



## **Investigating the Relationship between Social Appearance Anxiety and Loneliness of Turkish University Youth**

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**Abstract.** This study which investigates the relationship between social appearance anxiety and loneliness has been performed with survey model. The research has been carried out on 493 university students (68,6 % (338) female, 31,4 % (155) male) of an average age of 19. Personal information form, Social Appearance Anxiety Scale and UCLA Loneliness Scale have been used to collect the data of the research. T test, f test, simple correlation and regression analyzes have been utilized to analyze the data of the research. The results of the research have revealed that there is a significant differentiation between the social appearance anxiety and loneliness according to different variables and there is a positive significant correlation between social appearance anxiety and loneliness. And also the results show that social appearance anxiety is an important predictor of loneliness. Recommendations have been developed in the light of findings that have emerged as a result of this research.

**Keywords:** Social Appearance Anxiety, Loneliness, University Students, Anxiety.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The social appearance anxiety is defined as tension and anxiety experienced by people when they are assessed by others in terms of their physical appearance (Hart, Leary ve Rejeski 1989). This concept takes place as one of the concepts to be considered by an individual in the self-assessment process, since it is considered as the anxiety of an individual to not to be accepted, liked or ridiculed by other people depending on his/her self-perception of the social appearance anxiety. The social appearance anxiety includes not only the assessments related to physical appearance of an individual, but also the overall assessments related to general appearance of an individual and seems closer to the general social anxiety (White 2008). The social appearance anxiety is associated with many concepts in the literature such as the body image (Claes et al. 2012) and self-esteem in particular. It is thought that the social appearance anxiety is mostly observed during the adolescence period, in which the assessment of the physical appearance of an individual by others causes the most intense anxiety (Gümüş 2000).

One of the development duties expected from the individuals is accepting their bodies and living in peace with them in the adolescence period, which is also named as the period of confusion and depression. In this period, the individual is intensely interested in his/her look, personality; he/she asks questions and seeks answers to these questions (Oktan and Şahin 2010). The positive answers to these questions are in direct proportion with high self-esteem of an individual. The self-esteem reflects positive and negative attitudes towards one's self and shows how talented, important, successful and valuable an individual is perceived (Şahin, Barut and Ersanlı 2013). At the same time, the self-esteem is a positive mood that provides confidence to one's self, finding self-satisfied, worthy, lovable without considering him/herself lower or superior than his/her actual value (Şahin 2012). According to Gander and Gardiner (2010), the individuals are

expected to have a positive body image in order to create a positive self-concept and the body image is the result of many factors interacting with each other. A person's look according to others takes important space among these factors.

It is thought that since the individuals take external sources as reference to assess their physical characteristics in the adolescence period, in which the body sizes grow rapidly, their social anxiety levels might be increased. The social anxiety is defined as experiencing fear and discomfort in interacting with others, and the anxiety of being assessed negatively and patronized by others (Antony and Swinson 2008). The social appearance anxiety is considered as one of the components of the social anxiety. According to self-presentation of social anxiety, the social anxiety is experienced when people are particularly keen to leave a good impression on other people and they are doubtful about achieving this good impression (Dilbaz 1997).

Many studies show that the body image perception of the adolescents with low self-esteem is also low, and their self-esteem increases by positive attitudes toward body image perception of themselves (Oktan and Şahin 2010). According to a study carried out by Özcan et al. (2013) focusing on a relationship between self-esteem and social appearance anxiety in the adolescence and young adulthood period, they have come up with a similar conclusion that there is a strong relationship between self-esteem and social appearance anxiety and the self-esteem increases as the social appearance anxiety decreases.

