

Cultural Insecurity and Social Anxiety: The Mediating Role of Identity Uncertainty

Michael Anderson^{1*}, Haruka Nishimura²

¹ Department of Clinical Psychology, Harvard University, Cambridge, USA

² Graduate School of Human Sciences, Osaka University, Osaka, Japan

* Corresponding author email address: manderson@harvard.edu

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aimed to examine the mediating role of identity uncertainty in the relationship between cultural insecurity and social anxiety among adults in the United States.

Methods and Materials: The study employed a descriptive correlational design and included 430 adult participants from the United States, selected based on the Morgan and Krejcie sample size table. Standardized tools were used to assess cultural insecurity, identity uncertainty, and social anxiety. Data were analyzed using Pearson correlation in SPSS-27 and structural equation modeling (SEM) in AMOS-21 to test both direct and indirect relationships between variables and evaluate the model fit.

Findings: The results showed significant positive correlations among cultural insecurity, identity uncertainty, and social anxiety ($r = .53$ to $.62$, $p < .001$). Structural equation modeling confirmed that identity uncertainty significantly mediated the relationship between cultural insecurity and social anxiety. The model demonstrated good fit indices ($\chi^2 = 134.28$, $df = 74$, $\chi^2/df = 1.81$, $RMSEA = 0.043$, $CFI = 0.97$, $TLI = 0.95$). The total effect of cultural insecurity on social anxiety was strong and significant ($\beta = .70$, $p < .001$), with both direct ($\beta = .34$, $p < .001$) and indirect effects via identity uncertainty ($\beta = .36$, $p < .001$) contributing to this relationship.

Conclusion: The findings highlight the psychological pathway through which cultural insecurity leads to social anxiety by increasing individuals' identity uncertainty. This underscores the importance of addressing identity-related stress in interventions aimed at reducing social anxiety, especially in culturally diverse and shifting environments. Efforts to promote cultural inclusion and strengthen identity coherence may serve as protective factors against social withdrawal and emotional distress.

Keywords: Cultural insecurity, Identity uncertainty, Social anxiety.

1. Introduction

In an era of heightened globalization, migration, and digital connectivity, individuals frequently find themselves navigating complex and sometimes conflicting cultural environments. This phenomenon has led to an increase in what scholars refer to as cultural insecurity, a subjective sense of instability or threat to one's cultural identity. Cultural insecurity is particularly relevant in multicultural societies where individuals must reconcile heritage values with dominant cultural norms. This perceived instability often triggers psychological distress, with one of the most prominent manifestations being social anxiety—a chronic fear of social judgment and rejection that can profoundly impair interpersonal functioning and well-being (Rahmayanty et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2019). Although numerous studies have explored the roots of social anxiety in attachment and familial contexts, a growing body of literature now underscores the influence of broader sociocultural and identity-related factors in shaping individuals' psychological states (Frost, 2019; Karolinsky, 2019).

Social anxiety, traditionally examined through the lens of individual psychological traits or early relational trauma, is increasingly being conceptualized as a socially contingent phenomenon—one that is deeply affected by individuals' position within cultural and identity-based frameworks (Dyar et al., 2017). Specifically, the experience of cultural insecurity may increase one's vulnerability to social anxiety, particularly when one's cultural identity is perceived as marginalized, unstable, or conflicted. Recent research has highlighted how young adults exposed to conflicting cultural messages or negative comparisons via social media platforms, such as TikTok, are more likely to develop feelings of cultural inadequacy and insecurity (Rahmayanty et al., 2024). These experiences can result in hyperawareness of social norms and excessive fear of evaluation—core features of social anxiety.

Central to the relationship between cultural insecurity and social anxiety is the mediating role of identity uncertainty. Identity uncertainty refers to the psychological discomfort individuals feel when they are unsure about who they are, where they belong, or how to act in a given social context (Burke, 2020; Hogg, 2022). This uncertainty often emerges when individuals cannot clearly define their membership in social or cultural groups or when their cultural affiliations are contested or shifting. According to self-uncertainty theory, when individuals are unsure of their social identity,

they are more likely to experience psychological distress and engage in maladaptive coping mechanisms such as social withdrawal or conformity (Hogg, 2023; Jung et al., 2019). The experience of identity uncertainty is thus not merely an internal cognitive state but a dynamic process shaped by external group dynamics and sociocultural structures.

