

## Social Appearance Anxiety, Self-Esteem, and Life Satisfaction Relationship in Individuals Who Have Undergone Aesthetic Procedures

### Estetik İşlem Yaptırmış Bireylerde Sosyal Görünüş Kaygısı, Benlik Saygısı ve Yaşam Doyumu İlişkisi

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#### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** The study aims to determine the relationship between social appearance anxiety, self-esteem, and life satisfaction of individuals who have had aesthetic procedures.

**Materials and Methods:** The study was conducted on individuals who applied to a private clinic in Samsun. The study involved 284 people who received aesthetic surgery services. The data of the study were collected online between August 2022 and October 2022. Study data were collected by questionnaire forms prepared on Google Forms. Study data were collected through four forms, namely, the personal introduction form, social appearance anxiety scale, life satisfaction scale, and Rosenberg self-esteem scale.

**Results:** As a result of the study, there is a significant negative relationship between life satisfaction and social appearance anxiety ( $r=-0.393$ ). There is a weak positive correlation between social appearance anxiety and self-esteem ( $r=0.168$ ). There is a weak negative relationship between life satisfaction and self-esteem ( $r=-0.173$ ).

**Conclusion:** It has been determined that individuals with high social appearance anxiety have low life satisfaction. It may be appropriate for individuals with high social appearance anxiety to receive professional support to improve their quality of life.

**Keywords:** Aesthetic procedures, life satisfaction, self-esteem, social appearance anxiety

#### ÖZ

**Amaç:** Bu çalışma, estetik operasyon geçirmiş bireylerde sosyal görünüş kaygısı, benlik saygısı ve yaşam doyumu arasındaki ilişkiyi belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır.

**Materyal ve Metot:** Araştırma, Samsun ilinde özel bir kliniğe başvuran bireyler üzerinde yapılmıştır. Araştırmaya estetik cerrahi hizmeti alan 284 kişi katılmıştır. Araştırmanın verileri, Ağustos 2022 ile Ekim 2022 tarihleri arasında çevrimiçi olarak toplanmıştır. Araştırma verileri, Google Forms üzerinde hazırlanan anket formları ile toplanmıştır. Araştırma verileri kişisel tanıtım formu, sosyal görünüş kaygısı ölçeği, yaşam doyumu ölçeği ve Rosenberg benlik saygısı ölçeği olmak üzere dört form aracılığıyla toplanmıştır.

**Bulgular:** Araştırma sonucunda yaşam doyumu ile sosyal görünüş kaygısı arasında negatif yönde anlamlı bir ilişki vardır ( $r=-0,393$ ). Sosyal görünüş kaygısı ile benlik saygısı arasında pozitif yönde zayıf bir ilişki vardır ( $r=0,168$ ). Yaşam doyumu ile benlik saygısı arasında zayıf bir negatif ilişki vardır ( $r=-0,173$ ).

**Sonuç:** Sosyal görünüş kaygısı yüksek olan bireylerin yaşam doyumlarının düşük olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Sosyal görünüş kaygısı yüksek bireylerin yaşam kalitelerini artırmak için profesyonel destek almaları uygun olabilir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Benlik saygısı, estetik işlemler, sosyal görünüş kaygısı, yaşam doyumu

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## INTRODUCTION

Social appearance anxiety is a type of social anxiety caused by the stress or anxiety experienced by the individual when her/his environment evaluates her/his physical appearance.<sup>1</sup> Social appearance anxiety is also defined as “the fear that an individual will be negatively evaluated because of her/his appearance.”<sup>2,3</sup>

The anxiety felt by an individual is a subjective fear.<sup>4</sup> Social appearance anxiety arises because of the individual's negative perception and interpretation of her/his physical appearance. Thus, social appearance anxiety can be seen as a result of the individual's negative body image perception about her/his body and appearance.<sup>5-7</sup> Body image perception is a mental image of an individual's body and expresses how individuals perceive their own body.<sup>8,9</sup> When individuals are dissatisfied with their appearance and body and evaluate their appearance negatively, they see their body image negatively.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, this situation causes an increase in social appearance anxiety of individuals, dissatisfaction with life, and social anxiety.<sup>11-13</sup>

