

Privacy Dimensions and Preferences Among Turkish Students

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ABSTRACT. Thirty items taken from Pedersen's (1979) Privacy Questionnaire were translated into Turkish. Using data from a group of 104 Turkish students, 26 of Pedersen's items and 4 new items were selected to be used in this study. Factor analysis of responses by 375 Turkish students to this list of 30 items confirmed Pedersen's (1979) six-dimensional model of privacy. Scale scores were computed for these dimensions. An analysis of these scores indicated differences in the mean frequencies of preferences for each type of privacy. The results are discussed with respect to sex and culture.

WESTIN (1970) IDENTIFIED four states of privacy: solitude, intimacy, reserve, and anonymity. Solitude refers to a state of being alone. Intimacy is small-group privacy, as when two or more persons want to be alone together. Anonymity and reserve relate to social situations in which privacy is achieved. In the former state, the individual is with others and probably interacts with others but desires to keep himself or herself anonymous. The latter state is characterized by a situation when a person, either in private or in public, feels a need to restrict interaction with others and/or communication about himself or herself. Pedersen (1979), using a factor analytic study, extended this list of states of privacy from four to six by suggesting a new state and dividing intimacy into two states. The new classification of privacy, isolation, is similar to solitude but refers to physical separation of the self from others as a way of life. Intimacy was conceptualized as intimacy with family and intimacy with friends. These states sum up the physical, social, and psychological means of achieving privacy.

A reliance on or a preference for a certain type of privacy depends not only on the situation but also on the cultural context. Altman (1977) stated that privacy

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as a regulatory process of social interaction is a phenomenon that is both culturally universal and culturally specific. Because "people in all cultures engage in the regulation of social interaction," privacy is culturally universal, and because "the behavioral mechanisms by which . . . [privacy is achieved] are probably unique to the particular physical, psychological, and social circumstances of a culture" it is culture specific (Altman, 1977, p. 82). Therefore, what is crucial from a cultural perspective is not whether societies differ in amounts of desired privacy but, rather, the mechanisms by which they achieve these levels of privacy.

This study aimed to test the viability of Pedersen's (1979) six-dimensional model of privacy and to determine the relative significance of these dimensions in a non-Western culture, namely, the Turkish society. The Muslim Turkish society seems to differ from Western societies with respect to the way people orient themselves toward others, both socially and physically. For example, strong inter- and intrafamilial ties and frequent visits among relatives and friends provide socially dense environments. Moreover, there is some evidence that Turks can tolerate small interpersonal distances and high density (Rustemli, 1988, 1992). Life in socially dense environments may restrict one's desire for and chances of solitude, thus forcing an individual to use social and psychological mechanisms to control social interaction.

Method

A pilot study was conducted to determine which items should be used in the study. Pedersen's (1979) items were first translated (one was adapted) into Turkish by a small group of bilingual psychologists. Twenty new but comparable items were added to this list, and the whole set was administered to 104 university students. These subjects indicated how often they engaged in the activity or state represented in the statement, using a 5-point response scale that ranged from *never* (1) to *almost always* (5). We subjected the data to a number of factor analyses by varying the number of factors extracted systematically. Thirty items that had consistently high loadings in these solutions were selected for use in the study. Twenty-six of the selected items were Pedersen's items, and 4 were new.

The subjects in this study were 210 male and 165 female high school and university students in Ankara, Turkey. The students' average age was 19.18 years. The 30 items that had been selected in the pilot study were appraised by these subjects either in small groups or alone, using the 5-point response scale described previously.

Results

A series of factor analyses with varimax solutions was conducted on the data. When the number of factors extracted was not restricted, eight factors were obtained, explaining 56.8% of the total variance. When the number of factors was

restricted, a six-factor solution appeared to be the best. Because there was a certain degree of dependence among some factors, we also conducted an oblique solution, the results of which produced minor changes in loadings but did not alter the item compositions of the factors. Therefore, so that we would be able to conduct comparisons with earlier results (Pedersen, 1979), we favored the initial orthogonal solution. We used a factor loading of .30 as the criterion for inclusion in any factor.

All the items except Item 5, which barely failed to meet the criterion, had loadings above criterion on one or more factors. Item 5 was retained so that the pattern obtained would not be altered. Six of the 30 items loaded above criterion on more than one factor (see Table 1). Three of these 6 items were placed under the factors with lower loadings. These minor violations of the criterion increased factorial purity and resulted in equal numbers of items in factors. The factors closely resembled Pedersen's factors. Indeed, when we considered clusterings of Pedersen's 26 items under these factors, the degree of agreement between the results of this study and those of the earlier study reached 88%.

