

# To what extent does good peer relationship help prevent social appearance anxiety of adolescents

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## Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the relationship between peer relationships and social appearance anxiety of adolescents. Questionnaires and personal interviews have been used in this research. The results indicate that good peer relationships have a significant positive impact on preventing social appearance anxiety of adolescents. Another important result is that the impact of the quality of peer relationships on social appearance anxiety on males and females is totally different. There is a negative correlation between males' peer relationships and their anxiety level; however, there is no correlation between peer relationships and social appearance anxiety of females. This study provides new evidence for teenager psychology and serves as a valuable reference for researching social appearance anxiety and gender difference.

**Keywords:** Peer relationships, Social appearance anxiety, Self acceptance

## 1. Introduction

Nowadays social appearance anxiety has become an increasingly common issue among adolescents (Ertugrul et al., 2014). Appearance anxiety refers to the psychological state in which individuals are overly worried and dissatisfied with their appearance, which is a common psychological disorder in modern society (Caroline, Howard & Marc, 1993). With the popularization of social media and the high-level focus on appearance in society, adolescents often worry excessively about their own appearance. Social appearance anxiety can cause many impacts; for example, people who have social appearance anxiety tend to spend too much time and attention on their appearance, and they'll be less confident. Additionally,

social appearance anxiety also may cause depression, anxiety, and other mental illnesses (Felicia, 2009).

Several studies show that peer relations play an extremely significant role in the growth process of adolescents, and a study suggests that good peer relations have positive effects on the mental health of young people (Prinstien, Dodge, 2008). However, the role of good peer relations in preventing adolescents' social appearance anxiety has rarely been studied directly. Adolescents are highly sensitive to others' evaluations, and peer recognition and acceptance significantly influence their sense of self-worth (Laursen, Veenstra, 2021). Therefore, in-depth exploration of the extent to which good peer relationships have a positive impact on adolescents' social appearance

anxiety is of great theoretical and practical significance. The overall goal of this study evaluates the association between good peer relationships and adolescents' social appearance anxiety and determine how different dimensions of peer relationships, such as the quality of friendships and peer support, act on the anxiety degree of adolescents. Through this research, it is hoped to provide a theoretical basis for formulating intervention strategies for adolescents' mental health, thereby helping adolescents better cope with social appearance anxiety problems and promoting their mental health development.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 Concepts and Definitions

In this research, there are two significant definitions that need to be announced, which are social appearance anxiety and peer relationship, respectively. Social appearance anxiety is defined as "the fear that one will be negatively evaluated because of one's appearance" (Hart et al., 2008). The concept of appearance anxiety gradually expands to include dissatisfaction with other aspects of the body, such as figure, body shape, etc. At the same time, it is also more closely related to mental health, social culture, and other factors. For example, the study found that the popularity of social media and excessive attention to appearance may exacerbate people's appearance anxiety.

A peer relationship is a relationship between individuals who are equal in status, age, ability, or rank. According to research in developmental psychology, peers play a crucial role in a child's socialization process (Admin, 2023). For example, in the study "The Role of Peer Relationships in Childhood Development" (Smith, 2018), it was found that positive peer relationships can enhance a child's self-esteem and communication skills.

### 2.2 The negative impact caused by social appearance anxiety

Appearance anxiety can lead to eating disorders and a host of other physical illnesses; there are many studies mentioning the connection between social appearance anxiety and eating disorders.

When individuals are overly concerned about their appearance and weight, they may develop unhealthy eating habits such as restricting food intake, binge eating, or purging. These behaviors can result in serious eating disorders like bulimia nervosa and anorexia nervosa, which have severe physical consequences. Additionally, the stress and anxiety associated with appearance concerns can weaken the immune system, leading to frequent ill-

nesses. Other physical issues may include hair loss, muscle wasting, dizziness, fatigue, constipation, and irregular menstruation.

It is important to address appearance anxiety and promote a healthy body image to prevent these physical and mental health problems. Seeking professional help from therapists, nutritionists, and doctors can be beneficial in overcoming these challenges and improving overall well-being.

