

# Understanding the Concept of Shyness in Turkish Context<sup>1</sup>

## Türkiye Bağlamında Utangaçlık Kavramını Anlamak

Ahmet Temel<sup>2</sup>, Cemşafak Çukur<sup>3</sup>

### Abstract

Emotions are seen as very important in interpersonal relationships. Shyness, which is a self-conscious emotion, is also one of the important factors affecting interpersonal relationships. For this reason, shyness has become one of the important subjects of study. In particular, some studies have been conducted on cultural differences in terms of the definition and emergence of the concept of shyness. Considering the cultural differences in the conceptualization of shyness, it seems that there are some differences among societies. At the same time, these differences regarding shyness may change over time. Therefore, individuals' opinions are considered crucial in order to better understand these differences. This study aims to understand the concept of shyness in Turkish society and to reveal possible situations that cause shyness. To understand the concept of shyness and to determine the factors that cause shyness, open-ended questions were asked to a total of 147 participants from 3 different groups (people living in rural areas, people living in cities, and shy people). Data collected from participants were used to determine themes within the framework of 6 basic objectives related to shyness using the MAXQDA analysis program. In addition, qualitative study results were evaluated.

**Keywords:** Turkish Society, Shyness, Culture, Emotion.

### Öz

Kişilerarası ilişkilerde duygular oldukça önemli görülmektedir. Öz-bilinç duygularından olan utangaçlık da kişilerarası ilişkileri etkileyen önemli faktörlerden biridir. Bu nedenle utangaçlık önemli çalışma konularından biri olmuştur. Özellikle, utangaçlık kavramının tanımı ve ortaya çıkma durumu açısından kültürel farklılıklarla ilgili bazı çalışmalar yapılmıştır. Utangaçlığın kavramsallaştırılmasındaki kültürel farklılıklar göz önüne alındığında, toplumlara ait bazı farklılıklar olduğu görülmektedir. Aynı zamanda utangaçlık ile ilgili bu farklılıklar zaman içerisinde de değişime uğrayabilmektedir. Bu nedenle bu farklılıkları daha iyi anlayabilmek için bireylerin görüşleri oldukça önemli görülmektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türkiye toplumunda utangaçlık kavramını anlamak ve utangaçlığa sebep olan olası durumları ortaya çıkarmaktır. Utangaçlık kavramını anlamak ve utangaçlığa sebep olan etkenleri belirlemek için 3 farklı gruba (kırsalda yaşayan, kentte yaşayan ve utangaç kişiler) toplam 147 katılımcıya açık uçlu sorular yöneltilmiştir. Katılımcılardan toplanan veriler MAXQDA analiz programı kullanılarak utangaçlık ile ilgili 6 temel amaç çerçevesinde temalar belirlendi. Ayrıca nitel çalışma sonuçları değerlendirilmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Türkiye Toplumunu, Utangaçlık, Kültür, Duygu.

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<sup>2</sup> Dr. Öğr. Üyesi, Gümüşhane Üniversitesi, Edebiyat Fakültesi, Psikoloji Bölümü Öğretim Üyesi, Gümüşhane, Türkiye, ahmettemel41@gmail.com, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6336-7091>.

<sup>3</sup> Prof. Dr., Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt Üniversitesi, İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Fakültesi, Psikoloji Bölümü Öğretim Üyesi, Ankara, Türkiye, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0213-489X>.

## Introduction

One of the important factors affecting interpersonal relationships is “shyness”, which can be defined as a sense of uneasiness and restraint on the ground (Jones et al, 1986). Shyness is seen as the most important factor that makes it difficult for an individual to meet new people, make new friends and enjoy different experiences (Zimbardo, 1977). Carducci (2000) also sees shyness as an interpersonal problem that arises due to the extreme distress experienced in interpersonal relationships, low self-esteem, and fear of rejection. Similarly, avoiding social interaction is defined as a tendency to fail to participate properly in social issues or a tendency to shy away from others or avoid contact with them (Pilkonis, 1977). In other words, the individual's understanding of shyness is interpreted as behaviors under the influence of social integration efforts rather than a reflection of the lack of social skills. Although studies on shyness focus more on behaviors, some researchers have examined shyness in relation to the concept of social anxiety. Cheek and Busch (1981) defined shyness as a state of enduring feeling of social anxiety and interpersonal inhibition. McCroskey and Beatty (1986) describes social anxiety as uneasiness in front of others or discomfort from careful scrutiny or warnings of others, or solely from their presence. This similarity leads to the measurements of shyness to be nearly indiscernible from measurements of social anxiety trait (see Anderson & Harvey, 1988). In general, shyness appears as an important emotion. In this context, Izard (1972) stated that an emotion is a complex process with phenomenological components in the theory of different emotions. Similarly, an emotion that is believed to be innate and universal and to have distinguishable components of the complex process that creates an emotion is called basic and discrete (Izard, 1972). Also, Izard (2013) argues that basic emotions should be distinguished from emotion patterns, which are combinations of two or more basic emotions that tend to occur together under certain conditions. For this reason, the theory of different emotions defines anxiety as a combination or model of basic emotions that includes two or more of the fear, anger, shyness, and positive emotions (Izard, 2013).