Individuals have preferred plastic surgery in recent years to change their physical appearance, to have a more attractive appearance, and to destroy the negative image of the formation of other individuals.<sup>14</sup> The plastic surgery industry has been overgrown in the last 20 years. The American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons (ASAPS) has determined that the demand for aesthetic procedures has increased by 832% since 1997. Again, in the USA, more than 13 million aesthetic procedures were performed in 2016, and people spent more than 15 million dollars on this.<sup>15</sup> The International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery (ISAPS) has reported that more than 30.4 million plastic procedures were performed worldwide in 2021. According to 2021 data from ISAPS, women mostly preferred breast augmentation, breast lifts, liposuction, eyelid surgery, and rhinoplasty. Surgical procedures performed worldwide increased by 12.5% from 2017 to 2021.<sup>16</sup>

When the literature is examined, it is seen that there are many studies examining the relationship between social appearance anxiety, self-esteem, and life satisfaction. However, no research examining the relationship between social appearance anxiety, self-esteem, and life satisfaction of individuals who have aesthetic procedures has been found. For this reason, this study aims to determine the relationship between social appearance anxiety, self-esteem, and life satisfaction of individuals who have aesthetic procedures.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Ethics Committee Approval:** This study was

planned to follow the Helsinki Principles. Kütahya Health Sciences University Non-Interventional Clinical Study Ethics Committee approval was obtained (Date 22.06.2022, decision no: 2022/07).

**Population and Sample:** It is a cross-sectional study. The study population consists of local patients who receive services from the Aesthetic, Plastic, and Reconstructive Surgery Clinic of private health facilities in Samsun (Annual Average: 1000 Patients). The sample of the study was calculated as 278 with a 95% confidence interval and a 5% margin of error.<sup>17</sup>

**Data Collection Tools:** Study data were collected through four forms, namely the personal introduction form, social appearance anxiety scale, life satisfaction scale, and Rosenberg self-esteem scale.

**Personal Introduction Form:** It consists of 14 statements (age, gender, educational status, etc.) created by the authors to determine the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants.

**Social Appearance Anxiety Scale:** The scale was developed by Hart et al.<sup>18</sup> The Turkish validity and reliability of the scale was conducted by Doğan.<sup>19</sup> It is a 16-item 5-point Likert-type self-report scale with an answer key of (1 point) Not at all Appropriate, (5 points) Extremely Appropriate, which was developed to measure the emotional, cognitive, and behavioural concerns of an individual about her/his appearance. Item 1 of the scale is reverse-coded. High scores obtained from SAAS, which measures social appearance anxiety in a unidimensional way, indicate that appearance anxiety is high.<sup>19</sup> In this study, the overall scale reliability Cronbach coefficient of the SAAS was found to be  $\alpha = 0.942$ .

**Life Satisfaction Scale:** The scale was developed by Diener et al. in 1985 and adapted into Turkish by Köker in 1991.<sup>20</sup> The scale consists of five items related to life satisfaction. This seven-point Likert type scale was adapted into a five-point Likert type by Dağlı and Baysal, and its validity and reliability study was conducted. Each item is in a five-point Likert-type response system as (1 = Not at all appropriate – 5 = Extremely appropriate). The highest score that can be obtained from the life satisfaction scale is 25, and the lowest score is 5.<sup>21</sup> In this study, the Cronbach reliability coefficient was found to be  $\alpha = 0.869$  for the whole scale of LSS.

**Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES):** The scale was developed by Morris Rosenberg in 1965, and the validity and reliability studies of RSES in Türkiye were conducted by Çuhadaroğlu. RSES consists of twelve sub-domains, and its first ten items measure self-esteem.<sup>22</sup> Cronbach  $\alpha$  reliability coefficient of the whole scale of RSES was found to be 0.833.

**Data Collection:** The data of this cross-sectional study were collected online between 01.08.2022 and

31.10.2022. The study was carried out on individuals who applied to a clinic in Samsun. The study involved 284 people who received aesthetic surgery services. Questionnaire forms prepared via Google were first shared with the physicians working in the institutions where the study would be conducted. Physicians who agreed to support the study shared the questionnaire forms on social media platforms with their patient groups and ensured the forms were filled. Participants were asked the question, "Do you agree to participate in the study?" and 284 individuals who answered "Yes" were included in the analysis.

**Data Analysis:** The IBM SPSS 25 package program was used to analyse the data. Descriptive statistics were calculated to show the distribution of the data. The distribution of categorical data was shown as number (n) and percentage (%). Skewness and kurtosis values were analysed to determine whether the data showed normal distribution. VIF value was examined to determine whether there was multicollinearity between the variables. P value significance

level was accepted as  $p < 0.05$ . Pearson correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between variables, and multiple regression analyses were used to examine the effect of the dependent variable on the independent variable.