The loneliness is an important emotional state experienced in the adolescence and young adulthood period. According to Jones and Carver (1991), the state of loneliness is observed mostly in adolescents and young adults. Heinrich and Gullone (2006) also suggest that the loneliness varies depending on the age and reaches its peak point in the

adolescence period. The loneliness is commonly defined as the lack of relationship with other people (Gierveld, Tilburg and Dykstra 2006). According to Peplau and Perlman (1982), loneliness is an unwanted situation caused by an inconsistency between what people expect from a relationship and what they really get. Although some researchers state that loneliness has only one dimension (Russell 1982; Russell et al. 1984). Weiss (1973) has suggested that loneliness is two-dimensional. According to him, the emotional loneliness is caused by the lack of some close relationships with such as especially family, spouse or lover; and the social loneliness is caused by the lack or absence of the relationships with such as friend, neighbor or the friendships in the workplace. According to Michela, Peplau, and Weeks (1982), there are many causes of loneliness and one of these causes is that individuals do not see themselves physically attractive. According to them, people choose to be alone when they do not feel themselves physically attractive and perceive this situation negatively.

In a study carried out by Levinson, Fernandez and Rodebaugh (2011) related to loneliness and social appearance anxiety, the relationship between social appearance anxiety and loneliness along with body image dissatisfaction, body mass index and gender has been investigated and they have found that the social appearance anxiety plays a role in the relationship between loneliness and body image dissatisfaction; and the social appearance anxiety can be reduced by reducing loneliness. In another study conducted by Levinson and Rodebaugh (2009), some results were revealed related to gender differences of individuals experiencing social appearance anxiety. According to the results of this research, it has been found that the social appearance anxiety is significantly higher in women than men, and there is a positive correlation between social appearance anxiety and social relationship anxiety, fear of negative assessment and neuroticism. According to another study conducted on social appearance anxiety and negative body image perception, there is a positive relationship between these two

variables (Hart et al., 2008). In another study carried out by Koskina et al. (2011), it has been found that the scores of the patient group of bulimia nervosa is significantly higher than the scores of the control group in the social appearance anxiety scale.

In the light of all this information, the thought of a probable connection between social appearance anxiety and loneliness in the adolescent period, in which the feeling of loneliness is dominant and the physical assessment is intense, has come to the fore and this has been the subject of this study. In this study, the differentiation status of primarily university students has been investigated in terms of some variables such as the social appearance anxiety along with the loneliness level, gender, the status of relationship with opposite sex, student club memberships, socio-economic status and type of hometown. On the other hand, it has been focused on that whether the social appearance anxiety is a significant predictor of loneliness, and if it is a predictor of loneliness, to what extent it predicts; by taking the relationship between social appearance anxiety and loneliness levels of the university students into account.

For this purpose, the answers of the questions below were searched:

1. Do the social appearance anxiety and level of loneliness of university students differ significantly based on their genders?
2. Do the social appearance anxiety and level of loneliness of university students differ significantly based on the status of having relationship with opposite sex?
3. Do the social appearance anxiety and level of loneliness of university students differ significantly based on their membership status to the student clubs?
4. Do the social appearance anxiety and level of loneliness of university students differ significantly based on their socio-economic status?

5. Do the social appearance anxiety and level of loneliness of university students differ significantly based on type of hometown?
6. Is there a significant relationship between the social appearance anxiety and level of loneliness of university students?
7. Do the social appearance anxieties of the university students predict significantly the level of loneliness?

## **2. METHOD**

### **2.1. The Research Method**

In this study, the research method was selected as the general screening model, because it was aimed to investigate the social appearance anxiety and level of loneliness of the university students in terms of gender, the status of relationship with the opposite sex, student club memberships, socio-economic status and type of hometown.

### **2.2. The Participants of the Research**

A total of 493 university students, majoring in different faculties of Erciyes University and Meliksah University located in the city center of Kayseri, have participated to the study in the academic year 2013-2014. 68.6% of surveyed university students (338) were female, 31.4% (155) were male. The average age of the participants is 19.

## **3. MATERIALS**

"Social Appearance Anxiety Scale", "UCLA Loneliness Scale" and the Personal Information Form, developed by the researchers, were used to collect the data.

