

Coping Style as a Mediator between Adult Attachment Styles and Social Anxiety in College Students from Gansu, China

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Abstract: *In an endeavor to understand the intricate relationships between adult attachment styles, coping mechanisms, and social anxiety among Chinese college students, this research was conducted in Gansu, China, with a robust sample size of 1,731 participants. A quantitative research design was employed, leveraging the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) technique to juxtapose an "Estimated Model" with an ideal "Saturated Model". The instruments selected for this study were the 24-item Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale (LSAS), the 18-item Adult Attachment Scale (AAS Revised Version), and the 62-item Coping Style Questionnaire (CSQ) developed by Xiao Jihua and Xu Xiufeng in 1996. Findings underscored a significant correlation between adult attachment and social anxiety levels, while also drawing attention to the direct influence exerted by coping styles, contrary to our mediation hypothesis. The study's revelations suggest cultural specificities inherent to the Gansu province. The insights garnered not only augment the academic literature but also proffer pragmatic recommendations for mental health interventions. By encapsulating the psychological intricacies of Chinese college students, this research amplifies the importance of integrating cultural insights into psychological paradigms.*

Keywords: Coping Mechanisms, Mediators, Adult Attachment Styles, Social Anxiety, and College Students

1. Introduction

Social anxiety embodies the distressing emotions—such as fear, tension, and anxiety—stemming from an intense concern over being negatively assessed by others during interpersonal interactions (Boehme, Miltner & Straube, 2014; Morrison & Heimberg, 2013). While anxiety disorders, notably social anxiety disorder, find their roots often in childhood, their untreated progression can manifest into chronic conditions, culminating in significant emotional distress and impairments in both social and academic spheres (Alkozei et al., 2015).

It's evident that the ramifications of social anxiety go beyond immediate emotional discomfort. Adolescents grappling with social anxiety are at heightened risk for a range of adverse outcomes, including depression, substance misuse, social limitations, premature school departure, academic underachievement, and even victimization (Garcia-Lopez et al., 2014; Ranta et al., 2012). Notably, the detrimental effects of social anxiety penetrate deeply into the lives of college students, impeding their academic progress (Brook & Willoughby, 2015), undermining interpersonal relationships (Davila & Beck, 2003), and compromising both physical and psychological well-being (Wu Xiaowei et al., 2016).

In the face of such stressors, coping emerges as a pivotal factor in mental health. Coping can be viewed as a multifaceted strategy, encompassing both cognitive and behavioral mechanisms, devised to navigate and manage the demands posed by stress-inducing situations (Doron et al.,

2013). The foundation of one's coping mechanism may be intricately tied to early interpersonal dynamics, particularly those rooted in attachment experiences. According to attachment theory, the quality of attachment can wield significant influence on social anxiety levels (Vertue, 2003; Guo Xiaowei, 2000). Securely attached individuals often exhibit superior social interactions and form fulfilling relationships, resulting in diminished social anxiety. Conversely, those displaying high attachment avoidance tend to shun intimate bonds, leading to reduced social acceptance and heightened social anxiety (Hummel & Gross, 2001; Riggs & Kaminski, 2010).

Folkman's (1984) insights illuminate the intricate ways in which coping styles can influence an individual's well-being. Coping not only mediates the body's neurochemical responses but also can manifest in behaviors, some potentially harmful, that directly impact physical and psychological health.

Social anxiety is an alarmingly prevalent psychological concern among college students globally. The significance of this issue is underscored by its implications on normal campus life, with severe manifestations detrimentally affecting students' psychosocial adaptation, interpersonal communications, academic achievements, and leading to concomitant problems such as depression and aggressive behaviors (Brook & Willoughby, 2015; Su & Song, 2005; Morrison & Heimberg, 2013; Wu et al., 2015). Indeed, recent data suggests that an overwhelming 65.4% of college students experience moderate social anxiety, with 22.4% exhibiting severe symptoms (Zhao & Dai, 2016).

Key contributors to social anxiety encompass factors such as adult attachment, coping styles, self-esteem, and resilience. Such anxiety, predominantly observed in the age range of 13-24 years, not only jeopardizes interpersonal relationships but also poses substantial threats to the individual's physical and mental well-being (Zhao Xin et al., 2014). In more severe cases, it can escalate into social anxiety disorders, severely impairing one's social functions (Wei Zhengxin & HuoLiqin, 2009).

