

## ANXIETY AND INFORMAL EDUCATION (CROSS-CULTURAL ASPECT)

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### Abstract.

**Introduction.** Secondary education system in the post-soviet countries experience a significant crisis - traditional methods of education lose their significance under the influence of information society development and globalization. The courses, trainings, distance learning and other forms of informal education is starting to spread instead. Therefore, research of the informal education influence on its participants' mental health is particularly relevant.

**Purpose.** The purpose of the study was to identify the mutual anxiety of parents and students from staying in the informal education system in two countries with different mentality - Ukraine and Vietnam.

### Design/Methodology/Approach

The study had two stages: a survey of parents whose children are involved or not involved in informal education and a survey of teen students involved in traditional and informal education systems. The participants of a survey were 215 parents having school age children (143 Ukrainian and 72 Vietnamese). All of the Ukrainian surveyed parents were residents of large cities of Ukraine: Kyiv, Kharkiv, Lviv and Dnipro, where exists the wide range of non-formal education options; Vietnamese participants are residents of Biên Hòa city, Dong Nai province. In total, these parents have 346 children who are involved in different educational options. For this research we used E.S. Schaefer's and R.Q. Bell's Parent Attitude Research Instrument (PARI) in adaptation of T. V. Nescheret, Spielberg-Hanin test of state anxiety level and author's questionnaire. In addition, we examined Ukrainian and Vietnamese children enrolled in general education schools, in distant learning and in combined general-informal education with English courses. In total 208 children were studied, 140 of them are Ukrainian and 68 are Vietnamese. For children's survey we used Phillips' School Stress and Anxiety level test and Pip Wilson's Blob Tree test.

The study found that the parents' choice of the educational form for their children depends on such peculiarities of parental attitudes as anxiety, overprotection desire, excessive control and their own schooling and informal education

experience. Due to obvious “polarization” of indicators in two groups of Ukrainian parents with informal education, they were divided into two different subgroups depending on the level of anxiety. We’ve done an analysis of the differences between the medians in the different groups according to the Kruskal-Wallis criterion and an analysis of the differences between the two groups according to the Mann - Whitney criterion, which shows us significant differences by this parameter. According to cluster analysis participants divided into five groups. The first cluster includes parents whose children are not involved in the informal education system. They show a low level of anxiety, do not tend to excessive care and overprotection, 22% of Ukrainian parents and 64% of Vietnamese parents belong to this cluster. Parents of children who attend one or two clubs or sections have an average level of personal anxiety, a low level of situational anxiety. These are 28% of Ukrainian parents, 36% of Vietnamese. Another cluster includes parents whose children attend three or more clubs and sections, they are anxious, often interfere the child's inner world, seek early development, and find it necessary to overcome the child's resistance. This group is large in Ukraine - 41% and is absent in Vietnam. Parents of children who involved only in the informal education system divided into two quite different groups. One mainly consists of the parents of healthy children who have deliberately chosen homeschooling. They are anxious, focused on overprotection and isolation of children. There is also a focus on excessive interference to the child`s world and the desire for its accelerated development (6%). Another group are parents of children with special needs who forced to resort to informal education due to the disadvantages of inclusive education. They are less anxious; do not tend to overprotection, but want to accelerate the development of their child and control it enough (3%). The last two clusters investigated only in Ukraine.

By the way, we noted that traditional education caused a feeling of fatigue, avoidance of educational activity in the Ukrainian students, whereas informal learning was associated with difficulties overcoming, success, and friendly support.. Maximum faced anxiety in students who only attended school in Ukraine. Vietnamese students showed significantly lower levels of anxiety instead. In contrast to the Ukrainian, Vietnamese students had no experience of distant learning; they visited general schools and foreign language courses. The children were well adapted to traditional education, focused mainly on leadership, achievements and friendship with peers. We could explain this by the fact that Asian culture is more collectivist and by the fact that successful study is a step towards career growth and improvement of social status in Vietnam. Informal education is perceived more as a place for entertainment, friendly communication with mentors and peers, and has not led to increased anxiety in either Ukrainian or Vietnamese students.

### **Practical/Social value**

- The data obtained became the basis for building a system of socializing influence for informal education in English language courses for both countries,

- Revealed category of over anxious parents in need of psychological support,
  
- Regular informal education involvement (1-2 sections) can be considered as a prevention of excessive anxiety and apathy in schoolchildren.

**Conclusions.** The conditions of educational socialization (formally, distant and informal education) significantly influence the development of teenage personality and their self-attitude. Informal education was the most prosperous environment for the Ukrainian teenagers studied. The level of parental anxiety contributes to inadequate choice of education and leads to negative family education styles. Prospects for further research - development of an optimal strategy of psychological support for children and teenagers of different cultures in the context of informal education.

**Keywords.** Informal education, anxiety, parental attitude, school, self-esteem.