

Examination of Social Appearance Anxiety Levels of University Students

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ABSTRACT

Aim: The aim of this study is to investigate the social appearance anxiety levels of university students taking physical education course according to various variables.

Material and Methods: In the research, descriptive scanning model was used. The study group of this research consists of 929 participants who took compulsory physical education and sports lessons in the preparatory and first year of Kyrgyzstan Turkey Manas University in the 2020-2021 academic year. In order to determine the social appearance anxiety levels of individuals and the "Personal Information Form" prepared by the researcher, the data of the research; The "Social Appearance Anxiety Inventory (SAAI)," developed by Hart et al. (2008) and validated and reliable in Turkish by Doğan (2010) was used. The study was carried out in SPSS 22 statistical package program and the degree of significance was taken as 0.05. Independent-Samples T test was used in pairwise comparisons, and One-Way Anova test was used in multiple comparisons.

Results: In the study, no significant difference was found between the social appearance anxiety levels of university students and the variables of gender, class, age, father's education level and mother's education level.

Keywords: Social Appearance Anxiety, Physical Education and Sports, Manas University.

INTRODUCTION

It is inevitable for individuals to experience anxiety in environments that contain chaos or conflict elements¹. Anxiety describes the emotional state associated with feelings of nervousness, worry, and distress that occur with the arousal of the body². Malmö, on the other hand, explains anxiety as a state of tension so severe that an individual needs medical help and being unable to do his/her work³.

There are many types of anxiety. One of them is social anxiety and social appearance anxiety, which is a subdivision of social anxiety.

Social anxiety is described as "a behavior disorder that is extremely harmful because the person is alienated from social environments and distances himself from interpersonal relationships"⁴. According to another definition, social anxiety is defined as "an individual's fear for no reason, thinking that he will be ashamed in social environments or in situations where he has to perform"⁵.

Social anxiety, when different definitions are evaluated, is when the person is faced with the thought that he will behave in a way that does not fit different social situations, that he will be in a bad situation, that he will create a bad impression and that he will be exposed to negative reactions (incompetent, poor, stupid, etc.) by other people. It can be explained as a state of discomfort and tension⁶.

Individuals with social anxiety disorder fear that they will be negatively evaluated and humiliated in social environments or in situations where performance is needed. Some physical symptoms such as flushing, palpitation, sweating and trembling are observed in individuals who feel this fear⁷.

Social anxiety is a disorder that is extremely common in society and causes loss of function. Coexistence of social anxiety and mood disorder is common. Generally, social anxiety occurs earlier than mood disorders and leads to major depression⁸. People with high social anxiety are

afraid to speak in public, thinking they will mispronounce a word or say the wrong thing. To avoid criticism, they may not reveal their feelings. However, preferring to remain silent to protect themselves drives these people more into loneliness⁵.

Since the person with social anxiety believes that the opinions of others about them are important, he attempts to predict the standards that the other individual expects from him/her in any situation, and tries to understand and know whether he/she can meet the standards in question. But this goal is doomed to fail because the individual's mental representation of how others perceive him is always negative. The prejudice of the individual that he cannot meet the conditions he believes is expected of him can cause negative social consequences. Negative expectations increase social anxiety and become common. Anxiety and negative mental representation of the individual strengthen each other in a vicious circle⁹.

Social appearance anxiety is explained as a result of negative body image related to the body and physical appearance of the individual^{10,11}. As it is known, in every society, besides the "physical" or "formal" aspect of the individual's body, there is also a social reality. This situation is affected from people's age, gender, socio-economic conditions, working status, religious beliefs, etc. The "social" aspect of the body may be different for different cultures or for different groups within the same culture.

The perception of social appearance emerges at the first age when the child begins to distinguish himself from those who are not like him, and it constantly develops and changes throughout life. The evaluations of individuals about their appearance may differ according to the cultural structure of the society and time. In people who develop feelings and attitudes about their bodies within the scope of ideal measures presented to them, breaking away from ideal measures causes a change in the person's self-evaluation. Because the individual's perception of his own body and limbs and giving them certain meanings are closely related to the concepts of self-confidence, self-

respect, self-perception, personality and identity. Those who evaluate themselves physically positively are safer and more successful in their interactions with individuals; It is known that people who do not like themselves and think that they have many flaws in themselves are in different stages of their lives or are constantly feeling worthless, insecure and restless. If the body of the individual is quite different from the ideal body structure he imagines in his mind, dissatisfaction with the body is encountered. Body dissatisfaction increases as the differences between the individual's current body structure, perceived body type and imagined body structure increase. The concept of perceived body structure is important. There are individuals in the society who describe themselves as fat despite being thin. Serious body dissatisfaction and social appearance anxiety are encountered in these individuals¹².