In recent years, researchers have paid greater attention to how identity uncertainty affects social functioning. For example, identity uncertainty has been found to contribute to interpersonal difficulties and relational turbulence, particularly in contexts where one's identity is stigmatized or in flux, such as infertility or sexual minority status (Dyar et al., 2017; Yoon & Theiss, 2021). Within multicultural environments, individuals with high cultural insecurity often experience elevated levels of identity uncertainty, which in turn may increase their vulnerability to social anxiety. This layered relationship implies that cultural insecurity may not directly cause social anxiety but may do so indirectly through heightened uncertainty about one's social and personal identity (Milesi, 2022; Wagoner & Chur, 2024).

The cognitive and emotional dimensions of identity uncertainty are especially salient during periods of social or organizational upheaval. Belavadi et al. (2023), for instance, found that during the Greek financial crisis, conflicting media narratives exacerbated identity uncertainty by undermining shared social meaning and group belonging (Belavadi et al., 2023). Similarly, in educational contexts, identity uncertainty has been linked to decreased academic engagement and professional confidence, especially during times of disruption, such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Krismanti, 2021; Rozina et al., 2024). These findings suggest that identity uncertainty has far-reaching effects across domains and may act as a key mechanism by which structural and cultural instability influences psychological outcomes such as social anxiety.

Furthermore, the concept of identity uncertainty intersects with broader notions of uncertainty in human behavior. Leifer (2023) argues that uncertainty itself operates across multiple domains—epistemological, emotional, and social—each of which can destabilize one's sense of self and relational coherence (Leifer, 2023). When individuals face uncertainty about cultural norms or values, it can impair their ability to predict social consequences, making social interactions more anxiety-provoking. This is particularly relevant for individuals navigating bicultural or minority identities, as they must often adjust their self-presentation and behavior to align with divergent cultural expectations (Azizah et al., 2022; Jung et al., 2019). In such

contexts, cultural insecurity acts as a trigger for identity uncertainty, which subsequently amplifies social anxiety.

Another important dimension to consider is the role of group dynamics and leadership structures in mitigating or exacerbating identity uncertainty. Research has shown that when individuals perceive strong identity leadership—defined as leaders who foster shared identity and group cohesion—they experience less psychological distress and greater clarity in their identity commitments (Duell, 2022; Milesi, 2022). Conversely, in contexts where group norms are ambiguous or group boundaries are contested, identity uncertainty tends to rise, increasing the risk of social withdrawal and anxiety (Hogg, 2023). This highlights the importance of contextual support and inclusive environments in buffering individuals from the negative effects of cultural insecurity.

At a theoretical level, the relationship between cultural insecurity, identity uncertainty, and social anxiety can be understood within the framework of uncertainty-identity theory. This theory posits that individuals are motivated to reduce identity uncertainty through group identification and adherence to clear social norms (Hogg, 2022; Wagoner & Hogg, 2016). However, when cultural contexts are fragmented or contested, and group identities are weak or unstable, individuals may struggle to achieve this certainty. In such cases, identity uncertainty becomes chronic and may lead to persistent social anxiety. This is supported by findings from Wagoner et al. (2018), who demonstrated that regions with strong subgroup identities, such as Sardinia, showed greater resilience to identity uncertainty due to high identity centrality and subgroup autonomy (Wagoner et al., 2018).

In addition, the emotional burden of identity uncertainty may influence individuals' exit intentions from social or cultural groups. According to recent research, individuals with high levels of identity uncertainty are more likely to disengage from communities or seek alternative affiliations, particularly when their current group fails to offer a coherent narrative of belonging (Wagoner & Chur, 2024). This withdrawal can further limit social support and reinforce isolation—key drivers of social anxiety. Qi et al. (2024) have similarly noted that social capital plays a mitigating role in the relationship between structural insecurities (such as food insecurity) and psychological distress, highlighting the protective function of stable social networks (Qi et al., 2024).