Shyness, in general, is studied in two different ways. The first approach of shyness considered shyness as a continuous and distinct feature of personality or disposition. The second approach, on the other hand, considered shyness as situation dependent variable that occur occasionally, depending on the circumstances of the person. Generally speaking, trait shyness is more about or indicates to interindividual differences which could be studied using. Thus, behavior of given persons is observed and compared at the same situation. With respect to conceptualization of shyness as disposition, the survey of Zimbardo (1977) venerated to be one of the early works documented people's evaluation about the degree they see themselves being shy. On the other hand, though it is not hard to note the scarcity of studies illustrating situational factors accountable for inducement of shyness, there are some indications of situation produce shyness. According to Buss (1986), three factors were postulated to give rise the immediate occurrence of shyness, which include the action and presence of other people and unfamiliarity or novelty. The core argument of Buss revolves about the idea that occurrence of shyness, a part of dispositional factor, may also hinge on conjunctural factors such as one being in unfamiliar situations, physical surroundings (e.g., attending lecture at new university), new social activity (e.g., meeting with new people), new role (e.g., being promoted to a new position within work place). Regarding the presence of others, Buss (1986) contends that shyness is displayed here given to number of connotations such as presence of other in wedding ceremony (formality), meeting important person (high status) and feeling of bizarre like to have a strange thought regarding an issue contrary to others. Lastly, shyness might be engendered by actions of others that could involve being ignored by others, paid extensive attention (all eyes on you) or being exposed to personal question in crowd.

Shyness is considered as a universal concept; in the same way, although not defined, shyness has been suggested to exist in every culture (Carducci & Zimbardo, 1995). Shyness is a topic that has been emphasized in Western societies, especially in recent years. And this enormous concern springs from viewing or associating shyness most often with maladaptive behaviors (Rubin & Burgess, 2002). Interestingly, evidence from various studies showed divergent responses parents display toward shy behavior of their children. For instance, a study by Rubin and Burgess (2002) suggested that reaction of parents, from Northern America, to shy behavior was marked by feeling of disappointment, being worried, to extreme of rejecting and punishing children. Whereas parents of Chinese children reacted to shy inhibited behavior in calm way demonstrating of promotion and acceptance (Chen et al., 1997). Moreover, shyness is not seen as a problem in Turkish society, although it seems quite high; it is accepted as a natural aspect of human behavior (Köknel, 1986). In fact, this aspect is considered as one of the gender-specific qualities such as affection and emotion in women (Köknel, 1986). These studies attest the role of culture in the conceptualization of shyness. They gave us insight on how cultural variation affects our understanding of shyness and our construal of shy individuals. Such studies are, however, scarce.

## 1. Method

### 1.1. Aim of the Study and Research Model

The aim of this study is, first of all, to try to reveal how Turkish people conceptualize the structure of shyness and the most frequently shyness-eliciting situations. Another aim of the study is to obtain themes related to the concept of shyness by conducting a qualitative study from a Turkish perspective in order to eliminate the gap in the field regarding shyness. Relying on contents analysis method, themes of the obtained responses were created using the MAXQDA qualitative analysis program. Therefore, this study qualitatively addresses the factors that cause shyness, the characters of shy individuals, differences between genders, and society's perspectives on shy individuals.

### 1.2. Sample (Study Group)

A total of 147 participants (Male=65, Female=82) were enrolled. The participants were recruited from three different groups; those who scored high points in shyness scale (50) and, residents of rural (47) and urban areas (50). Note that, to determine the shy group, the Turkish version of the shyness scale developed by Cheek and Buss (1981) and adapted into Turkish by Güngör (2001) was applied. Participants who scored high on this scale were also included in the study. Participants' age ranges from 20 to 50 with a mean age of 26.83 ( $SD= 6.52$ ). Regarding the educational status of the participants, majority (65%) of them continue undergraduate. Similarly, in terms of the working status of the participants, 31.3% of the participants are students, while 68.7% work in different institutions. In addition, 52.4% of all participants lived in rural areas, while 47.6% stated that they lived in urban areas. In addition, to identify people living in urban and rural areas, the participants were asked whether they lived in the same place for at least 5 years. However, the purpose here is to collect data in a mixed way rather than to identify cultural differences.

