiliar environment. This experience is not only challenging for the young child but often exposes the mother to the same anxieties, insecurities, and even fears.

Maternal separation anxiety may be an important factor influencing children's separation anxiety. Based on investigating mothers' levels of separation anxiety and state-trait anxiety and exploring the relationship between them, The causes and behaviors of children's separation anxiety are varied, but most of them stem from the development of attachment relationships (Huang, Wenfei, 1995). In Bowlby's well-known attachment theory, children's anxiety is categorized into two types: stranger anxiety and primary caregiver separation anxiety, also known as separation anxiety. Although separation anxiety is normal, it can still affect children. For example, some children refuse to be exposed to any new environment or new friends in order to avoid separation from their primary caregiver, which limits their space for adaptation and development. Or due to physical and psychological maladjustment, children are unable to assimilate and construct new information and concepts, which affects learning or development. When children are separated from their caregivers, three emotional reactions are common: protest, despair, and alienation. However, if the reaction is too strong and the child worries excessively about the anticipated or nonexistent separation experience, it can interfere with the child's normal psychological development and cause symptoms of excessive separation anxiety. Such children often seek help from psychological professionals for

psychological symptoms such as school refusal, excessive withdrawal, and attachment to others. The role of the caregiver in the family is therefore very important. How to keep the child from being anxious and from compromising physical and mental development due to excessive anxiety is something that every family needs to know. Therefore, this will be discussed.

2. Separation Anxiety

"Separation" is an experience that almost everyone has had. According to Bowlby's attachment theory, infants are emotionally attached to their caregivers. If they are separated from their caregiver, they tend to express their feelings by crying, creating a sense of insecure attachment. Separation is generally interpreted as an uncomfortable experience for both parties; anxiety is usually characterized by fidgeting, disturbing emotional displays, and accompanying physiological reactions. However, infants and young children are not the only ones who experience separation anxiety. Mothers also experience anxiety when faced with separation from their children. In the Ainsworth Strange Situation Test, anxiety during mother-infant separation may affect the mother-infant reunion response as well as the infant's response to separation (Lin, 1, 2). Both Campbell in 1979 and Thomas & Chess in 1977 found that the mother's perceived support at the time of delivery, love of family, marital status, and the mother's own Campbell in 1979 and Thomas & Chess in 1977 found that mothers' feelings of support during childbirth, family love, marital status, and mothers' own early caregiving experiences may all influence mothers' behavioral and emotional feelings toward their infants (as cited in Lin, 1992). Barglow, Vaughn, and Molitor (1987) studied 110 infants and toddlers aged 12–13 months and found that mothers' working outside of the home all day long and repeated experiences of separation put the children's attachment to their mothers at serious risk and that children

were more likely to develop insecure attachment. to form insecure attachments; 73 pairs of mothers and infants have also been studied, and the findings suggest that the complexity of parent-child attachment between mothers and infants and the high level of separation anxiety when the mother is employed tend to affect the quality of the toddler's attachment, leading to the formation of insecure or avoidant attachments (Stifter, Coulehan, & Fish, 1993).

However, there is a considerable amount of domestic research on parent-child relationships and infant attachment (Wu, W. R., 2005; Li, Y. D., 2003; Lin, Y. H., 2006; Lin, L. H., 2002; Tu, M. R., 1998), and most of the findings suggest that there is a correlation between parent-child relationships and attachment. Thus, mothers' own attitudes toward their children's separation anxiety, their work hours, and their family and marital status may influence the quality of their children's attachment. Peleg et al. (2006) found that separation anxiety generated by mothers and their children's separation anxiety were correlated and influenced each other. Working mothers can feel conflicted about being away from their children, which can lead to emotional guilt and anxiety, which in turn can affect their children's anxiety. Therefore, appropriate separation anxiety is important for the healthy development of both the mother and the child, as well as contributing to the parent-child relationship (Hock et al., 1989; Peleg et al., 2006). In contrast, Deiner and Kim (2004) found that mothers' self-reported separation anxiety was significantly negatively related to children's social withdrawal and self-regulation strategies.

2.1. State-Trait Anxiety

According to Hawke et al. (1983), based on Spielberg's theory of state-trait anxiety, a mother's parent-child separation anxiety is a state of anxiety caused by the infant's short-term separation. When a mother experiences separation anxiety, her emotional state may include three levels of perceptions, namely: self-anxiety, perceptions of child anxiety, and perceptions of child anxiety.