Appearance anxiety is a serious issue that can have devastating effects on one's physical and mental health.

According to the research, appearance anxiety, perfectionism, and fear of negative evaluation are in the context of social anxiety and eating disorders. The research took college students as samples (the two samples are 236 and 136 people, respectively), used the questionnaire survey method to collect data, and used the structural equation model to analyze the data. In summary, social appearance anxiety is a shared risk factor for social anxiety and eating disorders, while fear of negative evaluation is a risk factor specifically for social anxiety. Perfectionism, on the other hand, did not emerge as a significant risk factor when all constructs were considered (Flett & Hewitt, 2002). Eating disorders (ED) are serious mental health conditions that involve abnormal eating habits and can have severe physical consequences. Common types include anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and binge-eating disorder. Individuals with anorexia often have an intense fear of gaining weight, restrict their food intake, and may experience physical symptoms like hair loss, dry skin, and amenorrhea. They may also exhibit psychological symptoms such as depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem. Bulimia is characterized by recurrent episodes of binge eating followed by inappropriate compensatory behaviors like vomiting or laxative abuse. People with bulimia often feel a loss of control during binges and may experience mood swings, guilt, and social withdrawal. According to another piece of research, binge-eating disorder involves frequent episodes of consuming large amounts of food in a short period, often accompanied by feelings of shame and distress. Unlike bulimia, individuals with binge-eating disorder do not engage in purging behaviors. All types of ED can lead to significant physical health problems, including malnutrition, cardiovascular issues, and gastrointestinal disorders. Additionally, they can impact social relationships and overall quality of life. Early intervention and professional treatment, including psychological therapy, nutritional counseling, and medical care, are crucial for recovery (Swanson et al., 2011).

Furthermore, appearance has another impact. Appearance anxiety significantly affects adolescents' psychological health, social functioning, and behavior. Addressing this

issue requires a multifaceted approach, including promoting positive body image, fostering healthy peer relationships, and encouraging critical thinking about societal beauty standards. Schools, families, and communities play crucial roles in providing support and creating environments where adolescents feel accepted and valued beyond their physical appearance (Monro & Huon, 2005).

In conclusion, this research proved that social appearance anxiety and the fear of negative evaluations both lead to eating disorders.

## **2.3 The factors that impact social appearance anxiety of adolescents**

### **2.3.1 External factors**

Increased social media use correlates with heightened appearance anxiety in teenagers. Exposure to idealized images, such as the thin ideals for girls and muscle ideals for boys, negatively affects adolescents' body cognition. Social media feedback and comments can also exacerbate physical attention issues. However, the specific impact on male body image requires further investigation (Hawes et al., 2020).

As for gender difference, women generally experience higher levels of appearance anxiety than men. For instance, boys' body dissatisfaction mainly stems from internalized muscle ideals, while girls' dissatisfaction relates to appearance conversations, social comparisons, and weight. Menarche also influences girls' anxiety levels, with late menarche associated with fewer body image and peer relationship problems (Kozee et al., 2012).

As for the factors that proved they can help prevent social appearance anxiety of adolescents, self-esteem levels significantly influence adolescents' social appearance anxiety. Research indicates a moderate negative correlation between self-esteem and appearance anxiety. However, the relationship between peer relationships and appearance anxiety is less clear-cut. One study found no significant correlation between these variables, though girls generally exhibited higher anxiety levels than boys. Another study focusing on Turkish middle school students confirmed the negative correlation between self-esteem and appearance anxiety but also noted the limitations of their research scope (Sahin et al., 2014).

These factors collectively highlight the complex nature of social appearance anxiety in adolescents, emphasizing the need for comprehensive understanding and targeted interventions.