Moreover, cultural insecurity often manifests in digitally mediated contexts, where individuals are exposed to curated

images of idealized cultural identities and lifestyles. These portrayals can trigger comparison-based insecurities and intensify feelings of cultural inadequacy, especially among youth navigating hybrid identities (Rahmayanty et al., 2024). The rise of global digital platforms has thus introduced new layers of identity complexity, further complicating how individuals relate to their cultural affiliations and social roles. As such, contemporary experiences of social anxiety must be understood through a lens that accounts for these evolving sociocultural and technological dynamics.

Despite growing empirical support, relatively few studies have empirically tested the mediating role of identity uncertainty in the relationship between cultural insecurity and social anxiety, particularly within diverse cultural settings. This gap underscores the need for integrative models that link macro-level cultural dynamics with micro-level psychological processes. Given the increasing diversity and cultural fluidity of modern societies, understanding these relationships is not only theoretically significant but also practically relevant for designing interventions aimed at reducing social anxiety and enhancing identity coherence among vulnerable populations (Rozina et al., 2024; Yoon & Theiss, 2021).

The present study aims to address this gap by investigating whether identity uncertainty mediates the relationship between cultural insecurity and social anxiety among a diverse sample of individuals in the United States.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

The sample consisted of 430 participants residing in the United States. Among them, 267 participants (62.09%) identified as female, 158 participants (36.74%) identified as male, and 5 participants (1.16%) identified as non-binary or preferred not to disclose their gender. In terms of age distribution, 94 participants (21.86%) were between 18–24 years old, 138 participants (32.09%) were aged 25–34, 101 participants (23.49%) were aged 35–44, 65 participants (15.11%) were aged 45–54, and 32 participants (7.44%) were aged 55 and above. Regarding educational background, 56 participants (13.02%) had a high school diploma, 139 participants (32.33%) held an associate or bachelor's degree, 180 participants (41.86%) had a master's degree, and 55 participants (12.79%) held a doctoral or professional degree.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Social Anxiety

To measure social anxiety, the Social Interaction Anxiety Scale (SIAS) developed by Mattick and Clarke (1998) was employed. This instrument consists of 20 items that assess distress experienced during social interactions, with a particular focus on fears of being scrutinized or judged by others. Items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (Not at all characteristic or true of me) to 4 (Extremely characteristic or true of me), with higher total scores indicating greater levels of social anxiety. The SIAS has been widely used in both clinical and non-clinical populations and demonstrates strong psychometric properties. Previous research has confirmed its high internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha values typically above .90) and strong convergent and discriminant validity, making it a reliable and valid tool for assessing social anxiety symptoms in diverse cultural contexts (Sriwenda, 2025; Zhang, 2025).

2.2.2. Identity Uncertainty

Identity uncertainty was assessed using the Identity Distress Survey (IDS) developed by Berman, Montgomery, and Kurtines (2004). This scale includes 10 items designed to evaluate the degree of distress individuals feel regarding key areas of identity, such as long-term goals, career choices, values, friendships, and group affiliations. Responses are recorded on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (Not at all) to 5 (Very severely), with higher scores indicating greater identity-related uncertainty and confusion. The IDS provides a composite score that reflects the intensity of identity-related concerns. Numerous studies have validated the IDS in adolescent and young adult populations, with reported Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .84 to .90, and evidence supporting its construct and concurrent validity across different cultural groups (Samuolis & Griffin, 2014).

2.2.3. Cultural Insecurity

Cultural insecurity was measured using the Cultural Identity Insecurity Scale developed by Yoon, Hacker, Hewitt, Abrams, and Cleary (2011). This instrument consists of 16 items and captures individuals' perceived instability or

conflict regarding their cultural identity, particularly in contexts where they navigate multiple cultural norms. Items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree), with higher scores reflecting greater cultural insecurity. The scale includes subscales for cultural belonging, perceived cultural conflict, and identity ambivalence. This tool has demonstrated solid psychometric properties, including good internal consistency (with Cronbach's alpha values generally above .85) and confirmed factorial validity in studies conducted with multicultural and immigrant populations (Marcum, 2024; Nawaz & Bhutta, 2024; Thelma & Madoda, 2024).