2.1.1. State Anxiety

According to Dang Caiping (2003), state anxiety is the short-term anxiety felt by an individual at a specific moment and in a specific situation. According to Shao Xiuqiao (2008), state anxiety is a short-lived state of nervousness, which is mainly manifested as a subjective and self-conscious feeling of worry. According to Zhao Li (2009), state anxiety has a short duration and is accompanied by fluctuations in emotional state. According to Zheng Hongjun (2011), state anxiety is a short-term emotional state characterized by some conscious subjective feelings caused by anxiety and tension, and is a highly autonomous nervous system activity. According to Li Fei (2013), state anxiety is an emotional state of nervousness and uneasiness that an individual exhibits when faced with a physical condition or situational stimulus. According to Lili Han (2013), state anxiety is a short-term emotional state that manifests itself in specific situations. According to Chen Xitong (2018), state anxiety is a short-term tense emotional state that is situational and time-sensitive. According to Zhao Dongfang (2020), state anxiety is a relatively short-term emotional state that changes with time and events. Individuals feel tense and anxious consciously and subjectively, indicating the level of anxiety the individual is feeling at the moment. What I agree with more in this article is the concept of state anxiety proposed by Chen Xitong: it refers to the short-term tense emotional state

of an individual that is situational and time-sensitive.

2.1.2. Trait anxiety

According to Dang Caiping (2003), unlike state anxiety, trait anxiety lasts longer, and is stable, and there are individual differences in anxiety states. According to Lu Lei (2006), trait anxiety is a relatively stable personality trait of anxiety tendency, which is a difference in people's tendency to react after perceiving a certain situation. Shao Xiuqiao (2008) argued that trait anxiety is generally characterized by relatively continuous and relatively stable individual differences in the tendency to perceive environmental stimuli as threatening. Zhao Li (2009) argued that trait anxiety lasts for a long period and that there are stable differences in anxiety tendencies among different populations. Zheng Hongjun (2011) argued that trait anxiety is a personality trait, i.e., the tendency to produce anxiety in various situations. According to Zhang Qinyuan (2012), trait anxiety is a long-term stable, and independent trait. Individuals with this personality have a higher sense of being evaluated, are more likely to feel threats from the external environment, and tend to adopt avoidance coping strategies. Summarizing the experience of previous researchers, Haidi Zhao (2013) concluded that trait anxiety is a trait attribute of personality with characteristics such as persistence, stability, and response tendency. Li Fei (2013) considered trait anxiety as a personality trait, a high tendency to anxiety, and a tendency to pre-react to the environment. According to Chen Xitong (2018), trait anxiety is a personality trait with high persistence and stability. Ong Keng Khee (2020) argued that trait anxiety is a personality trait that is an individual's tendency to react to potential environmental dangers. According to Zhao Dongfang (2020), trait anxiety is the tendency of an individual to produce increased autonomic responses such as nervousness, worry, and fear in the face of environmental stimuli. Wang, Xiangdong, Wang, Xilin, Ma, Hong, et al. Handbook of Mental Health Rating Scales (Updated Edition). Beijing: Chinese Journal of Mental Health, 1999, 205-209. state anxiety is an unpleasant emotional experience, such as tension, fear, worry, and nervousness, associated with excessive autonomic (vegetative) nerve functioning, usually transient. Trait anxiety is a personality trait that describes a relatively stable tendency to be anxious with individual differences.

State-trait anxiety is two classifications of anxiety. State anxiety is the feeling of fear, uneasiness, or nervousness at a given moment, while trait anxiety is a relatively stable individual difference that describes the tendency to feel anxious easily in a given situation or stimulus. These two types of anxiety are interrelated in many situations. For example, when faced with a stressful situation such as public speaking, one person may feel state anxiety, which is the nervousness and uneasiness of the particular moment of speaking. Another person may feel uneasy even in a relaxed environment due to chronic trait anxiety.