### 1.3. Data Collection and Measurements Tools

The questions were prepared using google form and the link was distributed to the participants via email and WhatsApp group. The link was shared with the participants using three research assistants (one for each group). The full questionnaire comprises short introduction about the purpose of the study, consent statement, demographic information, and the 15 open-ended items prepared to address the main objectives of the current study. The framework of the shyness scale is based on 6 important clusters. The conceptualization of shyness (4 items), cognitive components (6 items), behavioral components (1 item), shyness perceived by the individual and perceived by others (3 items), and differentiation of shyness between genders (1 item) consists of a total of 15 questions. (See Table 1).

**Table 1. Structure of shyness survey**

Structure	Objective	Number of question
Defining of shyness	To identifying the characteristic of shy person (first objective)	1, 2, 3, 6
Feeling of shyness	To identifying specific feelings individual feel and (second objective)	12, 11, 14
Situation eliciting shyness	The situations eliciting shyness (third objective)	4, 9, 10
Ways to reduce shyness	To identify how individuals behave when the feel shy (fourth objective)	13
Evaluated by the others component	To explore how the participants perceive shyness and also how they think shyness is perceived by the public (fifth objective)	7, 8, 15
Gender differences	To determine whether shyness differs in terms of gender or not (sixth objective)	5

### 1.4. Procedure

The method deployed to analyze the responses was content analysis using MAXQDA program designated for qualitative data analysis. Firstly, participants' responses to each open-ended question were entered in MAXQDA. Two experts (including the researcher) read each response thoroughly and tried to discern similarities in meaning among responses (meaning of words and general idea) and categorize them based on basic themes. After segmenting responses based on meaning congruence, we gave codes for each category that represents the underlying meaning of the responses included in each category. This allows us to summarize all responses for each item based on main themes. In order to identify the significance of each theme, for each question, frequency analysis was carried out using the MAXQDA.

Note that, for each theme we use the equivalent English word. In the process of translation, instead of dictionary meaning, we use the contextual meaning of the original Turkish terminology. For instance, the word "çekingenlik" could

be translated as Shyness, timidity, and bashfulness. However, the word “çekingenlik” in Turkish context, comprise a meaning of being abstained from doing something due to fear. Hence, we believe that relative to the other words, the English word “timidity” provides a closer meaning to the Turkish word “çekingenlik”. Not that, even though embarrassment is regarded to be a close equivalent word for “mahcubiyet” in English, it does not capture or meet the exact meaning of “mahcubiyet” in Turkish context. Thereby we decided to use “mahcubiyet” as it is.

## 2. Results

In this study, 15 open-ended questions were asked to the participants to investigate the concept of shyness from a cultural perspective. The results obtained were evaluated within the scope of 6 objectives. Explanations regarding these objectives and related questions are detailed in the table 1. The themes obtained from the MAXQDA analysis results in the qualitative study and the frequency analysis results of these themes are given in detail below. Similarly, the analysis results are given separately for each objective, respectively.

### 2.1. First objective (Defining Shyness)

Four questions were asked to the participants about the definition of shyness, and the answers to these questions were checked for the most repeated words using MAXQDA, and 9 themes were created for the first question, 3 themes for the second question, 9 themes for the third question and 5 themes for the fourth question. Percentage rates of the themes were determined according to the frequency analysis. According to these results, for the first question, timidity was the most recurring theme with 26.13%, while escape was the least recurring theme with 2.78%. For the second question, the most recurring theme was obstructive feeling 59.18%, while the least recurring theme was innocence 10.20%. For the third question, the most recurring staying quiet was 32.23% and the least recurring conformity was 0.98%. Finally, for the fourth question, the most recurring theme was nervous 26.11%, while the least recurring theme was escape 11.94%. (see detail table 2)

