

# Research and Practice on Parenting Anxiety at Home and Abroad

Chunyan Liang

Shandong Women's University, Jinan 250002, Shandong Province, China

**Abstract:** At present, our country is in the period of social transformation, the cultural form and values are impacted, and the family, as the epitome of society, is bound to be affected. The most prominent performance is the anxiety of parenting. Parenting anxiety affects parents' self-development and children's physical and mental health, and ultimately affects the quality of family education. Therefore, through the analysis of parenting anxiety in many countries, this study explores scientific strategies to alleviate parenting anxiety, in order to effectively ease family conflicts, form a good family environment, and improve the level of family parenting as a whole.

**Key words:** Family education; Parenting anxiety; Practice countermeasures; Comparative study between China and foreign countries

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**\*Corresponding author:** Chunyan Liang, 3024604244@qq.com

## 1 Introduction

The outline of China's children's development (2011-2020) issued by the State Council clearly states that: Children are the future of a country. Good pre-school education can help them form better study and living habits, and gradually form healthy and upward values and outlook on life, which is of great significance to their later life development. In preschool education, the most important is family education. Parents' unscientific parenting concept and negative parenting attitude will affect children's physical and mental health development, especially parents' negative emotions, which will imperceptibly affect children's

anxiety, sensitivity and inferiority complex, and affect their personality and social development.

## 2 The research significance of parenting anxiety

Parenting anxiety usually refers to a kind of restless mood produced by parents in the daily life, temperament, physical development, interpersonal relationship and other events of their children. It often occurs during the period of parenting, and is manifested as too strict or doting on the children, which makes it difficult to maintain a normal state of mind. In the 1990s, the United States conducted in-depth research on parenting anxiety" Desire for control, overprotection and unconditional refusal"<sup>[1]</sup>. Chinese scholars started this research late. Ouyang Jie (2014) carried out a survey in 2012. Among the 220 parents who participated in the survey, 90.7% of them said that they had a certain degree of anxiety in parenting, and some parents even had negative emotions such as anxiety and irritability<sup>[2]</sup>. Thus, parenting anxiety has become a common phenomenon in family education. Based on the analysis of parenting anxiety, this study explores the coping strategies to alleviate parenting anxiety, and improves the quality and efficiency of children's family education and kindergarten education, which is of great significance to children's healthy growth.

## 3 Analysis of parenting anxiety at home and abroad

### 3.1 Family internal factors

New Zealand, the United Kingdom and other countries have evaluated parents' psychological

changes and behavior performance in the process of parenting. Research shows that fathers' anxiety has a far greater impact on children than mothers. In China, research on parenting anxiety tends to focus on mothers". Under the influence of traditional ideas, the father's enthusiasm to participate in the process of parenting is not high, and the spiritual support is more than the actual action, which will virtually increase the anxiety of the mother in the process of parenting<sup>[3]</sup>." In addition, the relationship between husband and wife is also a major factor affecting parenting anxiety. Yang Wenjie (2010) once said: "A high-quality relationship between husband and wife can effectively alleviate the anxiety of parenting, and a harmonious relationship between husband and wife is an effective booster in the process of parenting." At present, many families in China adopt "role instead of parenting", that is, grandparents directly parenting. The conflict of parenting concepts between the two generations will also aggravate the problem of parenting anxiety<sup>[4]</sup>.

### **3.2 Social external factors**

Social system and cultural background will affect the generation of parenting anxiety. American scholars Christine Schetter and Lynlee Tanner (2012) believe that mothers will be affected by local policies and racism during pregnancy. This kind of parenting anxiety will accompany mothers through the whole process of parenting, which is difficult to eradicate and far-reaching<sup>[5]</sup>. Domestic researchers found that parents' parenting anxiety comes from educational resources to a greater extent. Compared with large and medium-sized cities, parents in many small cities have higher expectations of educational resources, which will cause anxiety of both parents and teachers.

## **4 Parenting anxiety in China and abroad and its influence on children's growth**

### **4.1 Parenting anxiety**

Ingeborg Lindhout (2006) found that parents with high anxiety will over protect and control their children's social activities. They will strictly screen their children's social environment and objects, and they will be over sensitive to their children's emotional needs. Chinese scholar Du Huiting (2011) found that excessive parenting anxiety can affect parents' enthusiasm for parenting and produce a

strong desire for control over their children, resulting in inequality and low harmony between parents and children, and children are prone to over dependence.

Mehdi Manoochehri (2014) pointed out that it is necessary to explore the relationship between parenting anxiety and parenting style. He believes that parents with high anxiety will create a repressive atmosphere in the process of parenting. Compared with peaceful parents, they lack rational judgment on the process of parenting and ignore their children's autonomy. Domestic scholar Xu Haiqing (2007) pointed out that parents with high anxiety tend to have high expectations for their children, while ignoring their children's actual physical and mental development level, which is mainly reflected in the comparison of academic performance, future education planning and so on.