2.2. Mothers' state-trait anxiety

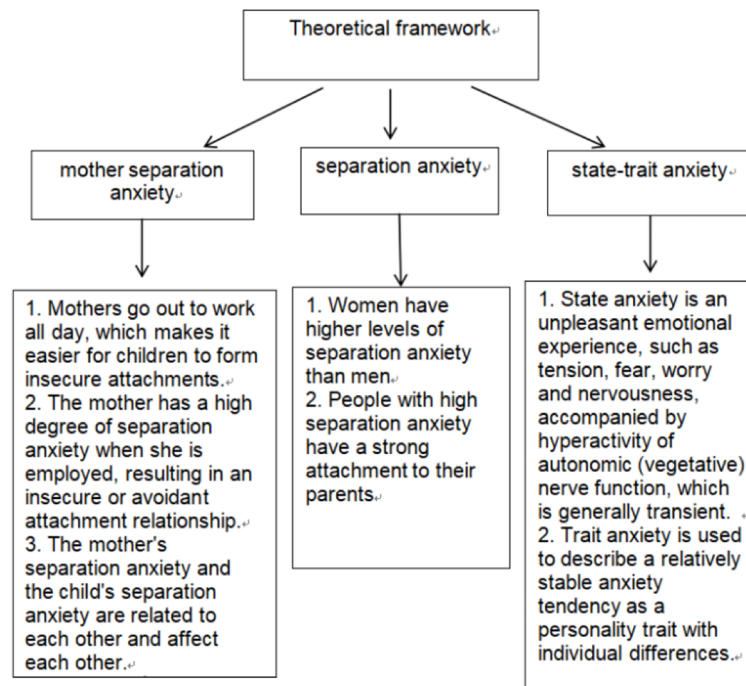
The mother's state-trait anxiety may manifest itself in emotional states such as excessive worry, nervousness, restlessness, or fear. This anxiety may affect the mother's daily life and work, and may even hurt the mood and behavior of family members. If the mother's state-trait anxiety is more severe, it is advisable to seek professional counseling and therapy. A psychotherapist can help the mother understand the nature and causes of anxiety and provide effective coping

strategies and techniques to alleviate anxiety symptoms.

2.3. State trait anxiety in young children

State trait anxiety in young children is transient anxiety that young children exhibit in specific situations. This anxiety

may affect the behavioral, emotional, and cognitive development of young children. State trait anxiety in young children may be related to a variety of factors such as family environment, educational style, and life experiences.



3. Significance of the Study

1. Theoretical significance: The study of state-trait anxiety is of great significance to the in-depth understanding of the nature and mechanism of action of anxiety. By studying the different characteristics and effects of state anxiety and trait anxiety, the psychological and neural mechanisms of anxiety can be further revealed, providing theoretical support for the prevention and intervention of anxiety disorders.

2. Practical significance: Studying state-trait anxiety, can guide the diagnosis and treatment of anxiety disorders in real life. Understanding the characteristics of different anxiety types can help develop more effective treatment programs and improve the mental health of anxiety patients.

3. Promoting the development of disciplines: The study of state-trait anxiety can promote the development of related disciplines, such as clinical psychology, neuroscience, and physiology. Through cross-fertilization with other disciplines, it can further expand the field of anxiety research and promote the progress of related disciplines.

4. Raising public awareness: Publicity and education on state-trait anxiety can increase public awareness and understanding of anxiety problems and reduce stigmatization and discrimination of anxiety disorders. By disseminating the results of anxiety research, public concern and attention to mental health can be enhanced, and the development of mental health in society can be promoted.

In conclusion, state-trait anxiety research is of great significance for the in-depth understanding of the nature and mechanism of action of anxiety, guiding practical applications, promoting the development of related disciplines, and raising public awareness. In the future, basic and clinical research on state-trait anxiety needs to be further strengthened to provide

a more scientific basis for the prevention and intervention of anxiety disorders.

4. Limitations:

4. 1. This study only examined the effects of maternal separation anxiety and state traits and did not examine the effects of other childcare providers in the family, thus failing to fully reveal other influences in the family.

4.2. The research process is short and the research methodology is relatively simple. Using only quantitative research methods, it is not possible to explore the deep-rooted causes of the current situation and relationship.

5. 5Causes of State and Trait Anxiety

State anxiety and trait anxiety arise for a variety of reasons. In the case of state anxiety, it is usually caused by specific situations, such as work stress, environmental changes, and health problems. When an individual is in these situations, he or she may feel nervousness and uneasiness, which leads to the emergence of state anxiety. Trait anxiety, on the other hand, is a long-term stable anxiety tendency of an individual, and its cause is more complicated. On the one hand, it may be influenced by genetic factors, i.e., individuals are naturally prone to feeling anxious. On the other hand, environmental factors may also have an impact on trait anxiety, such as the family environment, educational experiences, and life events during childhood. These factors may affect an individual's personality and psychological state, thus making certain individuals more prone to displaying trait anxiety.

6. How to Relieve State-trait Anxiety

State-trait anxiety is two different types of anxiety, where state anxiety is an immediate, situational emotional response, while trait anxiety is a relatively stable personality trait that usually refers to an individual's tendency to feel tense and uneasy in the face of stress. Here are some ways to alleviate state-trait anxiety:

6.1. Relaxation techniques: Learning and practicing relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing and progressive muscle relaxation, can help you relieve anxiety. These techniques can help you reduce physical tension and psychological stress.