Significant literature points towards the intricate relationship between adult attachment and social anxiety. Manning et al. (2017) illustrated a correlation between insecure attachment types and social anxiety, while research by Zhao Jing et al. (2016) and Cai Ruili and Lei Xiangzhu (2011) further emphasized the predictive nature of attachment on interpersonal efficacy and the degree of social anxiety, respectively.

Despite the rich discourse on adult attachment through emotional lenses, there remains a research gap in the cognitive perspective. Furthermore, coping styles, especially their problem-solving and emotion-oriented nature, have profound implications on mental health outcomes, including social anxiety (NiuGengfeng et al., 2013; Su Zhiqiang & Zhang Dajun, 2015).

Anecdotal evidence from personal interactions with students hints at the role of family influences and established coping mechanisms in shaping social anxiety manifestations. Thus, the critical question emerges: How do adult attachment characteristics, influenced by familial and personal coping strategies, impact social anxiety among college students?

This study stands as a pivotal contribution to the realm of psychological research, primarily by elucidating the intricate interrelationships between adult attachment characteristics, coping styles, and social anxiety among college students, thus filling a significant knowledge gap in the field. By approaching adult attachment from a novel cognitive perspective, it offers an innovative lens, expanding the dimensions through which attachment is conventionally understood and studied. Furthermore, set against the backdrop of Gansu, China, the research delivers invaluable cross-cultural insights about the manifestation and determinants of social anxiety, enhancing the existing body of knowledge that may be largely anchored in Western contexts. This confluence of nuanced understanding, methodological innovation, and cultural depth ensures that the study's findings bear profound implications for educators, counselors, and mental health professionals globally. Thus this study aims to bridge the knowledge gap and shed light on the intricate relationship between adult attachment characteristics, coping styles, and social anxiety in college students.

Research questions:

- 1) How do adult attachment styles directly influence social anxiety?
- 2) How do coping styles mediate this relationship among college students in Gansu, China?

2. Literature Review

Social anxiety emerges from negative emotional states like fear, tension, and apprehension when an individual confronts unfamiliar or seemingly threatening circumstances (Huang, 2002). The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (2013) characterizes social anxiety as a profound worry by individuals about potential judgment in social or performance situations, manifesting in college students as feelings of shame or embarrassment about their nervous behaviors.

Historically, Watson & Friend (1969) elucidated social anxiety as an individual's avoidance of social settings due to distress, fear, and trepidation about negative evaluations. Delving into interpersonal dynamics, theories suggest that maladaptive behaviors (like minimal eye contact or avoiding self-exposure) hinder positive interactions. This, coupled with negative feedback, amplifies apprehensions, thereby sustaining social anxiety symptoms. Social anxiety, furthermore, can be influenced by personal perceptions, societal structures, and interactions with others. In today's digitally connected world, online anonymity offers a shield, leading many to gravitate towards reduced real-world interactions for comfort.

Turning to the concept of adult attachment, it encapsulates the recall and interpretation of childhood attachment experiences, while also assessing present-day attachment evaluations. Attachment theory, one of psychology's influential frameworks (Finkel & Simpson, 2015), underscores our inclination to forge emotional connections with specific individuals (Yip et al., 2018). Notably, familial relationships and early childhood experiences shape social anxiety. Existing research indicates that overprotective parenting styles, alongside parent-child attachment quality, correlate with social anxiety during both adolescence and adulthood. However, the exploration of adult attachment's relation to social anxiety remains under-researched, with limited studies distinguishing between securely and insecurely attached adults (Wu & Fang, 2004).

Lastly, coping styles emerge as significant determinants of an individual's social anxiety levels. While positive coping mechanisms can temper social anxiety, negative styles might exacerbate the condition. Folkman and Lazarus (1992) proffer a seminal definition of "coping" as an individual's response to perceived threats from environmental interactions, especially when these surpass their capacities. Stemming from the study of stress, Lazarus (1966) proposed a stress-cognitive model, presenting coping as a blend of cognitive evaluation and active coping processes. Coping embodies systematic activities encompassing emotions, cognition, and behaviors in response to stress. According to Liang (2005), coping styles, reflecting personal characteristics, remain somewhat consistent across different stress situations, becoming a foundational component of how an individual responds to stress.