### **2.3.2 Self-esteem and Peer relationship on preventing social appearance anxiety**

The previous study showed the self-esteem levels can

also affect the social appearance anxiety of adolescents. This study aims to explore the relationship between teenagers' peer relationships and social appearance anxiety. The study sample was 412 teenagers, and the data was collected and analyzed by a variety of scales. The results show that the friendship relationship and social appearance concerns of teenagers are at a medium positive level. There is no significant correlation between social appearance anxiety and friendship relationships, and there is a significantly low level of negative correlation with gender, weight satisfaction, and other variables. The level of social appearance anxiety of girls is significantly higher than that of boys. The research suggests teenagers should be supported to avoid social appearance anxiety. However, the data used in this study was collected in only one high school, which may affect the final results. This result is that there's no significant correlation between social appearance anxiety and peer relations.

Another study aims to explore the relationship between self-esteem and social appearance anxiety among Turkish middle school students and shows similar results. Through a sample survey of 2,222 11-15-year-old students, a variety of scales were used to collect data and analyzed by SPSS. The results showed that there was a moderate negative correlation between self-esteem and social appearance anxiety in the overall, boys' groups, and girls' groups. The study also discusses the limitations and the significance of psychological counseling services. J. Basic (Appl., 2014).

## **2.4 Conclusion**

Previous research indicates social appearance anxiety is influenced by various factors and can trigger other disorders. However, limitations exist. Most studies rely solely on questionnaires and are regionally limited, affecting accuracy. The role of peer relationships, especially good ones, in preventing social appearance anxiety is under-explored.

Research on adolescents' appearance anxiety and peer relationships has deficiencies. Content-wise, it lacks in-depth analysis, ignores individual differences, and lacks dynamic research. Methodologically, methods are single, samples are limited, and experimental research is lacking. Peers provide a safe space for adolescents to share insecurities about appearance. Good peer relationships can reduce anxiety. However, research has disadvantages: over-reliance on questionnaires and insufficient attention to changes over time and cultural differences.

Further research on the association between peer relations and social appearance anxiety is meaningful. It can help educators develop targeted programs, guiding adolescents to build good peer relationships, improving their social

skills and mental health.

### 3. Methodology

The topic that was researched is “To what extent do good peer relationships have a positive impact on social appearance anxiety,” which focuses on the correlation of the quality of peer relationships and the degree of social appearance anxiety of participants.

The method of research was using questionnaires and interviews. The data that needs to be collected is the social status and the appearance anxiety degree of a group of teenagers, who are 13-19 years old; then the relation between peer relationship and appearance anxiety can be determined through data analysis such as the quantity and quality of friends, or whether good peer relationships can relieve appearance anxiety.

#### 3.2 Data collection

##### 3.2.1 Questionnaire

Select adolescents as research subjects, with an age range of 13-19 years old. The samples will be randomly selected from different regions (including urban and rural areas) and different types of schools (public and private) to ensure the representativeness of the samples. The questionnaire is divided into five sections. Compile a questionnaire including personal information (age, gender, having a stable friend group) and four parts for measuring the quality of peer relationships and the degree of appearance anxiety of the participants. The questions are referred to the existing and well-established scales, such as the “Peer relation scale” (Aydoğdu F, 2022) and the “Social appearance anxiety scale” (Looti, M. 2023), to establish the questions. Multiple items are used to measure the status of adolescents’ peer relationships. Each item is scored using

a Likert 5-point scale. The questionnaires were distributed through a combination of online and offline methods. Online, use the school’s network platform, social media groups, and diverse social media to send out questionnaire links to students; offline, during the break in the school classroom, the researchers distribute paper questionnaires to students and collect them on the spot. 108 responses are collected, and all responses are available to use.

##### 3.2.2 Interview Method

###### 3.2.2.1 Selection of interview subject

In order to know the reason related to the peer relationship and social appearance anxiety, the interview has been used after analyzing the questionnaire results.

From the questionnaire results, I picked some teenagers who are typical in terms of their peer relationship scores and social appearance anxiety scores.

There are four types: those with good peer relationships and low social appearance anxiety, good peer relationships and high social appearance anxiety, bad peer relationships and low social appearance anxiety, and bad peer relationships and high social appearance anxiety. One of each type was chosen to be interviewed.

###### 3.2.2.2 Interview outline design

For all the participants, the interview outline was the same, and a structured interview was conducted. The interview will focus on their attitudes and personal opinions on the association between peer relations and social appearance anxiety.