**Table 2. Obtained Themes for the Definition of Shyness**

Questions	Themes (%)-(Frequency)
What do you understand by shyness?	Timidity (26,13)-(75), com lem (22,29)-(64), nervousness(12,19)-(35), passive(11,49)-(33), lack of self confidence munication prob (4,87)-(14), fear of negative evaluation(3,8)-(11), mahcubiyet/innocence(3,48)-(10), deviating from the norm(3,48)-(10), physical symptoms(3,48)-(10), escape(2,78)-(8)
According to you, what type of feeling shyness is?	obstructive feeling(59,18)-(87), regulative feeling(25,85)-(38), innocence(10,20)-(15)
According to you what are defining the characteristics of shy individuals?	Staying quiet(32,23)-(98), avoding social contact(20,04)-(61), lack of self confidence(9,53)-(29), fear of negative evaluation(9,21)-(28), inability to express oneself(8,55)-(26), fear of making mistake(6,57)-(20), innocence(4,27)-(13), self control(3,61)-(11), conformity(0,98)-(3)
How do people behave when feeling shy?	Nervous(26,11)-(70), physical symptom(24,62)-(66), avoidance(22,01)-(59), staying quiet(13,80)-(37), escape(11,94)-(32)

### 2.2. Second Objective

The second objective was identifying specific shyness feeling. To do so, participants were requested to recall about their past experience and respond to a number of questions. Three questions were asked to the participants about the shyness experienced and the answers to these questions were checked for the most repeated words using MAXQDA and 6 themes were created for the first question, 3 for the second question and 3 themes for the third question. According to the frequency analysis, for the first question, negative feeling was the most recurring theme with 38.98%, while embarrassment was the least recurring theme with 3.95%. For the second question, the most recurring theme was negative 65.98%, while the least recurring theme was both of them 4.76%. In the last question, the most repetitive long was 66.6%, while the least repetitive was conformity 9.52%. (see detail table 3)

**Table 3. Obtained Themes about Feeling of Shyness**

Questions	Themes (%)-(Frequency)
What did you feel when you felt shy?	Negative feeling(38,98)-(69), negative self-evaluation(14,68)-(26), physical symptoms(14,68)-(26), fear of negative evaluation(11,29)-(20), hiding(10,16)-(18), mahçubiyet(3,95)-(7)
How do you evaluate the shyness feeling that you experienced?	Negative(65,98)-(97), positive(26,53)-(39), both of them(4,76)-(7)
How long the experience of shyness did last?	Long(66,6)-(98), middle19,72)-(29), shoort(9,52)-(14)

### 2.3. Third Objective

To identify situations, in which people most often experience shyness, participants were requested to respond to three questions; In what environment or situation do you think people behave shier?/ where were you when you experience shyness?/ with whom were you when you experience shyness? 8 themes were created for the first question, 3 for the second question and 4 for the third question. According to the frequency analysis, for the first question, crowded places was the most recurring theme with 35.98%, while when praised was the least recurring theme with 2.51%. For the second question, the most recurring theme was school 44.89%, while the least recurring theme was home 15.64%. Finally, the most recurring was friends 56.46%, while the least recurring was teacher 6.12%. (see detail table 4).

**Table 4. Themes about Situations Eliciting Shyness**

Questions	Themes (%)-(Frequency)
In what environment or situation do you think people behave shyer?	Crowded places(35,98)-(86), new environment(12,97)-(31), stranger(15,89)-(38), difference in status(12,55)-(30), opposite sex(8,36)-(20), deviating from the norm(4,60)-(11), in the presence of the elderly(2,92)-(11), when praised(2,51)-(7)
Where were you when you were shy?	School(44,89)-(66), crowded places(34,69)-(51), home(15,64)-(23)
With whom were you when you experience shyness?	Friends(56,46)-(83), relatives(16,32)-(24), stranger(12,24)-(18), teacher(6,12)-(9)

### 2.4. Fourth Objective

The result of general frequency analysis revealed that vast majority of individuals reported choosing to stay silent and question one-self to find out where one has done wrong (50%) and escaping from the place (21%) as the most preferable way for assuaging the aversive experience. Moreover, respondents indicated also other ways employed to attenuate experienced shyness such as acting ostensibly as if nothing has occurred (8,5%), and glossing over the topic (3,2%).