3. Conceptual Framework of the Study

The study operates at the intersection of three conceptual pillars: Social Anxiety, Adult Attachment, and Coping

Styles. Each of these domains is instrumental in shaping how individuals interact with their social environment, form emotional bonds, and manage stress. Social anxiety, as delineated by Huang (2002) and further detailed in the DSM-2013, encapsulates the negative emotional experiences an individual faces when confronted with unfamiliar or evaluative social scenarios. College students, for instance, may feel intense embarrassment or shame due to their own perceived behaviors or symptoms in such contexts. Jiang (2018) broadens this perspective by highlighting a cyclic pattern: maladaptive behaviors in social settings lead to fewer positive interactions, which in turn reinforces individuals' apprehensions about social engagement. The modern digital era adds another layer, as digital platforms and their associated anonymity can deter face-to-face interactions and, by extension, amplify social anxiety.

Moving to the realm of adult attachment, the concepts put forth by Finkel & Simpson (2015) and Yip et al. (2018) emphasize that adults tend to reflect and act upon their childhood attachment experiences, seeking and nurturing specific emotional bonds as they mature. This continuum from childhood to adulthood is crucial. Parental styles, especially those skewed towards overprotection, combined with the nature of parent-child attachment, have discernible effects on the onset and persistence of social anxiety. However, the research landscape presents a gap, especially concerning the nuances differentiating securely and insecurely attached adults and their predisposition to social anxiety.

Lastly, the study delves into coping styles. Drawing upon the definitions and frameworks established by Folkman and Lazarus (1992), coping emerges when individuals discern potential threats from their environment, especially if such challenges are perceived as overwhelming. Lazarus (1966) contributes further granularity, positing coping as a nuanced interplay of cognitive evaluations and subsequent responses to stress. This multifaceted response encompasses emotional, cognitive, and behavioral reactions. Liang (2005) adds another dimension, emphasizing that while coping styles are inherently personal, they display a consistent essence across various stress-driven scenarios.

The intricate interplay among these pillars forms the crux of the study. Specifically, the ways adult attachment memories and experiences can predispose individuals to social anxiety, and how different coping strategies can modulate, either alleviating or exacerbating, these anxiety levels. The overarching aim is to comprehensively explore the nexus of adult attachment patterns and coping styles and their collective influence on social anxiety manifestations.

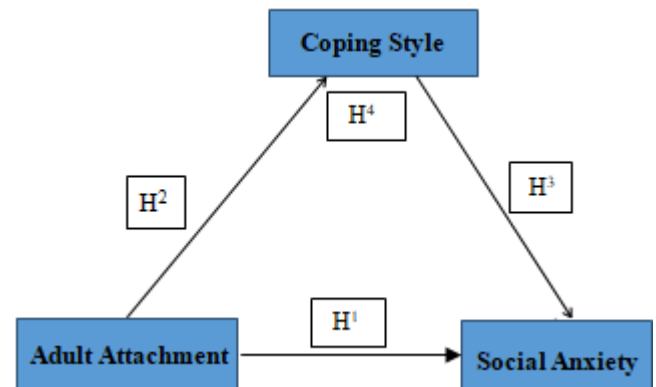


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

based on the theoretical framework, here are the null hypotheses for the four hypotheses:

- 1) **Adult Attachment and Social Anxiety (Ho1):** There is no significant relationship between adult attachment experiences and the levels of social anxiety in individuals.
- 2) **Adult Attachment and Coping Styles (Ho2):** There is no significant relationship between adult attachment experiences and the adoption of particular coping styles (either positive or negative).
- 3) **Coping Styles and Social Anxiety (Ho3):** The adoption of specific coping styles (either negative or positive) has no significant effect on the levels of social anxiety in individuals.
- 4) **The Mediator Role of Coping Styles between Adult Attachment and Social Anxiety (Ho4):** Coping styles do not mediate the relationship between adult attachment and social anxiety in individuals.