The whole interview includes three questions, which are, respectively, “What factors do you think are contributing to adolescents’ social appearance anxiety?” and “Talk about a time that your friend made an impact on your opinion of your appearance.” and “Do you think friends make you feel better or worse about the way you look?”

**Table 1 Interviewee list**

Gender	Age	Social appearance anxiety	Peer relationship
Male	17	Low	Good
Female	16	High	Good
Female	15	Low	Good

#### 3.3 Ethical consideration

The ethical considerations in research measures in this research. In any research or data-collection process, ethical considerations are crucial.

Participants should be involved on a voluntary basis. No coercion or undue influence should be exerted on them. Moreover, anonymity must be maintained. When conduct-

ing interviews, the information shared by the interviewees should be kept confidential. In addition, the content of the research should be harmless.

#### 3.4 Data analysis

##### 3.4.1 Descriptive Statistical Analysis

First, descriptive statistical analysis is carried out on the

collected data. Calculate statistical quantities such as the mean, standard deviation, and median of the independent variable (each dimension of peer relationships) and the dependent variable (social appearance anxiety) to understand the basic characteristics of the sample. For example, calculate the average scores of adolescents in different grades in each dimension of peer relationships, the overall average level of social appearance anxiety, etc.

### 3.4.2 Correlation Analysis

The Pearson product-moment correlation analysis method is used to test the correlation between each dimension of peer relationships and social appearance anxiety. Analyze whether there is a negative correlation between peer acceptance and social appearance anxiety, that is, whether the higher the peer acceptance, the lower the social appearance anxiety; at the same time, analyze whether there is a positive correlation between peer conflict and social appearance anxiety.

### 3.4.3 Regression analysis

Further regression analysis is carried out to determine the predictive ability of peer relationships on social appear-

ance anxiety. Take social appearance anxiety as the dependent variable and each dimension of peer relationships as the independent variables to construct a regression model. Through regression analysis, obtain indicators such as regression coefficients and the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) to evaluate the degree to which peer relationships can explain social appearance anxiety. Determine to what extent peer acceptance can explain the variation of social appearance anxiety.

## 3.4 Hypothesis

H1: peer relationship has negative relationship with social appearance anxiety of teenagers

H2: Good peer relationships can greatly reduce the social appearance anxiety of teenagers

H3: the impact of peer relationship on social appearance anxiety are difference in genders.

## 4. Result

### 4.1 Relevant analysis

**Table 2 The effect of age on the association of two variables**

Analysis results of variance					
	What is your current age? ( Average value $\pm$ standard deviation)			<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
	1.0( <i>n</i> =37)	2.0( <i>n</i> =30)	3.0( <i>n</i> =33)		
Peer relationship	19.54 $\pm$ 7.40	19.80 $\pm$ 6.53	20.76 $\pm$ 6.64	0.293	0.747
Social appearance anxiety level	16.70 $\pm$ 7.79	17.57 $\pm$ 7.08	16.00 $\pm$ 7.51	0.344	0.710
* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$					

Table one shows the data on the age of the participants. And according to the results, the age of participants did

not have an effect on both peer relationships and social appearances anxiety of participants ( $p = 0.747 > 0.05$ ).

**Table 3 Peer relationships vs social appearances anxiety**

Pearson Correlation		
Social appearance anxiety level		Peer relationship
	<i>r</i>	-0.420**
	<i>p</i> value	0.000
	<i>n</i>	100
* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$		

After analyzing 100 samples, there's a negative correlation ( $r = -0.420$ ) between the two conditions, which means better quality of peer relationships, lower level of social

appearances anxiety of the participants. Overall, good peer relationships do make positive impact on preventing social appearances anxiety.