**Table 5. Themes Related to Ways to Reduce Shyness**

Question	Themes (%)-(Frequency)
What did you do when you felt shy?	Staying silent(50)-(76), escape(21,05)-(32), explain(15,78)-(24), ignore(8,55)-(13), change the topic(3,28)-(5)

### 2.5. Fifth Objective

The section geared to explore how shy individuals are evaluated by people. Shifting from personal evaluation to societal evaluation, participants were asked to respond how shy individuals are viewed by society. Shifting to another aspect of evaluation towards shy individuals, respondents were asked to describe others' reactions toward them when felt shy. 7 themes were created for the first question, 6 for the second question and 4 for the third question. According to the frequency analysis, for the first question, need helps was the most recurring theme with 25.14%, while anxious was the least recurring theme with 3.5%. For the second question, the most recurring theme was passive 30.9%, while the least recurring theme was mocking 3%. Finally, the most recurring comfort was 56.46%, while the least recurring was not rebembering 10.38%. (see detail table 6)

**Table 6. Themes Related to Other Evaluation**

Questions	Themes (%)-(Frequency)
What do you think about shy people?	Sincerely(26,9)-(46), need help(25,14)-(43), communication problem(14,03)-(24), no differences(12,28)-(21), observent of customs(7,01)-(12), lack of self confidence(4,67)-(8), anxious individuals(3,5)-(6)
According to you, how shy individuals are evaluated by society?	Passive(30,9)-(51), vulnerable to be exploited(20)-(33), humble(19,39)-(32), devalued(15,15)-(25), lack of self confidence(7,87)-(13), mocking(3,03)-(5)
If you experienced the feeling of shyness with others, what were their reactions?	Comfort(19,04)-(28), mocking(17,68)-(26), no reaction(18,36)-(27), not rebempering(10,38)-(16)

## 2.6. Sixth Objective

This section represents the last objective, in which respondents were asked to report whether if there are gender differences in terms of proneness to shyness and manifestation of it. The general frequency analysis elicited that, the overwhelming of participants reported the existence of no differences (44%). However, contrary to that, a considerable number of respondents emerged to believe women (36%) are more susceptible to shyness compared to those who claim men (10%) to be more susceptible. (See detail table 7).

**Table 7. Themes in terms of Gender Differences**

Question	Themes (%)-(Frequency)
Do you think there is a difference between men and women in terms of shyness?	No difference (44,89)-(66), woman more(36,73)-(54), men more(10,20)-(15)

## 3. Discussion

This study was conducted to explore the shyness in the context of Turkey culture. It generally consists of six objectives. In this context, responses were obtained from three different groups: those living in rural and urban areas, and those scoring high on the shyness scale. Relying on contents analysis method, themes of the obtained responses were created using the MAXQDA qualitative analysis program. Broadly speaking, the results surface to be consistent with the mainstream literature in terms of conceptualization of shyness, in addition to the revelation of novel aspects that are exclusive to Turkish contextual. In what follows is the elaborate discussion for main objective of the study.

### 3.1. Defining Shyness

The first objective of the study was identifying how shyness is construed in the context of Turkish culture. For this purpose, participants were requested to respond to four questions. The first question was to explain what they understand about shyness? The overall analysis revealed ten basic themes; timidity, communication problem, passive, nervousness, lack of self-confidence, Mahcubiyet, fear of negative evaluation, deviating from the norms, physical symptoms, escape.

First of all, the above themes could be aligned into three main cluster of shyness definition; Timidity, Nervousness and Mahcubiyet. Relaying on the nature of responses, the other themes such as communication problem, fear of negative evaluation, lack of self-confidence, and a desire to fit the societal norm could be considered as auxiliary explanatory factors for shyness. Firstly, the majority of the participants define shyness as timidity. Regardless of group differences, most participants indicated that shyness is a state of being abstained (reserved) from saying or doing something. Respondents indicated that shy person refrain from expressing their idea. For instance, when participants responded to the question what they understand about shyness, they stated that "*shyness is being more reserved when they are in some situations and with some people/ İnsanın bazı durumlarda ve bazı insanlara karşı daha çekingen kalması*". Furthermore, responses from participants indicate to shyness being an emotion experienced in social contacts. Participants indicated that shy individuals experience difficulty of expressing themselves and initiating communication with others. For instance, they cited that "*shy individuals prefer to stay quiet and isolated/Konuşmaktan veya toplum içinde geri planda kalma veya dışa karşı duvarlar örmek*".