4. Research Methodology

Positivism, in its philosophical context, underscores the need for objective and empirical exploration of reality to acquire knowledge. Quantitative research, grounded in positivist beliefs, involves a methodical gathering and examination of numerical information to discern patterns, correlations, and shifts. This investigation will utilize a survey as a quantitative research approach to delve into the prevalent state of social anxiety among Chinese college students. The structured character of the survey method aligns well with SEM, guaranteeing uniform data acquisition across all participants.

Population and sample

Students who were completing their undergraduate degrees at universities in China served as the study's participants. Multi-stage cluster sampling was an intricate method that involved various sampling stages to pinpoint participants from a broad and varied demographic. Four universities were chosen for this research, all of which were located in the less urbanized regions of Northwest China, specifically in Gansu Province. For structural equation modelling (SEM), the aggregate student count across the chosen universities stood at 1371. The participant sample size was determined using the table crafted by Krecie and Morgan (1970).

The results concerning the given sample indicated a gender disparity. Males made up 19.8% of the participants, representing 271 out of the 1371 individuals. In contrast, females constituted the majority at 80.2%, equalling 1100 participants.

Data collection

The research tool employed in this study was adapted and adopted from prior research. The current study's questionnaire consists of 5 sections filled with close-ended queries. For assessing Social Anxiety, the primary tool utilized was the Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale (LSAS), introduced by Liebowitz in 1987. The LSAS, comprising 24 items, is a self-assessment measure used to gauge the impact of social anxiety across various situations. Regarding Adult Attachment, the instrument chosen was the Adult Attachment Scale (AAS Revised Version). This self-rating scale includes three subscales: closeness, dependence, and anxiety. Responses are recorded on a five-point scale, which ranges from entirely unsatisfactory to wholly agreeable. For Coping Style, the Coping Style Questionnaire (CSQ), developed by Xiao Jihua and Xu Xiufeng in 1996, was used. The CSQ consists of 62 items spread over 6 subscales. These subscales—problem-solving, self-blame, seeking help, fantasies, withdrawal, and rationalization—are named based on their item content. The distribution of items for each subscale is as follows: problem-solving (12 items), self-blame (10 items), seeking help (10 items), fantasies (10 items), withdrawal (11 items), and rationalization (11 items).

Convergent validity evaluates the degree to which scores from an instrument align with scores from similar tools, thus confirming its efficacy in measuring a specific construct (Campbell & Fiske, 1959). Factor analysis, a statistical method, delves into the inherent structure of a group of variables and is frequently employed in research to determine convergent validity. Confidence in the measurement of the underlying construct is bolstered when loadings are robust, typically ranging between 0.7 and 0.9 (Widaman, 2010). Beyond factor analysis, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) metric is derived. Convergent validity is deemed present when the constructs achieve an AVE of 0.5 or above (Fornell&Larcker, 1981; Sweeney & Soutar, 2001).

Discriminant validity plays a pivotal role in research and measurement. As defined by Zikmund, Babin, Carr, & Griffin (2013), discriminant validity underscores the distinctness of a construct. It is effectively established when a scale, which shouldn't have a strong correlation with a measure of a different construct, indeed remains uncorrelated. To assess discriminant validity, the squared root of AVE for each construct should exceed its inter-correlations with other constructs, as highlighted by Hair et al. (2014).

Coefficient alpha, symbolized as α , evaluates the internal consistency reliability of a measure. It gauges how closely multiple items, intended to measure the same construct,

correlate with one another. This value can range between 0 and 1, with values closer to 1 indicating higher reliability. A coefficient alpha value greater than 0.70 typically suggests that the items within the scale consistently and reliably measure the intended construct. From the results of the pilot study, all constructs exhibited satisfactory reliability, evidenced by Cronbach's Alpha values exceeding 0.7, confirming the acceptable reliability of these constructs.

Data Screening

Before proceeding with SEM analyses, it's imperative to screen and prepare the data. Among the 1371 respondents, no missing data were observed. One of the primary concerns in quantitative research is the presence of outliers. To address this, Mahalanobis Distance was utilized to detect multivariate outliers. A Mahalanobis distance value below 0.001 signifies an outlier. However, the results indicated that no cases fell below the threshold of 0.001, confirming the absence of outliers in the dataset. For normality testing, both Mardia's multivariate skewness ($\beta = 2.57, p < 0.01$) and Mardia's multivariate kurtosis ($\beta = 22.32, p > 0.01$) were evaluated. Given these outcomes, the analysis proceeded using Smart PLS, a non-parametric analysis tool, similar to the approach adopted by Ramayah et al. (2017) for assessing multivariate normality.