The extracted factors accounted for 49.1% of the variance. Solitude explained 16.4% and intimacy with friends explained 10.2% of the variance (see Table 1). The contributions of reserve, isolation, intimacy with family, and anonymity ranged from 4.2 to 7.7. Moderate amounts of dependence were present among some of the factors. The intercorrelations computed from scale scores, which were simply summed responses to items in each factor, indicated that reserve was significantly correlated with solitude ($r = .32$), isolation ($r = .29$), and intimacy with family ($r = .18$). The most significant relationship was between solitude and isolation ($r = .51$).

To determine whether there was any significant difference among the privacy dimensions, we subjected the scale scores to a 2×6 (Subject Sex \times Privacy) analysis of variance (ANOVA), with repeated measures on the second factor. The main effect for privacy was significant, $F(5, 1510) = 124.85, p < .001$. The means for the scale scores are presented in Table 2. Intimacy with friends had the highest mean (17.64), and reserve had the lowest mean (11.92). Comparisons of the mean scale values using a t test indicated that all the means differed significantly from each other at .01 or higher alpha levels, except the means for intimacy with family, and anonymity.

The Sex \times Privacy interaction was also significant, $F(5, 1510) = 7.83, p < .001$. The females had a significantly higher mean for intimacy with friends but lower means for isolation and reserve than the males did (see Table 2). The means for solitude, intimacy with family, and anonymity did not differ for the sexes.

Discussion

The results of the factor analysis provided cross-cultural support for Pedersen's (1979) six-dimensional privacy model. As this model suggests, intimacy with

TABLE I
Factor Pattern Matrix of Items and Explained Variance

	Factor					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Factor 1. Solitude (variance explained by 16.4%)						
1. I sometimes need to be alone and away from anyone.	.58	-.06	.23	.16	.06	.14
12. I like to be home alone where it is peaceful and quiet.	.81	.00	.08	.17	.05	.07
13. I like to be home with nobody else around.	.84	.13	-.06	.08	-.07	.04
23. Sometimes I like to be alone where I cannot be observed by anyone.	.59	.05	.24	.41	.03	-.06
30. I like being in a room by myself.	.70	.00	.01	.23	-.06	-.08
Factor 2. Intimacy With Friends (variance explained by 10.2%)						
4. I like my friends to sympathize with me and to cheer me up when I am depressed.	-.12	.67	-.09	-.01	.10	-.12
14. I have a special person that I can confide in.	-.03	.33	-.35	-.04	-.08	.06
18. I like people to fuss over me when I am sick.	-.01	.66	-.11	.00	.21	-.29
19. I like other people to notice me when I am in public.	.10	.74	-.08	-.15	-.06	.24
20. It pleases me when my accomplishments obtain recognition from others.	.08	.77	-.05	.02	-.03	.05
Factor 3. Reserve (variance explained by 7.7%)						
2. I would be reluctant to engage in a prolonged conversation with someone I had just met.	.32	.02	.41	-.35	.21	-.22
16. At parties I am more likely to sit by myself than to join the crowd.	.10	-.06	.65	.22	.05	-.13
25. My personal relations with people are cool and distant.	.10	-.08	.68	-.07	.04	.01

28. I like to meet new people.	.03*	.06	-.74	-.10	.02	.14
29. Whenever possible, I avoid being in a crowd.	.17	.00	.58	.29	.15	-.07
Factor 4. Isolation (variance explained by 6.1%)						
7. I'd like to work on a farm all by myself for a summer.	.24	-.06	.12	.64	-.01	-.07
9. I like living in an apartment house because it prevents you from being alone.	-.06	.13	-.21	-.41	.18	-.26
11. It would be fun to be alone on a high mountain peak surveying the scene below.	.14	-.02	.00	.59	.18	.11
22. I'd be happy living all alone in a cabin in the woods.	.46	-.08	.22	.60	.10	-.06
26. I think I'd like the kind of work a forest ranger does.	.18	-.07	.11	.57	-.10	-.11
Factor 5. Intimacy With Family (variance explained by 4.5%)						
3. I like to go on vacation alone with my family.	-.14	.13	-.06	.19	.55	-.29
10. I do not like to be disturbed when I am at home engaged in a family activity.	.15	.13	.18	-.05	.45	.14
17. I would like to have a mountain cabin where my family and I could be alone together.	.11	.04	-.14	.53	.47	-.15
24. I tell my problems only to my family.	.00	-.10	-.01	-.09	.66	.05
27. I prefer doing things with only my family.	-.07	.01	.17	.13	.73	.05
Factor 6. Anonymity (variance explained by 4.2%)						
5. I have to be encouraged to put on a stunt at a party even when others are doing the same sort of things.	-.12	.19	.16	-.10	.22	-.28
6. I want my thoughts and ideas to be known by others.	.07	.08	-.16	-.05	.11	.60
8. I like to be the center of attention in a group.	.04	.64	.06	-.10	.02	.41
15. I like to attend meetings if I do not know others.	-.21	.07	-.28	.03	-.03	.60
21. I reserve displays of physical affection for a select few friends and family.	.10	.26	.22	-.07	.28	.32