Such definition of shyness addresses one main component of shyness; behavioral inhibition. As literature indicates, shyness results in behavioral inhibition, in which individuals shy away from unfamiliar persons, objects or situation. For instance, Buss (1986) defined shyness as discomfort and inhibition that may arise in the presence of social audiences. Similarly, Rubin et al. (2014) in their studies among North American children indicated that shy children are described as inhibited and limited in their social interaction. Such behavior includes, inhibited social behavior, aversion of eye contacts, staying quit, and hesitating to do or say what they want (McCroskey & Richmond, 1982; Orr et al., 2009; Zimbardo et al., 1977). Various studies indicated that shyness related behavioral inhibition arises as a result of excessive attention to the self in social settings, negative self-evaluation, lack of self-confidence, and fear of negative evaluation from others (Henderson et al., 2010; Koydemir-Özden & Demir, 2009; Zhao et al., 2013). Corresponding to this, participants' responses indicated that fear of negative evaluation and lack of self-confidence could be the triggering factors that put them in a state of being reserved such as failure of expressing oneself and staying silent. These are illustrated clearly by some examples of respondents such as *"shyness is a state of emotion that prevents the person from expressing himself, his feelings and thoughts comfortably/kişinin kendisini, duygu ve düşüncelerini rahatça ifade etmesini engelleyen bir duygu durumudur"*, that *"shyness is being passive/edilgen olma, Kalabalık ortamda sönük kalmak, var olanı göstermekten, sergilemekten imtina etmek"* and that *shyness is a demonstration or feeling of lack of self-confidence in a certain condition "Bir kişinin toplumda bir konuda özgüvensiz hissetme gibi davranışlar göstermesidir"*. Hence, according to the majority of the participants, the underlying meaning of shyness is being reserved which arises as a result of fear of negative evaluation and/or lack of self-confidence.

The other main theme identified in this study associate's shyness with nervousness. This perspective could be explained by one of participants' responses as he defined shyness as *"a state in which a person feels tense and constantly anxious/Bir kişinin bulunduğu ortamdaki gerilmesi, sürekli kaygı içinde olması durumu"*. Similar to the case of defining shyness as timidity, fear of negative evaluation and lack of self-confidence engender nervousness culminating to a variety of reactions that involves inability of expressing oneself, staying quiet, and escaping from facing the eliciting situation of shyness. Besides, both timidity and nervousness could be encapsulated by the theme *"physical symptoms"*. This is because some respondents preferred using physical symptoms in defining shyness. Such as, *"blushing, behaving awkward etc / yüz kızarması ve hareketlerde bütünsüzlük"*. Hence, the experience of shyness is accompanied by a number of physical symptoms, including blushing, sweating and stuttering.

Such definition of shyness addresses the other main component of shyness; social anxiety. As literature indicates, all instance of shyness involves at least a certain level of social anxiety. For instance, Henderson and Zimbardo (1998) defined shyness as the tendency to avoid social situations due to feeling anxious and uncomfortable. Similarly, various scholars conceptualized shyness as wariness in the face of social contacts with strangers (Asendorpf, 1991; Cheek & Busch, 1981). Likewise, Cheek and Buss (1981) define shyness relying on individual's reaction to social novelty. They indicated that shyness involves tension, feelings of awkwardness and discomfort during social interaction with casual acquaintances or strangers.

All in all, the above two main themes implied that shyness involves both affective (nervousness) and behavioral (avoiding social interaction) features. These points dovetail with literature as it highlights the dysfunctional role of shyness (Heiser et al., 2003; Hofmann et al., 2004; McNeil, 2010). Commonly, shyness is construed as a deficit characterized by social anxiety and inhibition from social or interpersonal situations that arises due to factors such as excessive self-consciousness, negative self-evaluation, lack of self-confidence, and fear of negative evaluation from others (Henderson et al., 2010; Koydemir-Özden & Demir, 2009; Poole et al., 2017; Zhao et al., 2013). Supporting this, Henderson and his colleague (2010) described shyness as excessive concern about the self in social settings that results to inappropriate overt behaviors (such as staying quiet, timidity, broken speech), emotional and cognitive distress (such as nervousness, negative self-evaluation, etc.). As can be inferred from literature, shy individuals believe that others are very evaluative and critical, which in turn, leads to dysfunctional beliefs such as underestimating one's own performance, expectation of negative outcomes (Halford & Foddy, 1982; Maddux & Stanley, 1986), and others' expectations of perfectionist behaviors from themselves (Wallace & Alden, 1995). Consequently, such belief makes individuals to be reluctant to approach new people or take advantage of social opportunities. Thus, shy individuals feel discomfort in joining crowds, initiating new social contacts or involving in situations in which the perceived potential for scrutiny by others is high in general.