2.3. Data Analysis

Prior to conducting the main analyses, the assumptions of normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity were examined and met. Skewness values ranged from -0.84 to 0.61 and kurtosis values ranged from -0.79 to 0.98 across all continuous variables, indicating acceptable levels of normality. Linearity and homoscedasticity were assessed through scatterplots of standardized residuals, which showed random and evenly distributed patterns, confirming both assumptions. Multicollinearity was checked by examining Variance Inflation Factors (VIF), which ranged from 1.14 to 1.76, well below the cutoff of 10, and Tolerance values ranged from 0.56 to 0.88, all above the recommended threshold of 0.10. These results support the suitability of the data for Pearson correlation and SEM analyses.

3. Findings and Results

The sample consisted of 380 high school students from various regions in Canada. Of the total participants, 203 (53.42%) identified as female, and 177 (46.58%) identified as male. In terms of age distribution, 112 students (29.47%) were 15 years old, 126 students (33.16%) were 16 years old, 89 students (23.42%) were 17 years old, and 53 students (13.95%) were 18 years old. Regarding grade level, 94 students (24.74%) were in grade 10, 137 (36.05%) in grade 11, and 149 (39.21%) in grade 12. The majority of the participants, 287 students (75.53%), reported English as their first language, while 93 students (24.47%) reported speaking other languages at home.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables

Variable	M	SD
Cultural Insecurity	54.72	10.49
Identity Uncertainty	31.36	7.88
Social Anxiety	46.81	12.15

The results in Table 1 show that participants reported a moderate to high level of cultural insecurity (M = 54.72, SD = 10.49) and social anxiety (M = 46.81, SD = 12.15). The mean score for identity uncertainty was also relatively elevated (M = 31.36, SD = 7.88), suggesting that many participants experienced discomfort or confusion about their social identity.

Before conducting the main analyses, statistical assumptions were tested and confirmed. Normality was assessed through skewness and kurtosis values, which ranged between -0.74 and +0.91, indicating acceptable limits for all variables. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was non-

significant for grit (p = 0.108) and motivation (p = 0.127), but slightly significant for locus of control (p = 0.042); however, given the large sample size (N = 380), the data were considered approximately normal based on visual inspection of Q-Q plots and histograms. Linearity and homoscedasticity were examined through scatterplots and showed no major violations. Multicollinearity was checked using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values, all of which were below 2.1, confirming the absence of multicollinearity. These results indicate that the assumptions for Pearson correlation and SEM analyses were adequately met.

Table 2

Pearson Correlations Among Study Variables (N = 430)

Variable	1	2	3
1. Cultural Insecurity	—		
2. Identity Uncertainty	.62** (p < .001)	—	
3. Social Anxiety	.53** (p < .001)	.58** (p < .001)	—

As shown in Table 2, cultural insecurity was positively correlated with identity uncertainty (r = .62, p < .001) and social anxiety (r = .53, p < .001). Identity uncertainty was

also positively correlated with social anxiety (r = .58, p < .001), indicating strong and significant associations between all variables in the expected directions.

Table 3

Goodness-of-Fit Indices for the Structural Equation Model

Fit Index	Value	Threshold for Good Fit
χ^2	134.28	—
df	74	—
χ^2/df	1.81	< 3.00
GFI	0.96	≥ 0.90
AGFI	0.94	≥ 0.90
CFI	0.97	≥ 0.95
RMSEA	0.043	≤ 0.06
TLI	0.95	≥ 0.95

As presented in Table 3, the model demonstrated a strong overall fit. The chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio (χ^2/df = 1.81), RMSEA = 0.043, GFI = 0.96, AGFI = 0.94, CFI =

0.97, and TLI = 0.95 all met or exceeded commonly accepted thresholds for good model fit, supporting the adequacy of the hypothesized structural model.