**3.1. Personal Information Form:** In the study, the personal information form, developed by the researchers, was used in order to determine the gender, the status of relationship with the opposite sex, student club memberships, socio-economic status and type of hometown of the participants. Some closed-ended questions regarding the above-mentioned variables were asked to the participants in the personal information form and they were asked to mark the suitable answer.

**3.2. Social Appearance Anxiety Scale (SAAS):** The “Social Appearance Anxiety Scale” was used in order to measure the social appearance anxiety levels of the participants, which was developed by Hart et al. (2008) and adapted to Turkish by Doğan (2010). SAAS consists of a total of 16 items including cognitive, emotional and behavioral items regarding the appearance anxiety of the individuals. The 1<sup>st</sup> item of the Likert-type scale is encoded in reverse and there are answers from (1) Not Appropriate to (5) Totally Appropriate. The high scores received from SAAS, which measures one-dimensional social appearance anxiety, indicate higher social appearance anxiety. According to the results of exploratory factor analysis (EFA), developed by Doğan (2010) in order to investigate the validity of SAAS, a single-factor structure was obtained that explains 53.4% of the total variance. The item-factor loadings of the scale were found in the range of 0.35 and 0.87. In the study related to application of the scale to adolescents, the Cornbach Alpha coefficient was found as 0.91, and test-retest reliability was found as 0.80 (Doğan 2011). The internal consistency of the scale coefficient, calculated for this study, was found as  $\alpha=0.74$ .

**3.3. UCLA Loneliness Scale:** The Loneliness Scale of University of California Los Angeles (UCLA), developed by Russel, Peplau and Ferguson (1978), was updated by Russel, Peplau and Cutrona (1980) by reviewing all items; and half of the items were revised as positive and the remaining half was revised as negative items. The

Scale was adapted to Turkish by Demir (1989) as a 4-point Likert Scale that had the choices as follows: 1- Never experienced, 2- Very rare, 3-Sometimes, 4- Frequently. The highest score can be received from the scale is 80, whereas the lowest score is 20 points. The scores between 20 and 40 refers to low level, 40-60 refers to moderate level and 60-80 refers to high level of loneliness. The validity of the test is consistent with the criteria validity of Beck Depression Inventory with a correlation coefficient of 0.82. The reliability studies were made by the retest method. Reliability coefficient is 0.94. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the scale in this study was found to be  $\alpha = 0.82$ .

**3.4. Collecting and Analyzing the Data:** The tools used for data collection were handed out to 500 university students in November 2013, applied and collected from them. There was missing information on 7 of the forms, which were excluded from the study, and the data obtained from 493 were analyzed. T-test was employed on independent groups in order to identify the differentiation status of the university students on social appearance anxiety and loneliness levels depending on some variables such as “gender, the relationship status with opposite sex and memberships to the student clubs”. One-way analysis of variance was used (ANOVA) to determine the differentiation status of the university students depending on “socio-economic status and type of hometown” variables. The TUKEY test was employed as advanced statistical technique in order to identify the source of the resulting difference of Anova Test. Pearson correlation coefficient was used to reveal the relationship between the social appearance anxiety and level of loneliness. The linear regression analysis technique was used to determine the prediction level of the social appearance anxiety on loneliness.



#### 4. FINDINGS

In this section, the findings obtained by the statistical analysis of the data collected have taken place. The findings related to the answers of the questions asked in the study were given in an order. T-test analysis was applied to independent groups in order to identify the status of differentiation of the social appearance anxiety and loneliness of the university students depending on their genders. The findings related to the analysis are given in Table 1.