## **4.2 The influence of parenting anxiety on children**

### **4.2.1 Impact on infants**

Studies have pointed out that anxiety has a great impact on infants. When a mother is raising a baby, she can feel the needs of the baby in time through her own sensitivity to ensure its healthy growth. However, anxiety can lead to excessive attention of the mother, resulting in the decline of the child's immunity, weakened adaptability to the surrounding environment, and then affect the normal physical development. Chinese scholars have done in-depth research on the relationship between the needs of infants and mothers' anxiety, and come to the conclusion that "the higher the degree of anxiety, the more difficult it is to meet the needs of infants".

### **4.2.2 Impact on children in early childhood**

Due to overprotection, parents with high anxiety will reduce children's tolerance to strange environment, and also affect children's cognitive ability and judgment development to a certain extent, making them unable to define their own needs. In addition, high anxiety parents are not conducive to the development of children's personalization and socialization, and will encounter many obstacles in the social process. Generally speaking, high anxiety families are too strict with children, which makes them always in a low position and easy to form a more timid state of mind. Children are more inclined to play a weak role, thus forming an inferiority complex.

### **4.2.3 Impact on adolescent children**

Most of the domestic researches focus on infants and young children, but few on the influence of parenting anxiety on adolescent children. From the perspective of physical and mental development, it is speculated that anxiety families will have a greater impact on children in the future. In foreign countries, there are many scholars on the impact of parenting anxiety on adolescent children. Ronald Rapee (2009) pointed out that negative emotions and low self-control in adolescence are largely affected by parents with high anxiety in childhood. ANA Pereira (2014) pointed out that individual cognitive impairment is largely related to parental anxiety in childhood. Overprotection in childhood will greatly affect children's cognitive style when they grow up.

## **5 Countermeasures to the problem of parenting anxiety**

### **5.1 Paying more attention to parenting anxiety**

In the 1990s, many scholars have studied it. Parenting anxiety is common in all families. If we want to improve the quality of early childhood education, we need to pay more attention to parenting anxiety and eliminate the hidden dangers in the process of parenting. In China, the concern of all walks of life on the problem of parenting anxiety is also rising. In recent years, there are more and more researches on parenting anxiety in China. Many scholars have realized the seriousness of parenting anxiety. In October 2015, China officially issued the "guidance on strengthening family education", which has aroused great concern of the government. Parenting anxiety is not only a family problem, but also related to the fate of the country and society. It is of practical significance to explore more high-quality, comprehensive and systematic measures to deal with parenting anxiety.

### **5.2 Scientific evaluation and definition of parenting anxiety**

The existing evaluation and definition model of parenting anxiety in China is relatively backward, which is not suitable for parents to conduct self-test and reflection in parenting in the new era. Therefore, we must establish a comprehensive and multi angle parenting anxiety evaluation system to help parents reflect on their own problems in the process of

parenting, and then help them find the causes of parenting anxiety. Through the development of a more universal parenting anxiety evaluation table, we can help parents accurately evaluate and define their parenting anxiety. The research on parenting anxiety assessment abroad is more advanced. In the United States, the parenting anxiety of parents has been comprehensively assessed by DAS (clinical table for mother's parenting anxiety assessment), CPBQ (parenting behavior survey) and pas (children's anxiety assessment), which is of great significance to alleviate parenting anxiety. Through the scientific evaluation of parenting anxiety, parents can truly understand the problems in the process of parenting, update their parenting concepts and methods, and relieve the pressure of parenting.

### **5.3 Relieving the anxiety of parenting with the cooperation of Jiayuan Society**

In the research of parenting anxiety abroad, the main research point is the relationship between environment and children. Chuan Xiaoyan (2007) pointed out that parents can rationally analyze the problems existing in the process of parenting by virtue of different parenting environments, and then gradually come up with the optimal parenting strategies to alleviate parenting anxiety. In our country, the cooperation mode of home society is often used to enhance the parents' sense of security by allowing their parents to participate in the process of kindergarten parenting. For example, a monitoring system can be installed in the kindergarten to provide each child with an exclusive monitoring account. Parents can log in to the baby app through their mobile phones to keep track of children's trends at any time. In addition, parents can participate in parent-child activities in kindergartens during the open day activities. Through close interaction, the relationship among parents, children and kindergarten teachers can be improved, and the anxiety in the process of parenting can be alleviated. The community can take the lead in setting up a "parenting education club" to strengthen the contact between parents. By encouraging communication between parents, it can effectively reduce parents' sense of powerlessness in the process of parenting and enrich family parenting resources. It can be seen that the cooperation mode of Jiayuan society can help parents re-examine the problem of parenting, and then comprehensively

improve the effect of parenting.

## 6 Conclusion

In conclusion, parenting anxiety is a common problem in many countries. Research shows that through the analysis of the world's parenting anxiety, it can effectively alleviate the current children's anxiety and improve the quality of parenting. It is of great significance for the healthy development of children's physical and mental health and the improvement of the comprehensive level of parenting in China by appeal to the community participate in the study of parenting anxiety, and helping parents to conduct a more scientific evaluation of parenting anxiety and to carry out more diversified parenting anxiety alleviation activities.

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