**Table 4 The effect of having a fixed group of friends on the association of two variables**

Pearson correlation		
		Peer relationship
Collection of question 8	r	-0.389**
	p	0.000
	n	96
* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$		

After analyzing 96 samples which the participants who have a fixed group of friends, the most striking result to emerge from this data is that the pearson correlation between two variables is -0.389, which means when the

participants have a fixed social circle, the quality of peer relationship doesn't make so much impact on the level of social appearances anxiety

**Table 5 The effect of gender on the association between two variables (Male, related)**

Pearson correlation		
		Peer relationship
Social appearance anxiety level	r	-0.498**
	p	0.000
	n	56
* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$		

**Table 6 The effect of gender on the association between two variables(Famle, no related)**

Pearson correlation		
		Peer relationship
Social appearance anxiety level	r	-0.242
	p	0.083
	n	52
* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$		

Turning now to the evidence on the effect of gender on the association of peer relationships and social appearances anxiety. The single most striking observation to emerge after comparing the data of male and female, it can be seen that the peer relationships of male is correlated to

their social appearance anxiety level; However, for female participants, their social appearance anxiety level is not correlated to the peer relationships, which is thought- provoking.

#### 4.2 Regressive analysis of causal effects

**Table 7 Regression analysis of peer relationship impact on Social appearance anxiety**

Results of linear regression analysis (n=100)							
	Non-standardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient	t	p	Colinear diagnosis	
	B	Standard error	Beta			VIF	Tolerance
Constant value	25.851	2.106	-	12.277	0.000**	-	-
Peer relationship	-0.456	0.100	-0.420	-4.576	0.000**	1.000	1.000
R 2	0.176						



Results of linear regression analysis (n=100)							
	Non-standardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	Colinear diagnosis	
	<i>B</i>	Standard error	<i>Beta</i>			VIF	Tolerance
<i>Adjust R</i> 2	0.168						
<i>F</i>	<i>F</i> (1,98)=20.942, <i>p</i> =0.000						
D-W value	2.060						
Dependent variable = Social appearance anxiety level							
* <i>p</i> <0.05 ** <i>p</i> <0.							

**Table 8 Regression analysis of peer relationship impact on anxiety**

Linear regression analysis ( <i>n</i> =56)							
	Non-standardized coefficient		Standardize coefficient	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	Colinear diagnosis	
	<i>B</i>	Standard error	<i>Beta</i>			VIF	Tolerance degree
Constant	8.784	2.645	-	3.321	0.002**	-	-
Peer relationship	-0.547	0.125	0.512	4.378	0.000**	1.000	1.000
<i>R</i> 2	0.262						
<i>Adjust R</i> 2	0.248						
<i>F</i>	<i>F</i> (1,54)=19.169, <i>p</i> =0.000						
D-W value	2.534						
Notation: dependent variable =anxiety level							
* <i>p</i> <0.05 ** <i>p</i> <0.01							

According to the result of regressive analysis, the quality of peer relationship will have an effect on social appearances anxiety. The *R* side is 0.176 (*p*<0.05), about 17 percent of the influence, so that there's no doubt that there is an association between two variables, but it is suspected that there may be a more direct or more significant factor that impact the social appearance anxiety of adolescents. And when it refers to the regression analysis of male, a great correlation between two factors can be observed.

### 4.3 Summary

Peer relationship has a negative relationship with social appearance anxiety of teenagers. This is true, as good peer relationships provide social support, reducing loneliness and anxiety. Good peer relationships can greatly reduce social appearance anxiety. However, more essential factors than peer relationships affect it. The impact differs by gender. For males, social appearance anxiety correlates with peer relationships, but for females, the connection is rare.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1 To a certain extent, good quality peer relations can prevent social appearance anxiety

According to the conclusion of the interviews, “My friends, they never judge my appearance and always like the way I am.” and “My friends never judge a person based on their appearance, so I don’t even care about how I look.” There are many reasons that can explain why good peer relationships can prevent teenagers’ social appearance anxiety. First of all, peers provide a safe space for adolescents to express their insecurities about their appearance. When adolescents have positive peer relationships, they are more likely to receive understanding and empathy from their friends. According to the participants of the interview, if an adolescent is worried about a new haircut looking bad, a supportive peer can offer reassurance like, “I think it looks cool on you; it gives you a unique style.” This emotional support helps to reduce the intensity of their social appearance anxiety. Secondly,

from secondary research, in healthy peer relationships, social comparison can be beneficial. Instead of leading to increased anxiety as in negative comparisons, positive peer relationships can encourage adolescents to compare themselves in a way that promotes self-improvement. (Festinger, 1954d). A peer who is confident in their appearance might inspire others to also take care of themselves in a healthy way, such as through proper exercise and hygiene. This type of comparison is not about self-deprecation but rather about positive self-development, which can lower social appearance anxiety.