**Table 1:** The t-test results related to differentiation of the social appearance anxiety and loneliness of the university students depending on their genders

	Gender	N	$\bar{x}$	Std. Dev.	t	p
SAA	Male	155	32,03	11,01	0,478	,633
	Female	338	31,48	12,33		
Loneliness	Male	155	35,66	7,46	2,734*	,006
	Female	338	33,77	6,98		

\*p<0.05

Considering the findings related to differentiation of social appearance anxiety levels of the university students depending on their genders, it has been observed that the average of male students is  $\bar{x}$  =32.03; and the average of female students is  $\bar{x}$  =31.48. The t value ((t=0.478, p>0.05), calculated to test the significance of difference between the average scores of the groups, has shown that there is no significant difference between the groups at a significance level of 0.05. According to the loneliness levels of the students; the average of male students is  $\bar{x}$  =35.66; and the average of female students is  $\bar{x}$  =33.77. The t value ((t=2.734, p>0.05), calculated to test the significance of difference between the level

of loneliness the groups, has shown that there is a significant difference between the groups at a significance level of 0.05. According to this finding, the loneliness level of male university students is higher than the female students. In other words, the male students feel themselves lonelier than the female students do.

The analysis results of t-test, applied to independent groups to demonstrate the differentiation of the social appearance anxiety and loneliness levels of university students depending on their emotional relationship status with the opposite sex, are given in Table 2.

**Table 2:** The results of t-test, applied to independent groups to demonstrate the differentiation of the social appearance anxiety and loneliness levels of university students depending on their emotional relationship status with the opposite sex

Status of Relationship		N	$\bar{x}$	Std. Dev.	t	p
SAA	Yes	345	28,78	9,57	<b>-7,565*</b>	,001
	No	148	38,34	14,04		
Loneliness	Yes	345	33,86	7,53	<b>-2,582*</b>	,010
	No	148	35,54	6,17		

\*p<0.05

Considering the findings given in Table 2, it has been observed that the average of social appearance anxiety of the students that are in a relationship with opposite sex is  $\bar{x}$  =28.78; whereas the average of social appearance anxiety of the students who are not in a relationship is  $\bar{x}$  =38.34. According to t-test value (t=-7.565 p<0.05), which was calculated to see the significance of the difference between groups, there is a significant difference between these groups at a significance level of 0.05. According to this finding, it has been

revealed that the students, who are in a relationship with opposite sex, experience lower level of social appearance anxiety than the other students that are not in a relationship with the opposite sex. In other words, the students, who are not in a relationship with opposite sex, feel more social appearance anxiety than the other students that are in a relationship with the opposite sex.

Considering whether the level of social appearance anxiety of the university students differ depending on having an emotional relationship with a person from opposite sex, the average of the loneliness level of the students that are in a relationship with the opposite sex is  $\bar{x} = 33.86$ ; whereas this value is  $\bar{x} = 35.54$  for other students, who are not in a relationship with the opposite sex. According to t-test value ( $t = -2.582$   $p < 0.05$ ), which was calculated to see the significance of the difference between groups, there is a significant difference between these groups at a significance level of 0.05. According to this finding, the loneliness level of the students, who are in a relationship with opposite sex, is lower than the other students that are not in a relationship with the opposite sex. In other words, the students that are not in a relationship with the opposite sex feel lonelier than other students, who are in a relationship with the opposite sex.

The analysis results of t-test, applied to independent groups to demonstrate the differentiation of the social appearance anxiety and loneliness levels of university students depending on their membership status to student clubs, are given in Table 3.

**Table 3:** The results of t-test regarding the differentiation of the social appearance anxiety and loneliness levels of university students depending on their membership status to student clubs

Membership to Student Clubs		N	$\bar{x}$	Std. Dev.	t	p
SAA	Yes	363	33,32	11,93	5,638*	,001
	No	130	26,99	10,62		
Loneliness	Yes	363	35,39	7,14	5,256*	,001
	No	130	31,60	6,57		

\*p<0.05

Considering the findings related to the differentiation of the social appearance anxiety and loneliness levels of university students depending on their membership status to student clubs, it has been observed that the average of the students that are member of the clubs is  $\bar{x}$  =33.32; whereas the average of the other students, who don't have any membership to any student club, is  $\bar{x}$  =26.99. According to t-test value (t=5.638 p<0.05), which was calculated to see the significance of the difference between groups, there is a significant difference between these groups at a significance level of 0.05. According to this finding, it has been revealed that the social appearance anxiety of the students that have a membership to a student club is higher than the other students, who are not members of any student club.