6.2 Cognitive reframing: Changing the way you interpret threatening situations. Through cognitive reframing, you can reassess these situations and view them more realistically and rationally. This helps to reduce excessive anxiety and panic.

6.3 Responsive thinking: Develop a responsive mindset, i.e., a mode of thinking that focuses on solving problems and coping with threatening situations. This type of thinking can help you better deal with anxiety and stress.

6.4 Psychoeducation: Understand the nature and causes of anxiety and learn methods and techniques to cope with it. Through psychoeducation, you can better understand and manage your anxiety.

6.5 Lifestyle adjustment: Maintaining a healthy lifestyle, such as regular work and rest, healthy diet, moderate exercise, etc., can help alleviate state-trait anxiety. In addition, cultivating hobbies and maintaining social activities can also help improve mental health.

6.6 See support: Talk to friends and relatives, professional psychologists or therapists, and seek their support and help. Sharing your feelings and experiences with others can help relieve your anxiety, as well as gain support and advice from others.

In conclusion, alleviating state-trait anxiety requires a combination of methods and techniques. By practicing these methods, you can better manage your anxiety and improve your mental health.

7. Conclusion

State-Trait Anxiety is a common psychological state that involves the tension and uneasiness that an individual feels in a given situation. This anxiety can arise for a variety of reasons, such as facing stress, challenges, or uncertainty. Understanding the characteristics and causes of state-trait anxiety can help to better cope with and manage this emotion.

First, state-trait anxiety is context-specific. It usually occurs in certain specific situations, such as public speaking, taking a test, or talking to strangers. In these situations, individuals may feel their heart racing, shortness of breath, or disorganized thinking, resulting in poor performance. This state of anxiety may be influenced by past experiences, such as previous failures or traumas, which cause the individual to become fearful or worried about similar situations.

Second, state-trait anxiety is influenced by individual differences. Different people may react differently to the same situation, and some may be more prone to anxiety. This may be related to a variety of factors such as an individual's personality traits, upbringing, and life experiences. For example, some people may be naturally more sensitive or easily nervous or may have grown up with a lack of security, leading to worries about the unknown.

In addition, state-trait anxiety may be related to

physiological factors. Research suggests that the anxiety response may be associated with an imbalance in the autonomic nervous system, leading to physical tension and discomfort. This physiological response may further exacerbate psychological anxiety, creating a vicious cycle.

In conclusion, state-trait anxiety is a common psychological state that may be influenced by a variety of factors. Understanding its characteristics, causes, and coping strategies can help to better manage and minimize the impact of this emotion on an individual's life.

8. Based on the Research in This Paper the Results Were Obtained and The Following Recommendations Were Made:

8.1. Pre-school teachers, educators, and counselors must always be committed to training, workshops, and professional development, with a focus on encouraging parents to become more involved in their children's education. Mothers of only children must attend school or parent-teacher conferences, which may be of assistance in deepening their understanding of their relationship with their children. The overall recommendation is that coworkers, organizations, and family members should be valued. Some mothers or parents rarely seek help from others when they are in trouble and tend to rely on themselves to solve problems. Mothers should take a reasonable approach and actively seek help and support from their organization, family, friends, or relatives when they are experiencing difficulties.

8.2. To manage a child's separation anxiety, teachers and parents must work together to be the student's primary contact. They must empathize with the student, lowering themselves to the student's level and letting them know that it is acceptable for them to feel frustrated. Remind students to be with people they can trust or in a safe place surrounded by kind and caring people. They need to feel like they are learning, reaching a higher level, and that it is acceptable to feel frustrated with everyday life. Keep children on their toes and put themselves in safe places, but there are good people and bad people. To ensure the mental health of parents, school administrators can develop a partnership plan to continually develop, implement, evaluate, improve, and strengthen parent-child-promoting school partnership programs and practices. Schools can implement centralized participation of all parents in all school-organized activities. It may be beneficial for administrators and educators to try to involve all parents in their children's education, to educate parents regularly, and to make the educational experience more positive for everyone involved.

8.3. Future research may look at other factors such as emotional health, parental involvement, and mental health of parents with only one child. After this study, future researchers will be able to study the anxiety level of mothers when more only children enter kindergarten; further research, problem-solving, and problem-solving can be done in the future; children, observing more psychological and behavioral changes in small groups of children, being a good friend to the children, as well as further observing the anxiety characteristics of mothers of only one child.

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