

Washington University in St. Louis

Washington University Open Scholarship

Volume 13

Washington University
Undergraduate Research Digest

Spring 2018

Intra- and Intergroup Social Anxiety in Different Demographics

Lingyan Yu

Washington University in St. Louis

Follow this and additional works at: https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/wuurd_vol13

Recommended Citation

Yu, Lingyan, "Intra- and Intergroup Social Anxiety in Different Demographics" (2018). *Volume 13*. 232.
https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/wuurd_vol13/232

This Abstracts S-Z is brought to you for free and open access by the Washington University Undergraduate Research Digest at Washington University Open Scholarship. It has been accepted for inclusion in Volume 13 by an authorized administrator of Washington University Open Scholarship. For more information, please contact digital@wumail.wustl.edu.

INTRA- AND INTERGROUP SOCIAL ANXIETY IN DIFFERENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Lingyan Yu

Mentor: Thomas L. Rodebaugh

People typically report elevated social anxiety when interacting with out-groups (OGs) compared to their in-group (IG), particularly when groups are defined by race or ethnicity. Social anxiety entails both fear and avoidance of social situations, both of which could plausibly be moderated by race. We were thus interested in disassociating anxiety and avoidance in different social contexts and testing how race moderates these relationships. We hypothesized that all participants would be more anxious and avoidant with an OG than with their IG; however, minority participants would exhibit higher anxiety but similar avoidance with an OG compared to nonminority participants. We recruited 47 undergraduates in total. They were first asked to write about their IG and OG members, and then administered the Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale, which assesses fear and avoidance of different social situations. Each of these situations was framed in both IG and OG conditions and demographic information was collected at the end of the study. Our first hypothesis was confirmed by t-tests comparing anxiety and avoidance between IG and OG: participants reported significantly higher anxiety and avoidance with their OG. Using multilevel modeling, we found that avoidance of IG predicted avoidance of OG and vice versa. Race, the Level 2 predictor, was also shown to have a significant effect on the intercepts when predicting OG anxiety using IG anxiety and predicting IG avoidance using OG avoidance. Results indicate that both anxiety and avoidance are elevated in OG compared to IG. People with minority status are more anxious with their OG but, perhaps counterintuitively, more avoidant with their IG. The study highlights that minority individuals may not experience social anxiety and avoidance in the same way as nonminority individuals when social context is considered.