

## **Abstract**

We propose that cross-national differences in allocentric, or “other-focused” social anxiety, can be understood as an adaptation to different social ecologies with varying degrees of relational mobility. In societies low in relational mobility, such as East Asia, relationships and group memberships are stable and exclusive, and thus it is difficult for individuals to recover once rejected from current relationships and groups. In these contexts, it is adaptive for them to pay continuous attention to negative feedback from others in order to avoid potential rejection. On the contrary, such anxiety is less useful in societies high in relational mobility, such as North America, because there are a greater number of relationship alternatives available even if individuals were to be excluded. In line with our theory, cross-national differences in rejection sensitivity (Study 1) and *Taijin Kyofusho* (Study 2) were mediated by perceived relational mobility.

Keywords: socio-ecological approach, relational mobility, interpersonal anxiety, rejection sensitivity, *Taijin kyofusho*