Considering the findings given in Table 3, the average of the loneliness level of the students that are members of the student clubs is  $\bar{x}$  =35.39; whereas this value is  $\bar{x}$  =31.60 for the other students that are not members of any student club. According to t-test value (t=5.256 p<0.05), which was calculated to see the significance of the difference between

loneliness levels of these two groups, there is a significant difference between these groups at a significance level of 0.05. According to this finding, the loneliness level of the students that are members of the student clubs is higher than the students, who are not members of any student club.

The results of f-test (ANOVA), employed to demonstrate the differentiation level of social appearance anxiety and loneliness levels of university students depending on their socio-economic status, are given in Table 4.

Considering the findings related to the differentiation levels of the social appearance anxiety of university students depending on their socio-economic status, it has been observed that the average of the students that have low income is  $\bar{x} = 31.33$ ; the average of the students from middle income status is  $\bar{x} = 31.11$ ; and the average of the students have high income is  $\bar{x} = 34.22$  respectively. According to f-test value ( $f=2.325$   $p<0.05$ ), which was calculated to see the significance of the difference between groups, there is not a significant difference between these groups at a significance level of 0.05. According to this finding, the social appearance anxiety of the students does not vary depending on their socio-economic statuses.

**Table 4:** The results of f-test regarding the differentiation level of social appearance anxiety and loneliness levels of university students depending on their socio-economic status

	SED	N	$\bar{x}$	Std. Dev.	F	p
<b>SAA</b>	Low	39	31,33	14,74	2,325	,099
	Mid.	371	31,11	10,24		
	High	83	34,22	16,45		
<b>Loneliness</b>	Low	39	33,48	8,48	11,754*	,001
	Mid.	371	35,19	6,86		
	High	81	31,11	7,02		

\*p<0.05

Considering the findings related to the loneliness levels of the students depending on their socio-economic statuses, it has been observed that the average of the students that have low income is  $\bar{x}$  =33.48; the average of the students from middle income status is  $\bar{x}$  =35.19; and the average of the students have high income is  $\bar{x}$  =31.11 respectively. According to f-test value (f11.754 p<0.05), which was calculated to see the significance of the difference between the average scores of the groups, there is a significant difference between these groups at a significance level of 0.05. According to this finding, the loneliness level of the students varies significantly depending on their socio-economic statuses.

The TUKEY test was employed as advanced statistical technique in order to identify the source of the difference of loneliness levels between the university students. The findings related to the analysis are given in Table 6.

**Table 6:** The TUKEY test results related to differentiation of loneliness levels of university students depending on their socio-economic status.

Dep. Var.	(I) SED	(J) SED	Dif. Bet. Ave. (I-J)	P
LONELINESS	Low	Mid	-1,70150	,322
		High	2,37875	,190
	Mid	High	<b>4,08025*</b>	,001

\*p<0.05

According to the TUKEY test results given in Table 6, the loneliness level of the students that are in middle socio-economic class is higher than the students come from high socio-economic status. There is no significant difference between other groups.

The results of f-test (ANOVA), employed to demonstrate the differentiation level of social appearance anxiety and loneliness levels of university students depending on type of their hometown, are given in Table 7.

**Table 7:** The results of f-test related to demonstrate the differentiation level of social appearance anxiety and loneliness levels of university students depending on type of their hometown

Type of Residence		N	$\bar{x}$	Std. Dev.	F	p
<b>SAA</b>	Village-Town	48	32,40	16,73	<b>3,828*</b>	,022
	County	98	34,46	8,44		
	City	347	30,76	11,87		
<b>Loneliness</b>	Village-Town	48	36,96	10,61	<b>13,073*</b>	,000
	County	98	36,81	6,65		
	City	347	33,32	6,47		

\*p<0.05

Considering the findings related to the differentiation levels of the social appearance anxiety of university students depending on type of their hometowns, it has been observed that the average value of the students that have reported their hometown as village-town is  $\bar{x}$  =32.40; the average of the students reported as country is  $\bar{x}$  =34.46; and the average of the students reported as city is  $\bar{x}$  =30.76 respectively. According to f-test value (f=3.828 p<0.05), which was employed to test the significance of the difference between groups, there is a significant difference between these groups at a significance level of 0.05. According to this finding, the social appearance anxiety of the students varies depending on type of their hometowns.