## 5.2 Good quality peer relations aren't the only factor of social appearance anxiety of adolescents

Although the correlation between peer relationship and social appearance anxiety is significant. However, teenagers can't prevent social appearance anxiety only by having a good peer relation; there are many factors apart from peer relation that influence social appearance anxiety, because according to the regressive research, the  $R^2$  value is 17 percent, which means the quality of peer relationship can only account for 17 percent of the factor causing social appearance anxiety. So that it may be other more important factors that influence the social appearance anxiety of adolescents. Another participant of the interview said, "Sometimes I think my friends say I'm pretty just because we are friends." It reflects that the influence of friends on appearance anxiety is limited to a certain extent. Furthermore, it should also be noted that peer relationships are not a panacea for social appearance anxiety. There are cases where negative peer interactions, such as bullying or excessive teasing about appearance, can exacerbate the problem. But overall, positive peer relationships have the potential to be a powerful force in reducing adolescents' social appearance anxiety.

However, these findings are similar to previous studies by Alev ÜSTÜNDAĞ and Buse KARAARSLA (2023), who also found that the peer relationship and social appearance anxiety of 15-18-year-old participants are all at stable levels. And there is no significant correlation between social appearance anxiety and friendship relationships, and there is a significant and low-level negative correlation with gender and weight satisfaction variables. The previous research is different from this because the previous ones may have considered more factors, and the time and region in which those two research projects took place were different. As the time passes by, people's opinions about social appearance anxiety may change. And different cultures in different countries may also affect the result. Moreover, according to the research, "The contribution of

social media addiction to adolescents' life: Social appearance anxiety," Caner et al. (2022) pointed out that social media is another important factor causing social appearance anxiety.

## 5.3 The reason of difference between male and female

The average score of girls' social appearance anxiety is significantly higher than that of boys. The previous research considered more factors, and the time and region in which those two research projects took place were different. As the time passes by, people's opinions about social appearance anxiety may change. And different cultures in different countries may also affect the result.

Male adolescents can obtain more social support in good peer relationships. This support can help them better cope with the psychological pressure brought by appearance anxiety and enhance their self-confidence and self-esteem. However, for female teenagers, their friendships tend to be more complex than males', so that can explain why the results are different for different genders of participants (Kimhi & Shamai, 2006).

As for females. There is often comparison and competition in female friendship, especially in terms of appearance. Women may compare their appearance with their friends and worry that they are not as good as each other. This comparison and competition will lead to women's appearance anxiety. They may feel that they need to constantly improve their appearance in order to maintain the competitiveness of friendship. Female friendship may become unstable for various reasons, such as quarrels, betrayal, or other conflicts. This instability will make women feel anxious and uneasy, worrying about whether their appearance is one of the reasons for friendship problems. This kind of anxiety will further aggravate women's appearance anxiety. In addition, communication between women sometimes takes indirect ways, such as expressing dissatisfaction or competition through hints, silence, or behind-the-scenes discussions. This indirect way of communication may make women more self-doubting and anxious about their appearance. For example, when a woman talks about someone else's appearance behind her back, the woman who is being discussed may begin to doubt whether there is something wrong with her appearance, resulting in appearance anxiety. So although if a girl gives compliments to her friend's appearance, the friend may still suspect it and think it is not a sincere compliment.

In society, there are also distinct requirements for the appearances of men and women. For women, there is often an emphasis on being slender, having smooth skin, and having long hair. Society sometimes expects women to be



“beautiful” in a more traditional sense, with features like big eyes and a small nose. They are also often pressured to use makeup to enhance their looks.