TABLE 2
Means and Standard Deviations According to Sex and *t* Values

Privacy/Sex	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>
Solitude				
male	203	15.09	3.93	
female	160	15.25	4.34	-0.36
combined	363	15.16	4.11	
Intimacy with friends				
male	204	16.95	2.91	
female	160	18.51	2.60	-5.37**
combined	364	17.63	2.88	
Reserve				
male	203	12.35	3.31	
female	152	11.34	3.50	2.78**
combined	355	11.92	3.42	
Isolation				
male	202	13.91	3.99	
female	154	12.87	3.84	2.49*
combined	356	13.46	3.96	
Intimacy with family				
male	201	14.08	3.46	
female	153	14.38	3.53	-0.78
combined	354	14.21	3.49	
Anonymity				
male	198	14.61	2.59	
female	151	14.31	2.28	1.13
combined	349	14.48	2.46	

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$, both two-tailed.

family and intimacy with friends were empirically different; items that loaded significantly on one factor had low loadings on the other. This differentiation may be a valid approximation of reality; the nature and scope of intimate relations with family members and friends are very different. For example, in Turkey the exchange of information on sexual matters is almost taboo in the family but usual among friends. A similar differentiation was evident between solitude and isolation; although there was a moderate amount of empirical dependence between the two, the solitude items represent temporary states of being alone, whereas the isolation items characterize a preference for a life away from others.

There were significant differences in preferences for privacy. The most preferred types of privacy were intimacy with friends and solitude, and the least preferred were reserve and isolation. The high preference for intimacy with friends, and solitude might be closely related to the characteristics of the subjects

who participated in the study, students between the ages of 15 and 25. At this age friendship is a salient feature of the social world, and private problems and experiences are either confided to others who are perceived as very close or are reflected upon and evaluated in solitude. The relatively low preference for reserve that was demonstrated in this study may be indicative of a high degree of social responsiveness in Turkish culture. Most Turks feel obliged not to ignore the presence of others and others' attempts to interact.

The relatively low mean preference for intimacy with family members as compared with that for intimacy with friends is worthy of comment. Although the structure of the Turkish family has undergone change, the family is an intact unit, with intense care and concern for children. It seems that children in such an environment would develop deep confidence in, and an intimate relationship with, their parents, but the restricted nature and content of parent-child communication and the parents' expectations of a high degree of dependency on the part of their children are contrary to the needs of the adolescent and young adult years. Thus, issues of personal identity and intimacy are directed toward peers. This observed preference for intimate relationships with friends rather than with family members provides evidence for Pedersen's (1979) suggestion that there are two types of intimacy.

Some sex differences were observed in preferences for privacy. The female subjects indicated a higher frequency for intimacy with friends, but lower mean frequencies for reserve and isolation than the men did. These differences may be closely linked to sex types; females tend to be more friendly and affiliative, whereas males tend to be more independent, distant, and separate from others (Broverman et al., 1972).

The results of the present study were, to a large extent, comparable to those of Pedersen's (1987) study with American subjects; the overall preferences for and sex-related findings on solitude, isolation, anonymity, and intimacy with friends were about the same in the two studies. There were differences in the two studies regarding preferences for reserve and for intimacy with family. Unlike the American subjects, the Turkish subjects demonstrated a low frequency for reserve, and the females were reserved less frequently than the males. Similarly, the preferred intimacy with family members for both sexes was lower in the Turkish subjects than in the American subjects. The Turkish subjects preferred intimacy with friends over intimacy with family members, whereas the American subjects had high and comparable preferences for both types of intimacy. These differences may be related to cultural differences in the nature of family relationships and communication patterns.

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