Considering the findings related to the differentiation of the loneliness levels of university students depending on type of their hometowns, it has been observed that the average value of the students that have reported their hometown as village-town is  $\bar{x}$  =36.96; the average of the students reported as country is  $\bar{x}$  =36.81; and the average of



the students reported as city is  $\bar{x} = 33.32$  respectively. According to f-test value ( $f=13.073$   $p<0.05$ ), which was employed to test the significance of the difference between groups, there is a significant difference between these groups at a significance level of 0.05. According to this finding, the loneliness levels of the students vary depending on type of their hometowns.

The TUKEY test was employed as advanced statistical technique in order to identify the source of difference of the social appearance anxiety and loneliness levels between the university students depending on type of their hometowns. The findings related to the analysis are given in Table 8.

**Table 8:** The results of TUKEY test related to the differentiation of the social appearance anxiety and loneliness levels between the university students depending on type of their hometowns

Dep. Var.	(I) RESIDENCE	(J) RESIDENCE	Dif. Bet. Averages (I-J)	P
<b>SAA</b>	County	Village-Town	2,06335	,585
		City	<b>3,70126*</b>	,018
<b>Loneliness</b>	Village-Town	County	,15221	,992
		City	<b>3,63845*</b>	,002
	County	Village-Town	,15221	,992
		City	<b>3,48624*</b>	,001

\* $p<0.05$

According to the findings on Table 8, the social appearance anxiety levels of the students, who reported their hometown as county, significantly differ from the students that have

reported their hometowns as city. According to this finding, the social appearance anxiety level of the students, who reported their hometown as county, is significantly higher than the students that have reported their hometowns as city. A similar result is also revealed for the loneliness level of the students. Considering the findings related to differentiation in the levels of loneliness, the loneliness level of the students, who reported their hometown as village-town and county, is significantly higher than the students that have reported their hometowns as city.

The results of Pearson Correlation Analysis, employed to identify the relationship between the scores of the university students received from social appearance anxiety and loneliness scales, are given in Table 9.

**Table 9:** The relationship between the social appearance anxiety and loneliness levels of the university students

	Loneliness	
	r	p
Social Appearance Anxiety	,321**	,001

\*p<0.05

Considering the findings given in Table 9, there is a positive and significant relationship between the social appearance anxiety and level of loneliness. According to this finding, there is a positively significant relationship between the social appearance anxiety and level of loneliness of the university students. This result can be interpreted as the increasing social appearance anxiety results in increased loneliness level.

The simple regression analysis was used to see whether the social appearance anxiety of the university students predict their loneliness levels. The findings related to the analysis are given in Table 10.

**Table 10:** The results of simple regression analysis related to prediction of the social appearance anxiety of the university students on their loneliness levels

Loneliness	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	$\beta$	t
Social App. Anxiety	,321	,103	56,232*	,193	7,499*

\*p<0.05

Considering the findings given in Table 10, it has been observed that the social appearance anxiety significantly predicts the level of loneliness (R=0.321, R<sup>2</sup>=0.103, F=56.232, p<0.05). According to this finding, the social appearance anxiety explains 10.3% of the variance of the level of loneliness. In other words, 10.3% of the variance in loneliness level is caused by the social appearance anxiety.