In assessing linearity, residual scatter plots were employed showing a good linearity. When assumptions are met, residuals tend to scatter around the 0 mark, implying that most scores cluster around the central 0 point (Flury&Riedwyl, 1988).

Multicollinearity gauges the correlation level among independent variables (Hair et al., 2010). The results revealed an absence of collinearity within the structural model since all VIF values remained below 10, as corroborated by Shrestha (2020). The preceding table further emphasized the absence of multicollinearity, with VIF values consistently registering below 10.

5. Findings

In this research, Structural Equation Modelling was executed using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach. The analysis was facilitated by the SmartPLS 3.0 software (Ringle et al., 2015). Navigating the intricate terrain of research often culminates in the formulation of a final model, which stands as an authentic reflection of the foundational theoretical framework. This pivotal phase commences the estimation of the final model, which encapsulates the interplay between various latent constructs and manifest variables. By drawing on insights from preliminary analyses and measurements, the final model seeks to unravel the intricacies of the phenomena under scrutiny. In the ensuing segment, the results of this analytical expedition are disclosed, shedding light on the intricate web of associations underpinning the research framework.

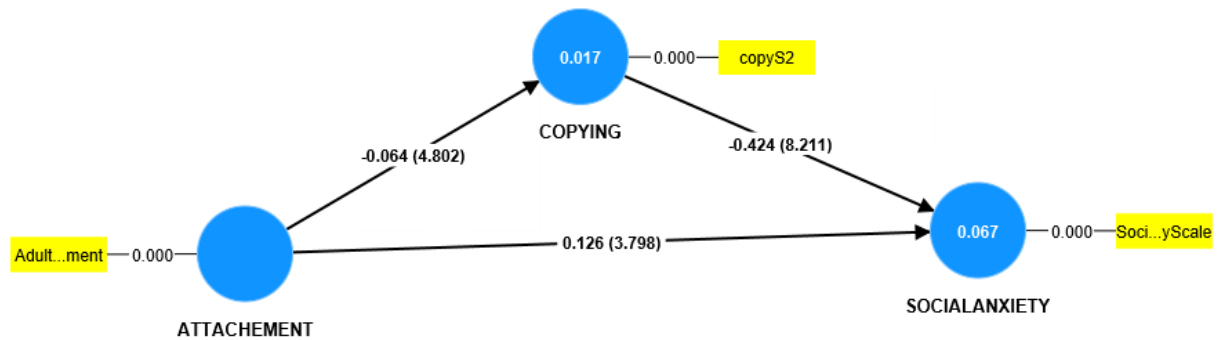


Figure 4.2: The Graphical output of Final Model estimation

To interpret the diagram, the researcher relied on "Total path coefficients." These coefficients delineate the cumulative direct or indirect impacts of independent variables on dependent variables within a Structural Equation Model

(SEM) or a path analysis (refer to Table). Such coefficients offer a glimpse into the magnitude and orientation of associations between the model's variables.

Table: Final Model estimation

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ((O/STDEV))	P values
Attachment -> Copying	-0.064	-0.064	0.013	4.802	0.000
Attachment -> Social Anxiety	0.126	0.126	0.033	3.798	0.000
Copying -> Social Anxiety	-0.424	-0.424	0.052	8.211	0.000
Attachment -> Copying -> Social Anxiety	0.027	0.027	0.007	4.158	0.000

Table () reveals the following results:

1) Attachment -> Copying:

- **Original Sample (O):** The data in this group has a mean of -0.064.
- **Sample Mean (M):** The sample mean is also -0.064, which means the data is centered around this value.
- **Standard Deviation (STDEV):** The standard deviation is 0.013, indicating that the data points are relatively close to the mean.
- **T Statistics ((O/STDEV)):** The t-statistic is 4.802, which is quite large. This suggests that there is a significant difference between the data in this group and a hypothetical population with a mean of zero.
- **P Values:** The p-value is 0.000, which is less than the commonly used significance level of 0.05. This indicates that the difference observed is statistically significant, and there is strong evidence against the null hypothesis.