## RESULTS

Information about the demographic characteristics of the participants is shown in Table 1. The mean age of the participants is age arithmetic mean  $29.81 \pm 10.881$ ; 73.6% of them are female; 44.3% of them are associate degree graduates; 57% are single; 52.5% of them have an income of 4001-8000 TL; 65.5% do not smoke; 78.9% do not use alcohol; 96.5% are social media users; 84.2% use Instagram the most; 41.9% spend 2 hours a day on social media; 57.7% came to the hospital/physician with a recommendation from a friend/relative and 71.1% were satisfied with the service they received. Of the participants, 46.5% (132) underwent rhinoplasty, 14.8% (42) liposuction, and 9.2% (26) breast reduction had gynecomastia procedures (Tablo 1).

**Table 1.** Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Participants (n=284).

Characteristics	n (%)	
<b>Gender</b>	Female	209 (73.6)
	Male	75 (26.4)
<b>Education</b>	High school	29 (10.2)
	Associate degree	126 (44.3)
	Bachelor's degree	98 (34.5)
	Master's degree	24 (8.5)
	Doctorate degree	7 (2.5)
<b>Marital Status</b>	Married	122 (43)
	Single	162 (57)
<b>Income Level (Monthly)</b>	0- 4000 TL	50 (17.6)
	4001- 8000 TL	149 (52.5)
	Over 8001 TL	85 (29.9)
<b>Number of Visits</b>	Only one time	158 (55.6)
	2 Times	28 (9.9)
	3 and more	98 (34.5)
<b>Smoking Status</b>	Yes	98 (34.5)
	No	186 (65.5)
<b>Alcohol Drinking Status</b>	Yes	60 (21.1)
	No	224 (78.9)
<b>Do you use social media?</b>	Yes	274 (96.5)
	No	10 (3.5)
<b>How much time do you spend daily on social media?</b>	1 hour	52 (18.3)
	2 hours	119 (41.9)
	More than 3 hours	113 (39.8)
<b>Which social media do you use the most?</b>	Facebook	20 (7)
	Instagram	239 (84.2)
	Twitter	21 (7.4)
	Tik Tok	4 (1.4)
<b>How did you reach this hospital/physician?</b>	Advice for relatives/friends, etc.	164 (57.7)
	Social media	100 (35.3)
	Brochure/ advertising / TV	20 (7)

**Table 1.** Continue.

<b>What service did you receive?</b>	Rhinoplasty	132 (46.3)
	Liposuction	42 (14.8)
	Breast Reduction	26 (9.2)
	Abdominoplasty	24 (8.5)
	Breast Augmentation	23 (8.1)
	Blepharoplasty	13 (4.6)
	Hair Transplantation	13 (4.6)
	Botox	10 (3.5)
	Gynecomastia	1 (0.4)
<b>Are you satisfied with the service you received?</b>	Yes, I am pleased.	202 (71.1)
	No, I am not satisfied.	11 (3.9)
	I am undecided/ not sure.	71 (25)
<b>Age Mean ± SD</b>		29.81±10.881

In Table 2, the relationship between social appearance anxiety, self-esteem, and life satisfaction of those who had aesthetic procedures was evaluated with the Pearson correlation. According to the results of the correlation analysis, there is a significant negative relationship between life satisfaction and social appearance anxiety ( $r = -0.393$ ). A weak positive correlation exists between social appearance anxiety and self-esteem ( $r = 0.168$ ). There is a weak negative relationship between life satisfaction and self-esteem ( $r = -0.173$ ).

Table 3 shows the multiple regression model showing the effect of SAA and SE levels on the life satisfaction of individuals who had aesthetic procedures.

As a result of the analysis, the regression model is statistically significant ( $F = 28,010$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and the independent variables explained 16.6% of the change in life satisfaction. LS decreases by -28% points when SE increases by 1 point after controlling other variables. LS decreases by -39% points when SAA increases by 1 point after controlling other variables. In other words, as social appearance anxiety increases and self-esteem, the level of life satisfaction decreases (Tablo 3).

**Table 2.** The relation between Social Appearance Anxiety, Self-Esteem, and Life Satisfaction.

Variables	LS	SAA	SE
LS	1		
SAA	-0.393**	1	
SE	-0.173**	0.168*	1

r: correlation coefficient; \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$  (significance level); SSA: social appearance anxiety; LS: Life satisfaction; SE: Self-Esteem.