People with social appearance anxiety generally have somatic and behavioral symptoms. For example, blushing is expressed as proof that he has fallen into a bad situation and will be disgraced; palpitations become a sign that you are about to lose control. Second, people with physical anxiety become mentally preoccupied with their somatic reactions and negative ideas of social evaluation. Afterwards, the behavior patterns of physical concerns such as appearing colder and closed may cause other people's unfriendly reactions, which can partially confirm the fears of people with social anxiety¹³.

Participation in physical education and sports activities, physical activity and exercise has positive contributions to human health and performance in many ways^{14,15,16,17}. It is known that physical activities have positive effects on physical development, social development, motoric development and psychological health as well as general health. Although there are many variables that negatively affect the psychological structure of people, social appearance anxiety is among the factors that negatively affect psychological health and social development. Although social appearance anxiety is a problem that usually arises in parallel with the dissatisfaction of the individual with his body size and appearance, it is thought that socio-demographic variables are among the factors affecting social appearance anxiety. Considering that the physical appearance of the individual is an important determinant besides the demographic variables on the basis of social appearance anxiety, it is thought that the individual's social appearance anxiety can be reduced by participating in sports. Because with participation in sports, the physical development of the individual becomes healthy in terms of both general health and appearance.

For this purpose, it is aimed to examine the social appearance anxiety levels of university students who take compulsory physical education and sports lessons in the first year and students in the preparatory year.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Research Design: The research is descriptive in nature and the social appearance anxiety levels of the preparatory class students and the students who take compulsory physical education and sports lessons in the 1st year in Kyrgyzstan Turkey Manas University were examined.

In this study, the model of the research was created by considering the "screening model". Screening models are research models that aim to describe a past or present situation as it is. The event, person or object that is the subject of the research is tried to be conveyed in its own conditions and as it is. There is no aim to change or affect these conditions in any way¹⁸.

Study Group: The study group of this research consists of 929 participants who took compulsory physical education and sports lessons in the first year and the preparatory class students of Kyrgyzstan Turkey Manas University in the 2020-2021 academic year.

Table 2.2.1: Distribution of Students Participating in the Study by Demographic Variables;

	Demographic Variables	N	%
Gender	Female	486	52.3
	Male	443	47.7
Age	16-19	343	36.9
	20-23	233	25.1
	24-27	178	19.2
	28 and over	175	18.8
Class	Preparatory class	451	48.5
	Freshman	478	51.5
Father's Education Level	Middle School	263	28.3
	High School	238	25.6
	Licence	428	46.1
Mother's Education Level	Middle School	249	26.8
	High School	167	18.0
	Licence	513	55.2
Total		929	100

Data Collection Tools: In order to determine the demographic characteristics of the individuals participating in the research, the "Personal Information Form" developed by the researcher was used. This form; consists of questions about gender, age, father's education level and mother's education level.

In order to determine the social appearance anxiety levels of individuals; The "Social Appearance Anxiety Inventory (SAAI)," developed by Hart et al. (2008) and validated and reliable in Turkish by Doğan (2010) was used. The scale consists of 16 items and a single sub-dimension, and a high score on the scale indicates that the individual has high social appearance anxiety. In the original form of the scale, the scale was brought to the literature as a measurement tool consisting of a single sub-dimension. Turkish validity and reliability study of SAAI was also conducted on university students. The SAAI is a 5-point Likert-type scale, and the answers given to the scale items are scored in the range of not at all appropriate (1) to completely appropriate (5). In the Turkish validity and reliability study of the scale, it was determined that the internal consistency coefficient was .93 in the first measurement, and that the internal consistency coefficient was .85 in the retest, and that the scale is a reliable measurement tool that can be used on university students in Turkey¹¹.

Analysis of the Data: The data collected through the scale used in this research, which was conducted to examine the social appearance anxiety levels of the preparatory class students and the students who took compulsory physical education and sports lessons in the first year in Kyrgyzstan

Turkey Manas University, were analyzed through the statistical package program SPSS.22 and the results were interpreted. Descriptive statistics including arithmetic mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage distributions are presented in order to gain an idea about demographic information and other group questions. In order to determine the relationship between the social appearance anxiety levels of the participants and some demographic variables, the normality of the distributions (Kolmogorov-Smirnov) and then the skewness and kurtosis (Skewness and Kurtosis) tests were examined. Osborne and Amy (2004) stated that "regular" expression scores are scores with Z values ranging from -3 to +3, and "outliers" are scores whose Z values are outside the range of -3 to +3. However, a kurtosis value of ± 1 is considered excellent for most psychometric measurements, but a value in the range of ± 2 is also acceptable depending on the particular application¹⁹. Independent Sample T and One Way Analysis of Variance (One Way Anova) tests were applied for the variables showing normal distribution according to the test results. If there is a difference between the variables, Tukey HSD and Dunnet T3 tests were used according to the homogeneity results from the Post-Hoc tests in order to determine which group or groups caused this difference. The results were evaluated at the 95% confidence interval and the significance level of $p < 0.05$.