2) Attachment -> Social Anxiety:

- **Original Sample (O):** The data in this group has a mean of 0.126.
- **Sample Mean (M):** The sample mean is also 0.126, indicating that the data is centered around this value.
- **Standard Deviation (STDEV):** The standard deviation is 0.033, suggesting that the data points have some spread around the mean.
- **T Statistics ((O/STDEV)):** The t-statistic is 3.798, which is relatively large. This suggests a significant difference between the data in this group and a hypothetical population with a mean of zero.
- **P Values:** The p-value is 0.000, indicating that the observed difference is statistically significant.

3) Copying -> Social Anxiety:

- **Original Sample (O):** The data in this group has a mean of -0.424.
- **Sample Mean (M):** The sample mean is also -0.424, indicating that the data is centered around this value.
- **Standard Deviation (STDEV):** The standard deviation is 0.052, suggesting that the data points have a relatively larger spread around the mean.
- **T Statistics ((O/STDEV)):** The t-statistic is 8.211, which is quite large. This indicates a highly significant difference between the data in this group and a hypothetical population with a mean of zero.
- **P Values:** The p-value is 0.000, demonstrating strong statistical significance.

In summary, for all comparisons, the data differs significantly from a hypothetical population with a mean of zero. The small p-values (all 0.000) indicate that these differences are statistically significant. This suggests that there are meaningful differences between the groups being compared in each case.

Research Question 2: Does coping strategy mediate the link between adult attachment and social anxiety in GanSu Province's college students?

To ascertain whether coping strategies serve as mediators between adult attachment and social anxiety, one can examine the path coefficients of the refined model:

Attachment -> Copying -> Social Anxiety:

- **Original Sample (O):** The data in this group has a mean of 0.027.
- **Sample Mean (M):** The sample mean is also 0.027, indicating that the data is centered around this value.

- **Standard Deviation (STDEV):** The standard deviation is 0.007, suggesting that the data points are closely clustered around the mean.
- **T Statistics (|O/STDEV|):** The t-statistic is 4.158, which is relatively large. This indicates a significant difference between the data in this group and a hypothetical population with a mean of zero.
- **P Values:** The p-value is 0.000, indicating strong statistical significance.

Given these results, there's both a direct pathway from ATTACHMENT to SOCIALANXIETY and an indirect pathway via COPING. This dual presence points to partial mediation. This infers that coping styles only partly mediate the connection between adult attachment and social anxiety in the mentioned students.

In summary:

Both direct and indirect effects are present in the model. • Attachment exerts both a direct positive and an indirect impact on social anxiety through coping strategies. • Coping strategies present a direct negative influence on social anxiety. • Inferiority feelings directly augment social anxiety.

R-squared is a statistical measure signifying the proportion of variance in a dependent variable explained by an independent variable in a regression model. Table () displays the R-squared outcomes for the refined model.

Table: R-square of the Final model Estimation

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Coping Style Questionnaire	0.017	0.016
Social Anxiety Scale	0.312	0.309

For the Coping Style Questionnaire, the R-squared value stands at 0.017, with an adjusted R Square of 0.016. This means the model explains about 1.7% of the variability in coping styles. Although this is a modest amount of variance explained, it hints at other significant factors influencing coping styles not included in this model. On the other hand, the Social Anxiety Scale boasts an R-squared value of 0.312 and an adjusted R Square of 0.309, explaining approximately 31.2% of the variance. While this is more substantial, it's crucial to recognize there might be additional influential factors not captured by the model.

Model fit is a cornerstone in SEM and statistical evaluations, acting as a crucial metric for gauging a model's appropriateness and precision. The ensuing table presents the model fit outcomes of the Final Model Estimation.

Table: Model fit of the Final model Estimation

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0	0.073
d_ ULS	0	0.08
d_ G	0	0.012
Chi-Square	0	95.686
NFI	1	0.92

The statistics presented juxtapose the "Saturated Model" (perfect fit) against the "Estimated Model" (our actual model). Here's a breakdown of the fit indices:

- The SRMR of 0.073 for the estimated model indicates a decent fit. Although not as perfect as the saturated model, it adequately mirrors the observed data.
- A d_ ULS of 0.08 is small, showing a close fit between the estimated and saturated models.
- The d_ G of 0.012 also highlights a close fit.
- The chi-square value for the estimated model exceeds 0. While this implies a divergence from the observed data, the chi-square's sensitivity to sample size means larger datasets can yield significant results.
- An NFI of 0.92, nearing 1, suggests a commendable fit for the estimated model.