**Table 3.** Multiple regression model.

Variables	B	SE	$\beta$	t	p	Statistics VIF
(Constant)	2.900	0.339		8.562	0.000	
SE	-0.283	0.142	-0.110	-1.997	0.047	1.029
SAA	-0.392	0.058	-0.374	6.775	0.000	1.029
	$R^2=0.166$	$F=28.010$		$p=0.000$		

B: Regression constant coefficient; SE: Standard error,  $\beta$ : Standardized regression coefficient; t: The ratio of regression constant to standard error; p: Significance levels; VIF: Multicollinearity value;  $R^2$ : Effect size; F: Additional variance.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In the study, it was first determined which aesthetic procedures the participants had. According to the results of the study, it has been ascertained that the participants have had rhinoplasty, liposuction, breast reduction, abdominoplasty, breast augmentation, eyelid surgery, hair transplantation, botox, and gynecomastia, respectively. In the study conducted by Campbell et al. on medical tourists who had 1760

aesthetic procedures, it is seen that the first ten aesthetic procedures are similar to our study.<sup>14</sup>

In this study, it was determined that women had more plastic surgery procedures than men. Similar results were obtained in other studies.<sup>23,24</sup> All these results show that women are more interested in aesthetic procedures. Although the rate of men undergoing aesthetic surgery was around 10% in the study conducted by Pearlman et al.,<sup>24</sup> in our study, this rate

was approximately 36%. According to ISAPS data, most of those who have aesthetic procedures in the world are women.<sup>16</sup> In addition, this result supports the statement that having a beautiful physical appearance is a requirement of being feminine.

Life satisfaction is the harmony between the expectations of individuals and the realisation of these expectations. As the expectations of the individual are realized, their life satisfaction will increase, and in cases where they are not recognized, their life satisfaction will decrease.<sup>12</sup> Life satisfaction is a concept that expresses the cognitive aspect of the individual's subjective well-being and includes the individual's evaluations of his/her life in line with the criteria determined by the individual. The evaluations in the other two dimensions of subjective-being, positive and negative affect, may change with each experience. However, it is stated that life satisfaction, which constitutes the cognitive dimension of subjective well-being, is generally more consistent and stable.<sup>25</sup> In this study, it was determined that as social appearance anxiety increased, life satisfaction decreased. Current study results show that there is a negative relationship between life satisfaction and social appearance anxiety.<sup>5,24</sup> According to these results, it can be said that life satisfaction will decrease as the social appearance anxiety of individuals increases. It may be appropriate for individuals with high social appearance anxiety to receive professional support to improve their quality of life.

In this study, it was determined that as self-esteem increases, life satisfaction decreases. In a study conducted by Topuz, intense levels of it have been determined that individuals experiencing hopelessness have a high level of life satisfaction.<sup>27</sup> These results appear to contradict other study results in the literature.<sup>28</sup> The reason for such different results may be due to the characteristics of the sample group or the effects of different variables. In future studies, there is a need to examine variables that may mediate the effect of self-esteem on life satisfaction.

In this study, it was determined that there was a positive relationship between Social Appearance Anxiety and Self-Esteem. Liao et al.<sup>29</sup> As a result of the study conducted, it was determined that there was a positive relationship between social appearance anxiety and self-esteem. However, Göbel et al. In the study conducted, it was determined that there was a negative relationship between social appearance anxiety and self-esteem.<sup>30</sup> This difference in results may be due to some characteristics specific to the sample group. The variables causing this difference can be investigated in future studies.

In conclusion, it has been determined that women have more plastic surgery procedures than men. The most performed plastic surgery procedure is rhinoplasty. As Social Appearance Anxiety and Self-

Esteem increase, life satisfaction decreases. As self-esteem increases, social appearance anxiety also increases. The important aspect of the study is that it was conducted on individuals who applied to the plastic surgery clinic. The limitation of the study is that the study data was collected from a single centre. In future studies, a multicentre study can be conducted on this subject.

**Ethics Committee Approval:** This study was planned to follow the Helsinki Principles. Kütahya Health Sciences University Non-Interventional Clinical Study Ethics Committee approval was obtained (Date 22.06.2022, Decision no: 2022/07).

**Conflict of Interest:** No conflict of interest was declared by the authors.

**Author Contributions:** Concept – YD, ED, MN, SÖ; Supervision – MN, YD, ED, SÖ; Materials – YD, ED, MN, SÖ; Data Collection and/or Processing – YD, ED; Analysis and/or Interpretation – YD, ED, MN, SÖ.; Writing– YD, MN, ED, SÖ.

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