RESULTS

This section is the section where the statistical results of the study will be explained. Statistical analysis made according to the demographic characteristics of the people participating in the research will be included.

Table 3.1: Comparing the social appearance anxiety levels of the students participating in the research according to the gender variable;

	Gender	N	X	S.d	t	p
Social Appearance Anxiety	Female	486	2.17	.632	-1.350	.17
	Male	443	2.23	.652		
Total		929				

$p < 0.05$

When Table 3.1 is examined, there was no statistically significant difference found between the groups in the social appearance anxiety levels of the students participating in the research according to the gender variable ($p < 0.05$).

Table 3.2. Comparing the social appearance anxiety levels of the students participating in the research according to the class variable;

	Class	N	X	S.d	t	p
Social Appearance Anxiety	Preparatory	451	2.21	.630	.394	.69
	Freshman	478	2.19	.653		
Total		929				

$p < 0.05$

When Table 3.2 is examined, there was no statistically significant difference found between the groups in the level of social appearance anxiety according to the class variable of the students participating in the study

($p < 0.05$).

Table 3.3: Comparing the social appearance anxiety levels of the students participating in the research according to the age variable;

	Age	N	X	S.d	F	p
Social Appearance Anxiety	16-19	343	2.16	.630	.854	.46
	20-23	233	2.24	.686		
	24-27	178	2.20	.608		
	28 and over	175	2.23	.637		
Total		929				

$p < 0.05$

When Table 3.3 is examined, there was no statistically significant difference found between the groups in the social appearance anxiety levels of the students participating in the study according to the age variable ($p < 0.05$).

Table 3.4: Comparing the social appearance anxiety levels of the students participating in the research according to the father's education level variable;

	Father's Education Level	N	X	S.d	F	p
Social Appearance Anxiety	Middle School	263	2.25	.664	1.453	.23
	High School	238	2.15	.595		
	License	428	2.20	.652		
Total		929				

$p < 0.05$

When Table 3.4 is examined, no statistically significant difference was found between the groups in the social appearance anxiety levels of the students participating in the study according to the variable of "your father's education level" ($p < 0.05$).

Table 3.5: Comparing the social appearance anxiety levels of the students participating in the research according to the mother's education level variable;

	Mother's Education Level	N	X	S.d	F	p
Social Appearance Anxiety	Middle School	249	2.26	.695	2.474	.08
	High School	167	2.24	.594		
	License	513	2.16	.628		
Total		929				

$p < 0.05$

When Table 3.5 is examined, no statistically significant difference was found between the groups in the social appearance anxiety levels of the students participating in the study according to the variable of "your mother's education level" ($p < 0.05$).

DISCUSSION

The results obtained in this part of the research will be evaluated in terms of similarities and differences with similar research results in the literature.

There was no statistically significant difference between the groups in the social appearance anxiety levels

of the students participating in the study in terms of gender variable. When the literature is examined; our study shows parallelism with the result obtained in the study named "Examination of Social Skills and Social Appearance Anxiety Levels of University Students" by Kuyulu and Beltekin²⁰. Although there was no statistically significant difference in terms of the findings obtained as a result of the studies, the social appearance anxiety levels of male students were found to be higher when compared to female students. Cetinkaya et al. showed that social appearance anxiety did not differ significantly according to gender as a result of their study on high school students²¹. In addition, a similar result was reached as a result of the research conducted by Çakmak on university students²². In addition to these studies, there are different studies supporting our study results in the literature^{23,24,25,37,38}.

There was no statistically significant difference between the groups in social appearance anxiety levels according to the class variable of the students participating in the study. The studies of Küçük Kılıç²⁶ and Yüceant²⁵ support our study.

No statistically significant difference was found between the groups in terms of social appearance anxiety levels in terms of the educational status of the parents of the students participating in the study. In the study, it was found that father's education level and mother's education level did not reveal a significant difference with social appearance anxiety. This result was reported by Küçük Kılıç²⁶, Çetinkaya et al.²¹, Alımcı²⁷, Şahin²⁸, Dinç Altun²³ and Şahin, Barut and Ersanlı²⁹ research findings.

There was no statistically significant difference between the groups in the social appearance anxiety levels of the students participating in the study in terms of the age variable. When examining the literature, Soyulu et al. found that there was no significant difference between the groups in terms of social appearance anxiety levels according to the age variable of the participants in their study on adolescents³⁰. Şahin³¹ determined that there was no significant difference between middle school student's social appearance anxiety levels depending on the age variable. Similarly, studies conducted on adolescents have shown that age does not have a significant effect on social appearance anxiety^{25,26,27,30,32,33,34,35,36,39,40}.

CONCLUSION

As a result; in the study, no significant difference was found between the social appearance anxiety levels of university students and the variables of gender, class, age, father's education level and mother's education level. As the reason for the lack of difference in the study; it can be thought that this is due to the fact that university students are in adulthood and pay attention to their social appearance.

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