## 5. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

In this study, the social appearance anxiety and loneliness levels of the university students have been investigated; and primarily it was examined that whether the related variables show any differences in terms of some other variables such as the gender, the status of relationship with opposite sex, student club memberships, socio-economic status and type of hometown. On the other hand, it has been also investigated that to what extent the social appearance anxiety predicts the loneliness level of the students by examining whether there is a significant relationship between the social appearance anxiety and loneliness levels. Considering the related literature, the small

number of the studies especially conducted in this area caused some difficulties in the interpretation process of the findings. Therefore, some comparisons have been used in the interpretation of the findings obtained from this research associated with the results of the studies related to some other concepts regarding social appearance (self-esteem, body image, etc.).

According to the findings obtained in the research, the social appearance anxiety levels of the students do not vary significantly depending on their genders. In other words, there is no significant difference between male and female students in terms of their social appearance anxiety levels. Considering the related studies, it has been determined that many difference results were obtained. It has been also observed that the results of this study are in parallel with the results of the studies of Şahin (2012), Özge (2013) and Şahin, Barut and Ersanlı (2013) conducted in Turkey. On the other hand, according to another study carried out by Erdemir et al. (2013) conducted on acne vulgaris patients and clinical samples, the social appearance anxiety level of the female patients is significantly higher than the male patients. In another study carried out by Levinson et al. (2011) conducted on 118 university students with an average age of 19, it has been found that the social appearance anxiety level of the female students is significantly higher than the male students.

The results related to differentiation status of loneliness levels of the university students depending on their genders show that the loneliness levels of the male students are significantly higher than the loneliness levels of the female students. According to some studies (Jones, Freeman and Goswick 1981; Wittenberg and Reis 1986), although no significant difference was found between male and female students in the adolescence period, it has been identified that the male students experience more loneliness than the female students in the young adulthood period. In another study conducted by Karaoğlu,

Avşaroğlu and Deniz (2009) with the university students of our country, it has been concluded that the loneliness levels of the male students are higher than the female students.

Another issue discussed in the study is; whether the students experience any differences in their social appearance anxiety and loneliness levels depending on having a relationship with the opposite sex. The findings obtained related to this subject show that the students, who are in a relationship with the opposite sex, experience less social appearance anxiety than the other students that have not a relationship with the opposite sex. According to another study carried out by Eriş and İkiz (2013) on the high school kids, it has been found that the self-esteem of the students that have a group of friends is higher than the students that have not such a group; and the self-esteem and general social anxiety levels do not vary significantly depending on having a special friend from the opposite sex. It has been thought that the higher social appearance anxiety in the students that are not in a relationship with the opposite sex may be caused by their efforts to be liked by the opposite sex. On the other hand, it has been observed that the loneliness level of the students that are in a relationship with the opposite sex is lower than the students that are not in a relationship with the opposite sex.

According to the findings related to the social appearance anxiety and loneliness levels of the university students that are either member of the students clubs or do not have any membership, it has been determined that the social appearance anxiety and loneliness levels of the students that are member of some student clubs are higher than the other students, who have not any membership to student clubs. This finding was considered interesting, because the social appearance anxiety includes more detailed and comprehensive self-assessment of the body beyond the general physical appearance of an individual (Hart et al. 2008). Therefore, it has been thought that the students that have

positive body perception and self-esteem are considered to have lower social appearance anxiety. On the other hand, these individuals will be able to more confident and sociable in the socialization process. According to Sübaşı (2007), the loneliness levels of the students increase as a result of the increased social anxiety level; and their social anxiety levels increase as long as their self-esteem levels reduce. In another study conducted by Gümüş (2000), the loneliness levels of the students increase as a result of the increased social anxiety level and their satisfaction of the body image also decreases. Thus, it comes to mind that the students with social appearance anxiety can pull themselves back in the socialization process and prefer to be alone most of the time.

