



# Relationship between appearance anxiety and social anxiety among emerging adults

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## Abstract

Appearance anxiety has been defined as a preoccupation with one's appearance and a fear that one's appearance (body and face shape, height, and weight) may be negatively evaluated by others. Social anxiety is pertains to an irrational fear that individuals experience during social interactions, stemming from their apprehension of receiving attention and being observed, scrutinized, or evaluated by others. The aim of the research was to study the relationship between appearance anxiety and social anxiety among emerging adults. The study hypothesised that there is a significant relationship between appearance anxiety and social anxiety among emerging adults. The 120 college students are the participants for the present study. The Appearance anxiety scale and Social anxiety scale has been used to collect the data from the sample. The person correlation method has been used to find the relationship between appearance anxiety and social anxiety among emerging adults. The results found that there is a significant relationship between appearance anxiety and social anxiety among emerging adults.

**Key words:** *Appearance anxiety, social anxiety and emerging adults*

## Introduction

Social comparison theory suggests that individuals need to make accurate evaluations about their own opinions and abilities and that they can do this by comparing themselves with other individuals. In the mentioned comparison, it is stated that individuals can make a downward comparison with those who are considered inferior to themselves and upward with those who are considered superior to them. While downward comparisons can increase self-esteem, upward comparisons can have the opposite effect. When men and women compare their appearance (body size, shape, and weight) with other men and women portrayed as cultural ideals in media images, an upward social comparison takes place, which in some cases leads to dissatisfaction with body image and binge eating behaviours (Cooley & Toray, 2001; Kaye, Strober, & Rhodes, 2002) and appearance-based anxiety and depression symptoms may occur (Myers, Ridolfi, Crowther, & Ciesla, 2012). Cognitions can play an effective role in the emergence of social appearance

anxiety. The cognitive therapy model; conceptualizes an individual's cognitive structure as basic beliefs, intermediate beliefs, and automatic thoughts. According to the cognitive model, the underlying element of all disorders is distorted or dysfunctional thoughts that affect the individual's emotions and behaviours. Bringing these dysfunctional thoughts to a functional dimension and reshaping them realistically can cause changes in emotions and behaviours (Beck, 2001). Thoughts that flow rapidly through the mind, that are not noticed at the moment, but that cause emotional (anger, joy, sadness, anger), behavioural and physiological (tension in the body, breathing speed, sweating) reactions are called automatic thoughts. Automatic thoughts, which are real words or images that pass through the person's mind, are specific to the situation and are accepted as the most superficial level of cognition (Beck, 2011). Clark and Wells' cognitive model of social phobia posited that negative cognitive beliefs predispose socially anxious individuals to perceive the social environment as threatening or dangerous.

One of the important factors in maintaining social anxiety is self-focused attention (i.e., monitoring self-perceptions and predicting negative evaluations from others). According to the cognitive model of social phobia, appearance anxiety is a result of individuals turning their self-focused attention to their image and experiencing fears that their appearance may be negatively evaluated by others, and these behaviours typically increase the severity of social anxiety. Accordingly, this study proposed hypothesis H1: appearance anxiety positively predicts the onset of social anxiety.

## Methods

The aim of the study was to explore the relationship between appearance anxiety and social anxiety among emerging adults. Objective of the study was respectively, to study the relationship between appearance anxiety and social anxiety among male emerging adults and to study the relationship between appearance anxiety and social anxiety among female emerging adults. The hypothesis of the study was respectively, there is a significant relationship between appearance anxiety and social anxiety among male emerging adults and there is a significant relationship between appearance anxiety and social anxiety among female emerging adults.

The variables of the study was Appearance anxiety and social anxiety. The non-experimental correlation research design has been used for the present study. According to the inclusion and exclusion criteria the data collected from the participants. The 120 emerging adults have participated in the present study. The convenience sample and snowball technique has been used. The Appearance anxiety scale and social anxiety scale has been used to collected the data. The Pearson correlation has been used to find the relationship between appearance anxiety and social anxiety among emerging adults.

## Results and Discussion

**Table: Showing the Mean, Standard Deviation, Pearson Correlation and Significance between appearance anxiety and social anxiety among emerging adults.**

Gender	Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Pearson correlation n	Significant (2-tailed)	N
Male	Appearance anxiety	52.32	8.4	.843	.000	60
	Social Anxiety	24.32	5.8			
Female	Appearance anxiety	18.32	4.3	.872	.000	60
	Social Anxiety	23.23	5.3			

As shown in above table in the present research sample, sample size was 120 participants. The objective of the study is to assess the relationship between appearance anxiety and social anxiety among male and female emerging adults. The hypothesis of the project is "There will be significant relationship between appearance anxiety and social anxiety among male and female emerging adults".

From the above study with the sample size 60 (N) from the results it can be observe that there is positive significant relationship between appearance among male and female emerging adults. Pearson r value is .843 is high positive correlation and p value is .000. It has significant correlation between appearance anxiety and social anxiety among male emerging adults.

From the above study with the sample size 60 (N) from the results it can be observe that there is positive significant relationship between appearance among female and female emerging adults. Pearson r value is .872 is high positive correlation and p value is .000. It has significant correlation between appearance anxiety and social anxiety among female emerging adults.

### Implications and suggestions of the study:

The present study explored that there is positive relationship between appearance anxiety and social anxiety among male and female emerging adults. The results will helps to develop a intervention model

### Conclusion:

The study findings concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between appearance anxiety and social anxiety among male and female emerging adults.

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