Table 4

Direct, Indirect, and Total Path Coefficients in the Structural Model

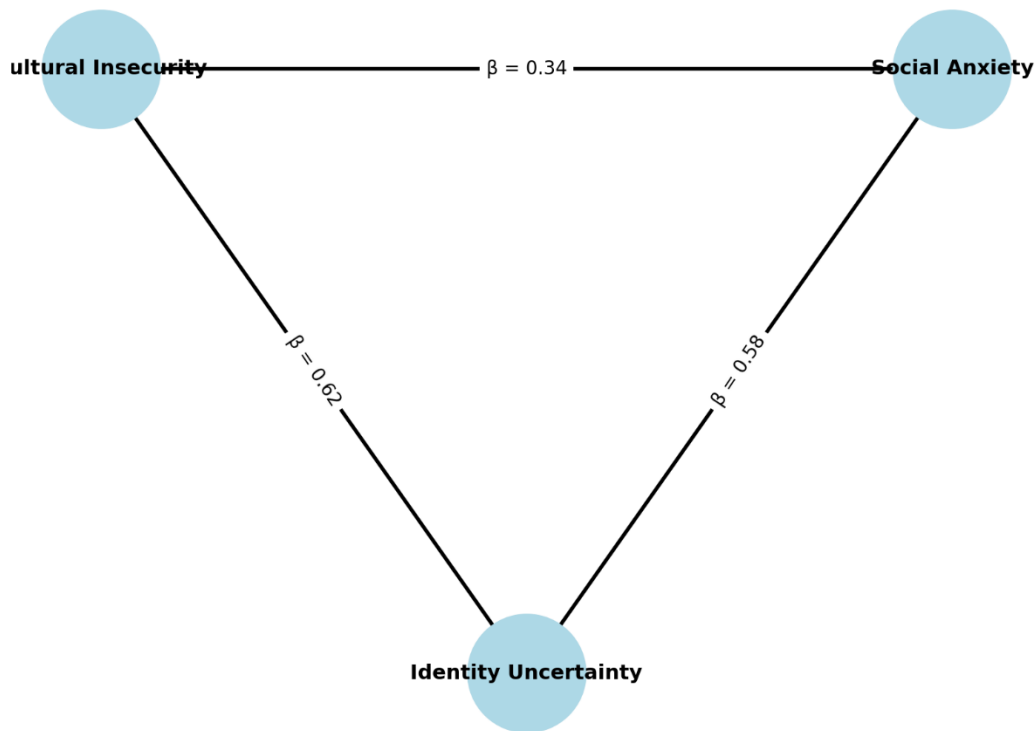
Path	b	SE	β	p
Cultural Insecurity → Identity Uncertainty	0.48	0.06	.62	< .001
Identity Uncertainty → Social Anxiety	0.51	0.07	.58	< .001
Cultural Insecurity → Social Anxiety (Direct)	0.32	0.08	.34	< .001
Cultural Insecurity → Social Anxiety (Indirect via Identity Uncertainty)	0.24	0.05	.36	< .001
Cultural Insecurity → Social Anxiety (Total)	0.56	0.07	.70	< .001

The data in Table 4 reveal that cultural insecurity had a significant direct effect on identity uncertainty ($\beta = .62, p < .001$), and identity uncertainty had a significant direct effect on social anxiety ($\beta = .58, p < .001$). In addition, cultural insecurity directly predicted social anxiety ($\beta = .34, p < .001$). The indirect effect of cultural insecurity on social

anxiety through identity uncertainty was also significant ($\beta = .36, p < .001$), and the total effect of cultural insecurity on social anxiety ($\beta = .70, p < .001$) indicates a strong overall predictive relationship when both direct and mediated paths are considered.

Figure 1

Structural Model of The Study



4. Discussion and Conclusion

The present study investigated the relationship between cultural insecurity and social anxiety, with a particular focus on the mediating role of identity uncertainty among individuals in the United States. Using structural equation modeling, the findings revealed a significant positive relationship between cultural insecurity and social anxiety. Furthermore, identity uncertainty was found to mediate this

relationship, suggesting that individuals experiencing high levels of cultural insecurity are more likely to report elevated social anxiety, in part because of increased identity uncertainty. These results provide empirical support for theoretical models that conceptualize identity instability as a central mechanism linking sociocultural stressors to psychological outcomes.