In sum, in the prevailing approaches, two main characteristics are considered as defining features of shyness; social anxiety and behavioral inhibition. Highlighting this, Leary (1986) indicated that shyness is viewed as subjective social anxiety coupled with behavioral inhibition, which arises as a result of fear of others evaluation. Accordingly, shyness is associated with variety of unpleasant and disruptive emotion and cognition that obstruct individuals from pursuing their interpersonal and professional goals (Henderson et al., 2010). Such approach of shyness is replicated by the main two themes discussed above (timidity and nervousness). Even though, the prevailing approach plays important role in our

understanding of shyness, such approach however, overlook the non-anxious form of shyness. This could be related to the fact that most of the studies on shyness are carried out in Western countries wherein competence is defined mostly by individual's assertiveness and expressing one's personal interest (Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2004). In such culture, individuals are positively viewed when they are competitive, autonomous, and prioritize individual goals (Hofstede et al., 2010; Keller, 2012). Behaving otherwise, however, is considered as problem. For example, studies by Pines and Zimbardo (1978) revealed that among Americans Shyness is construed as social incompetence.

However, in societies wherein high value is given to group cohesion over individual goal, nonassertive and unassuming behavior sometimes could be appraised positively. As some cross-cultural studies revealed, shyness could be a functional construct that helps to maintain social harmony (Xu et al., 2007). Similar finding was also reported by Chen et al. (1992). The authors suggested that among Chinese culture, shyness or inhibition indicates self-control and maturity. The conceptualization of shyness as both positive and negative construct was also apparent in some classical studies conducted in Western culture. For instance, Zimbardo (1974) indicated that shyness is not always negative and sometimes shyness is appraised as an endearing quality by others. Explaining this Zimbardo (1974) stated that "*Shyness*" means different things to different people; for some it is the reserved manner of the introvert, for others it connotes modesty and diffidence (p.1). Similarly, Gough and Thorne (1986) indicated the presence of different isomorphs of shyness. They argued that while some forms of shyness carry strong titters of anxiety, fear, and timidity, some other form of shyness stress on qualities of tact and self-control. Nevertheless, the attention to the positive dimension of shyness has been gradually decreased through time. This could be related to rapid cultural change that occurs in Western society especially in this century (Inglehart & Baker, 2000; Lesthaeghe, 1983). Note that, the association of positive perception of shyness with collectivist society is not meant that shyness is always appraised positively in collectivist society. Of course, for the most part, even in collectivist society, shyness is construed negatively (Henderson et al., 2010; Xu et al., 2007). The positive shyness discussed in contemporary studies in collectivist society such as China merely shows the presence of both positive and negative type of shyness (Ding et al., 2014; Xu et al., 2007).

Corresponding to this, in addition to the timidity and nervousness dimensions, this study reveals the positive dimension of shyness. The third main theme identified in this study comprises the responses of the participants that associate shyness with positive qualities. Opposite to the two perspective in definition of shyness, some of the participants defined shyness in a positive way as they reported shyness as being Mahcub or Masum (innocent). For instance, replying to the question how do you define shyness?, one of the participants stated that shyness is "*Sign of decency and mahçupluk in the person/Kişide oluşan edep ve mahçupluk belirtisi*". Echoing this, some participants also stated that shyness is a *sign of good manner or being disciplined/ terbiyeli ya da disiplinli olmak*. Similar findings were reported by Xu, et al. (2005). In their studies on parenting style among Mainland China, revealed that mothers perceive features such as not bragging about one's good deeds or backing off from facing potential conflicts with peers, and subjugating one's desire in order to conform to norms as endearing manners they expect their children to depict. Hence, such aspects of shyness (regulated shyness) embody most appealing behaviors anticipated from children and is positively evaluated by parents since it enhances cohesion among individuals in society. (For further details, see Xu, et al., 2014). Furthermore, some participants also defined shyness as being *mahcub*. Commonly, the word *Mahcubiyet* is translated as embarrassment. Without casting any doubt regarding the overlap between these two words, we believe there are slight differences between them. To start by the similarities, both embarrassment and *mahcubiyet* could be appraised as self-conscious emotions precipitated by perceived failure of meeting personal or societal standards. For instance, literature indicated that embarrassment entails an awareness of unfulfilled expectations, which can be associated with failure to behave in accordance with personal standards (Edelmann, 1987; Modigliani, 1968, 1971) or social standards (Goffman, 1963; Scheff, 1988; Tangney et al., 1996). Strengthening this, Modigliani (1968) stated that embarrassment is precipitated by being cognizance of one's failure to demonstrate the behavior perceived appropriate to a certain social interaction. Such acts threaten one's self presentation and creates private disapproval which leads to the feeling of embarrassment (Withers & Sherblom, 2008). Thus, individuals may experience embarrassment due to range of situations such as failure to maintain privacy, mistaking a stranger for an acquaintance or forgetting the name of a new acquaintance (Miller & Tangney, 1994; Modigliani, 1968; Withers & Sherblom, 2008). Thus, mostly embarrassment is caused by perceived violations of social conventions (personal standards) that increase social exposure (Babcock & Sabini, 1990; Crozier, 1990). Likewise, as it is apparent from some participants' responses, Mahcubiyet also involves a feeling of not meeting one's personal or social conventions. For instance, when asked to define shyness, one participant stated that it is *the emotion that arises when you act contrary to the values of society or to your person standards/Toplumun ya da kişinin değerlerine aykırı bir davranışta bulununca ortaya çıkan duygudur*. Similarly, participants also indicated that shyness is an emotion that occurs when a person feels he/she committed a mistake/*Kişinin hata yaptığını düşünmesi durumunda hissettiği duygu*.