In essence, the estimated model generally aligns well with the data across various fit metrics, albeit with slight deviations from the perfect saturated model.

Overall, the model's outer loadings are robust, reflecting that observed items adeptly denote their respective latent constructs, ensuring the measurement model's quality.

Considering the PLS-SEM model outcomes, key conclusions include:

Hypotheses Testing Results:

- 1) "Attachment" and "Copying": A significant and negative path coefficient from "Attachment" to "Copying" ($p < 0.001$). This support the hypothesis of a significant direct relationship.
- 2) "Attachment" and "Social Anxiety": A significant and positive path coefficient from "Attachment" to "Social Anxiety" ($p < 0.001$). This corroborates the hypothesized direct relationship.
- 3) "Copying" and "Social Anxiety": A significant and negative path coefficient from "Copying" to "Social Anxiety" ($p < 0.001$). This upholds the direct relationship hypothesis.
- 4) Three-way interaction: A significant and positive path coefficient for the three-way interaction to "Social Anxiety" ($p < 0.001$). This backs the hypothesized significant direct relationship.

In summary, our hypotheses testing results have provided compelling evidence for the relationships under investigation. Firstly, the significant and negative path coefficient from "Attachment" to "Copying" ($p < 0.001$) confirms the presence of a meaningful direct relationship between these factors. Similarly, the significant and positive path coefficient from "Attachment" to "Social Anxiety" ($p < 0.001$) corroborates the hypothesized direct association between these variables. Furthermore, the significant and negative path coefficient from "Copying" to "Social Anxiety" ($p < 0.001$) underscores the existence of a direct relationship. Lastly, the significant and positive path coefficient for the three-way interaction to "Social Anxiety" ($p < 0.001$) adds weight to our hypothesis of a significant direct relationship in this context. These findings collectively enhance our understanding of the intricate dynamics among these variables, emphasizing the importance of considering their direct relationships in our analytical framework.

6. Conclusions

The study significantly advances the comprehension of factors impacting Chinese college students in Gansu. It underscores the pivotal roles played by attachment styles, coping strategies, and psychological resilience in shaping social anxiety among this population. These findings not only emphasize the importance of these psychological constructs but also reveal the interconnectedness between them, shedding light on their collective influence on social anxiety.

One key revelation is the mediating role of coping styles in the relationship between adult attachment and social anxiety. While a direct association between adult attachment and social anxiety is evident, the study highlights that coping styles act as a crucial intermediary factor. This suggests that how individuals manage stress and adversity plays a substantial role in determining the extent to which attachment styles contribute to social anxiety.

Moreover, the identification of an indirect negative path via coping styles implies a mitigatory function. In other words, effective coping mechanisms can potentially buffer the impact of attachment-related issues on social anxiety. This underscores the need for interventions that focus on enhancing coping skills among individuals with specific attachment patterns, as it may help reduce the severity of social anxiety symptoms.

In essence, this study offers a comprehensive perspective on the intricate interplay among attachment, coping, and social anxiety within the context of Chinese college students in Gansu. It emphasizes the necessity of adopting an integrated approach to comprehend and address social anxiety effectively. These insights not only contribute to the academic literature but also have practical implications for mental health intervention strategies tailored to this demographic.

Furthermore, the multidisciplinary nature of this research is noteworthy. By exploring the relationships among psychological elements, this study epitomizes the essence of multidisciplinary inquiry. It opens avenues to promote holistic well-being and enrich our collective understanding of human emotions and behaviors, transcending traditional disciplinary boundaries. This holistic approach is essential for addressing complex issues like social anxiety comprehensively.

In conclusion, the study's findings provide a deeper understanding of the factors influencing social anxiety among Chinese college students in Gansu, emphasizing the interconnected roles of attachment, coping, and psychological resilience. These insights have both academic and practical significance, underlining the importance of integrated approaches and multidisciplinary research in mental health studies.

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