The direct relationship between cultural insecurity and social anxiety aligns with existing literature suggesting that

threats to one's cultural identity can provoke fear, self-consciousness, and social withdrawal. In culturally diverse societies, individuals may feel compelled to suppress or adjust their cultural expressions to fit dominant norms, which fosters insecurity and apprehension in social situations (Rahmayanty et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2019). These findings echo the work of Karolinsky (2019), who emphasized the role of cultural context and attachment patterns in shaping children's and adolescents' social anxiety (Karolinsky, 2019). Similarly, Frost (2019) noted that individuals who lack a clear cultural or ideological framework for their identity are more prone to social detachment and emotional vulnerability (Frost, 2019).

Importantly, the mediating role of identity uncertainty adds a layer of psychological complexity to the observed relationships. The results suggest that cultural insecurity does not impact social anxiety directly alone but does so by undermining individuals' clarity and stability in their self-concept. This supports previous theoretical work by Hogg and colleagues, who emphasized that identity uncertainty can lead to various negative emotional outcomes, including anxiety, especially in environments where group boundaries and social expectations are ambiguous (Hogg, 2022, 2023). Jung et al. (2019) found that perceived threats to group entitativity—a shared sense of belonging—heighten identity uncertainty and consequently influence individuals' attitudes toward emigration and disengagement (Jung et al., 2019). Such findings are consistent with our study, which showed that individuals unsure about their cultural identity experienced greater social discomfort and fear of evaluation.

Our findings are also reinforced by empirical research on digital and mediated cultural comparisons. For example, Rahmayanty et al. (2024) highlighted how exposure to idealized cultural content on social media platforms like TikTok fosters feelings of inadequacy and insecurity among college students (Rahmayanty et al., 2024). These digital encounters amplify cultural tension and identity confusion, particularly for those juggling multiple cultural affiliations. These findings, along with the present study, point to the growing relevance of media and digital environments in shaping identity-related stress and social discomfort.

In terms of theoretical contributions, this study supports and extends uncertainty-identity theory, which posits that individuals are motivated to reduce identity uncertainty by identifying with stable social groups (Hogg, 2022; Wagoner & Hogg, 2016). When individuals cannot find culturally congruent or validating groups, their identity remains unstable, leaving them vulnerable to heightened anxiety in

social situations. Consistent with this model, we found that identity uncertainty significantly mediated the cultural insecurity–social anxiety relationship. These findings also align with those of Wagoner and Chur (2024), who noted that unresolved domains of identity uncertainty predicted stronger intentions to withdraw from social groups (Wagoner & Chur, 2024).

Support for the mediating role of identity uncertainty can also be found in research on sexual and reproductive identity contexts. Yoon and Theiss (2021) demonstrated that women coping with infertility often experience heightened identity uncertainty, which in turn leads to increased relational turbulence and communication difficulties (Yoon & Theiss, 2021). Similarly, Dyar et al. (2017) showed that identity uncertainty among non-monosexual individuals contributed to challenges in relationship decision-making, particularly in relation to social roles and partner expectations (Dyar et al., 2017). These studies support the notion that identity ambiguity is not just a cognitive discomfort but a socially embedded phenomenon with direct implications for interpersonal and emotional functioning.

Additionally, the role of social context and group narratives cannot be overlooked in this dynamic. Belavadi et al. (2023) explored the impact of media representations during the Greek financial crisis and found that conflicting narratives about national identity intensified collective identity uncertainty and public anxiety (Belavadi et al., 2023). Such macro-level forces mirror the individual-level processes examined in this study, where cultural insecurity, often induced by political or social marginalization, triggers psychological distress via the disruption of a coherent identity narrative.

The buffering effect of strong group identification is also supported by studies such as those by Milesi (2022) and Duell (2022), who found that environments with stable identity leadership and clear social norms tend to reduce the negative effects of uncertainty (Duell, 2022; Milesi, 2022). In contexts where individuals feel supported in their cultural identity and are provided with consistent group expectations, identity uncertainty is reduced, and psychological well-being improves. This underlines the importance of institutional and community efforts to foster inclusivity and cultural recognition, as these efforts can have tangible effects on individuals' mental health.