In contrast, there’s obviously less requirement on a male’s body figure than a woman’s. Society usually requires men to have career success, responsibility, and other qualities. Under this requirement, men face great pressure. And making friends is an important way for men to get support. For example, in the workplace, men may face fierce competition. A group of like-minded friends can share experiences and resources with each other, which will help them make progress in their careers and thus improve their social status. (Rd, 2024) When men’s social status is improved, they will pay more attention to the embodiment of their own intrinsic value. They will realize that their value in society is composed of many aspects, such as wisdom, ability, morality, etc. In this way, the anxiety about appearance will be relatively reduced. Because they understand that with the support of friends, appearance is not the only factor that attracts attention in the process of gradually rising social status. When a man who has achieved results in the academic field by making friends and obtaining resources cares more about his scientific research results than his appearance. Under the influence of socio-culture, there are differences in appearance-related role expectations between men and women. Women are often faced with higher appearance standards and more appearance-related pressure, while men relatively have less. Therefore, when male adolescents are faced with appearance anxiety, they may be more likely to obtain support and understanding from peer relationships, thus reducing their anxiety. So that may be a reason why good peer relationships can help males prevent social appearance anxiety but can’t help females (Bastug et al., 2019).

## 6. Evaluation

The research has several highlights. Firstly, the result is creative, especially the part about gender difference, which is delightful. And the rich secondary research is also a highlight. The research method of this study is also creative; in this research, a combination of quantitative and qualitative research has been used.

This research differs from other studies because it is targeted to teenagers. They are in a critical period of building self-identification. Peer relationships have a great impact on the formation of their self-identification. The acceptance or exclusion in the process of getting along with peers will affect their perception of themselves. For example, a teenager who is often ridiculed by his peers may have a low sense of self-worth (Riese et al., 2011). Moreover, the thinking of teenagers is gradually chang-

ing. This makes the way they deal with peer relationships more complicated. They began to understand deep interpersonal concepts, such as loyalty, trust, etc. For example, in a friendly relationship, they are no longer satisfied with just playing together but more value the spiritual support and mutual understanding between friends (La Greca & Harrison, 2005).

In the process of research, a variety of research methods have been adopted; the research used questionnaires and interviews. The first is the questionnaire survey method. Through reasonably designed questionnaires, data on peer relationships and their own appearance anxiety are widely collected from teenagers from different regions and backgrounds. This allows us to understand the possible relationship between the two from the macro level. Secondly, the interview analysis method was used to deeply analyze some typical teenage cases, including those with positive peer relationships and low appearance anxiety, as well as cases with a lack of good peer relationships and severe appearance anxiety. Through this method, various elements of peer relationships, such as support, acceptance, identity, and other influencing mechanisms of appearance anxiety, are analyzed in more detail.

However, there are still some limitations. Due to ethical considerations, some parts of the personal interview of the participant who has low peer relationships can’t be done.

## 7. Conclusion

This study focuses on exploring the extent to which good peer relationships can help prevent adolescents’ social appearance anxiety. Through a series of investigations, analyses, and studies, it is found that adolescence is an extremely critical stage of individual psychological development. Social appearance anxiety is more common during this period, and good peer relationships play an important role in the social appearance anxiety level of adolescents.

The significance of this study is to emphasize the importance of peer relationships in the social environment to the mental health of adolescents. This research found that peer relations can prevent social appearance anxiety to a certain extent. However, there’s a correlation between the peer relation and social appearance anxiety in male participants, but for female participants, there’s no correlation between the two factors. According to the prediction, that phenomenon may be because women will be more disciplined about appearance than men. Future research can further explore how to better guide adolescents to establish positive and healthy peer relationships and how to optimize this relationship through the joint efforts of schools, families, and society so as to further reduce the incidence of adolescents’ social appearance anxiety. At the

same time, the research can also study in depth the differences in the impact of peer relationships on appearance anxiety in different cultural contexts so as to provide more targeted mental health support strategies for teenagers in different regions.

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