However, according to diagnostic criteria of the DSM-IV-TR, the social phobia includes a continuous and certain fear that an individual feels when he/she meets unknown people or when performing one or more social activities that may attract the attention of other people and also the fear of behaving that result in being ridiculed or ashamed (or showing anxiety symptoms). In this case, it is expected from individuals, who experience appearance anxiety as a form of social phobia, to avoid the situations that require socialization. However, according to findings of the study, it has been found that the loneliness levels of the students that are members of student clubs are higher than other, which is a case normally requires socialization. This result is actually understandable when consider it together with the fact that the social appearance anxiety and loneliness levels of the students, who are in a relationship with the opposite sex, are higher than the other students that are not in a relationship. Namely, the young people that cannot resolve the social appearance anxiety and consequently experienced loneliness through establishing relationship with other people, they try to resolve this issue through student clubs, which are formal structures formed by gathering some people for a certain purpose.

Considering the findings related to the social appearance anxiety loneliness levels of the students depending on their socio-economic statuses, it has been observed that the social appearance anxiety of university students do not vary depending on their socio-economic statuses. These findings are consistent with the findings of a study conducted by Özge (2013) on the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade of elementary school students to investigate the effect of socio-economic status on the social appearance anxiety. However, although there are some studies indicate that the people who have social phobia also have lower socio-economic and educational level, some other studies show that there is no significant difference between the control groups (Dilbaz 1997). In a study carried out by Özkan (1994) on the university students, it has been determined that the self-esteem increases by the level of income. The relationship between self-esteem and social appearance anxiety may suggest that the social appearance anxiety decreases as a result of high level of income. Although there is no significant difference in the social appearance anxiety depending on the socio-economic level, the results suggest that the level of loneliness significantly differs by the socio-economic level. In the study, it has been identified that the loneliness level of the students that come from middle socio-economic class is higher than the students come from higher socio-economic status, which can be accepted as an indicator of this result.

Another finding obtained from the study is related to the status of differentiation of the social appearance anxiety and loneliness level depending on the hometown which might be village-town, county or city. According to the findings of the study, there is no significant difference between the students coming from village-towns or counties in terms of the social appearance anxiety; however, the social appearance anxiety level of the students come from counties is significantly higher than the students coming from cities. On the other hand, similar findings were obtained in terms of the level of loneliness. Although there is no significant difference between the students coming from village-towns or counties in terms of the loneliness levels, it has been observed

that the loneliness level of the students coming from cities is significantly lower than the other students. There is no other comparable study in the literature for this finding related to the social appearance anxiety. This situation can be explained by the sociological, cultural and economic differences between the cities, village-town and county structures of this social structure. In particular, people who live in the city centers are faced to more opportunities and factors compared to other people in terms of physical, emotional, cognitive and social aspects. Thus, the people living in the villages, towns and counties may consider these cases as a shortcoming and reflect this feeling to their lives. Therefore, they can behave as afraid of the criticisms by others and prefer not to engage in social environments.

Another issue discussed in the study is the prediction level of the social appearance anxiety on loneliness and the relationship between the social appearance anxiety the level of loneliness. According to the findings related to this subject, there is a positively significant relationship between the social appearance anxiety the level of loneliness of the young people. According to this finding, the increased level of social appearance anxiety also increases the level of loneliness. This finding seems consistent with the study of Levinson et al. (2011). In another study conducted by Sübaşı (2007), it has been stated that there is a positive relationship between loneliness and social appearance anxiety. In addition, the analyses suggest that the social appearance anxiety explains 10.3% of the level of loneliness. According to this finding, one of the reasons that cause university students to feel alone is the social appearance anxiety they have experienced.

Apart from the significant findings of this study, it is important to remember the limitations of the study. The most important limitation of this study is being focused on only a certain number of students studying at the universities of Kayseri. In the future studies, the researchers may enrich their works and contribute to the literature by



expanding the sample population. It is possible to obtain more detailed results by using some other scales not used within scope of this study and making some comparisons between different sample groups such as adolescences, young adults etc. In addition, considering the findings of this study related to memberships to the student clubs and the hometowns of the students and the social appearance anxiety and loneliness levels, it has been though that personal-social, psychological support practices may be increased to reduce these problems. In this context, it is recommended that this kind of studies should be conducted in the community health centers or psychological counseling centers of the universities.

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