Furthermore, Rozina et al. (2024) demonstrated that tolerance for uncertainty plays a significant role in students' professional identity development, particularly in unpredictable academic environments (Rozina et al., 2024).

Their findings resonate with ours, as they suggest that individuals with lower tolerance for ambiguity—especially in identity-relevant contexts—are more likely to experience stress and self-doubt, which may evolve into social anxiety over time. This conceptual overlap reinforces the multidimensional impact of identity uncertainty and its pervasive influence across educational, cultural, and interpersonal domains.

Another compelling dimension of our results relates to the temporal and contextual fluidity of identity. Burke (2020) argued that identity dispersion can manifest as flexibility, inconsistency, or uncertainty, depending on the surrounding social structures (Burke, 2020). While flexibility may be adaptive in diverse or rapidly changing environments, persistent inconsistency and uncertainty—especially when unacknowledged by social systems—can lead to psychological strain. Our findings support this framework, indicating that cultural insecurity may initially prompt adaptive identity flexibility, but over time, if unresolved, it contributes to debilitating identity uncertainty and increased anxiety.

Moreover, this study contributes to our understanding of how individuals respond to threats to social identity during uncertainty. Wagoner et al. (2018) found that in culturally distinctive regions such as Sardinia, strong subgroup identification enabled individuals to maintain identity clarity even in the face of national-level ambiguity (Wagoner et al., 2018). The lack of such coherent subgroup affiliation may explain the heightened identity uncertainty and resulting social anxiety observed in our U.S.-based sample, especially among individuals navigating multicultural identities in a predominantly individualistic society.

Finally, the results echo findings from Leifer (2023), who emphasized that uncertainty operates across various cognitive and emotional domains and influences individuals' relational behavior and social confidence (Leifer, 2023). In our study, cultural insecurity served as an antecedent to such multidimensional uncertainty, which in turn contributed to emotional and behavioral symptoms consistent with social anxiety. This layered conceptualization underscores the importance of addressing both structural-cultural and individual-psychological factors in understanding mental health outcomes in diverse societies.

5. Limitations & Suggestions

Despite the strengths of this study, including its theoretical grounding and robust statistical analysis, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the cross-sectional design limits the ability to infer causal relationships between cultural insecurity, identity uncertainty, and social anxiety. Longitudinal research is needed to examine how these variables interact over time. Second, the study relied on self-report measures, which may be subject to response biases such as social desirability or recall inaccuracy. Third, while the sample was demographically diverse, it consisted solely of individuals residing in the United States, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to non-Western or collectivist cultures. Fourth, although the study accounted for cultural insecurity as a generalized construct, it did not differentiate between various forms (e.g., ethnic, linguistic, or religious insecurity), which may have distinct effects on identity and anxiety.

Future studies could benefit from using longitudinal designs to examine how cultural insecurity and identity uncertainty evolve and interact over time. Researchers should also explore the role of cultural resilience and identity affirmation practices in moderating the effects of cultural insecurity. Comparative studies across different cultural contexts would enhance the understanding of how collectivist and individualist societies differently frame the relationship between identity and anxiety. Additionally, future research should investigate the influence of contextual variables such as media exposure, community support, and institutional inclusion policies on identity uncertainty and psychological outcomes. Incorporating qualitative methods could also provide richer insight into the lived experiences of individuals navigating cultural instability and social anxiety.

Given the demonstrated link between cultural insecurity, identity uncertainty, and social anxiety, mental health practitioners should consider integrating identity-focused interventions in therapeutic settings, particularly for individuals from multicultural or minority backgrounds. Educational institutions and workplaces should cultivate environments that support cultural diversity and affirm multiple identity expressions. Community programs aimed at cultural inclusion and group solidarity can help reduce identity uncertainty and promote psychological well-being. Media literacy education can also play a role in helping individuals critically engage with cultural representations that may otherwise provoke insecurity. Finally, public policy initiatives should prioritize equity and representation in social and cultural domains to foster a collective sense of

belonging and reduce the societal roots of identity-related anxiety.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contributed to this article.

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