Nevertheless, in addition to this, however, the Turkish conceptualization of the word *Mahcubiyet* bears some other meaning. Individuals may feel *Mahcub* not only when they fail to meet standards (personal or societal) but also due to positive factors such as receiving complements or unrequited gifts. One of the respondents, for instance, stated that shyness is *mahcub olmak that arises as a result of receiving unrequited gifts or praised by others especially in public places/karşılıksız iyilik gördüğümüzde, iltifat ya da hediye aldığımızda hissederiz*. Thus, unlike embarrassment that entails, for most part, inadequacy or failure, *mahcubiyet* entails, depending on the situations, sometimes a sense of inadequacy (failure) or feeling of innocency/decency. Therefore, when we say that a person is *mahcub* (*Mahcub oldu*), we are actually saying that he/she is experiencing shyness due to being innocent or decent. As a result, whereas embarrassment accompanied by anxiety/nervousness such as sweating, stuttering, and blushing (Miller & Tangney, 1994; Modigliani, 1968; Withers & Sherblom, 2008), *mahcubiyet*, however, did not necessarily leads to such kind of distressing symptoms. That means, when individuals feel *mahcub* because of receiving unrequited gifts or praises, they may not experience nervousness/anxiety.

In sum, even though both embarrassment and *mahcubiyet* have similarities, they differ at least in two main points. The first difference lies in the causal factors of both emotions. For most part, while embarrassment is caused by violations of personal or social conventions that increase social exposure, the antecedence of *mahcubiyet*, on the other hand, may include both violations of social conventions and also positive factors such as receiving praises or unrequited gifts. The second difference is related to the affective outcomes. While embarrassment mostly accompanied by uneasiness/nervousness, the affective outcome of *mahcubiyet*, on the other hand, is not necessarily accompanied by such feelings.

Similar to the timidity and nervous shyness, the positive type of shyness may also involve passivity or withdrawn behavioral responses in social contexts. The difference lies on the causes and the end goal of the behavior. Unlike the negative shyness that arises due to excessive fearfulness or lack of self-confidence, the positive shyness such as decency or modesty arises mainly due to a belief in one's own mediocrity or a desire to adjust one's behavior according to the societal norms that values decency/modesty (Xu et al., 2009). What is meant here is that positive shyness is a situational tendency rather than a personality trait. Therefore, positive shyness may not always lead to negative physiological arousals such as sweating, stomach upset, and tremors (Nikolić et al., 2016).

Looking at the end goal of shyness behavior, whereas the motivation of anxiously shy person is to keep oneself as far away as possible from social context, in case of positive shyness, the motivation is to avoid disturbing social harmony or attracting the attention of others (Farver et al., 1995; for further review see Chen, 2010). Explaining this, one of the participants stated that *shy people prefer to remain silent so as not to offend the people around them/ utangaç insanlar karşısındaki insanları kırmamak için sessiz kalmayı tercih ederler*. Similarly, participants indicated that shyness could be a sign of respect to others. For instance, some participants define shyness as *timidity out of respect to others/Saygıdan dolayı çekingenlik*.

Thus, positive shyness; modesty/decency could be explicated by the theme "fitting with norms". That is the desire to fit with the norms is more likely to make individuals feeling shy (described as being decent). Hence, shyness is more or less conceptualized as a desire/attempt to fit with norms that permeate in a given society. Thus, in addition to the mainstream approach that tends to subscribe shyness negatively as timidity and nervousness, Turkish society appears to have somehow positive conceptualization for shyness as is described as being decent or equanimity. Thus, it is worth noting that, though shyness is regarded to be one of negative self-conscious emotions (Sette et al., 2019), the positive perspective may contribute to making a claim shyness have a positive part in its conceptualization. Thus, apart from the prevailing premise shyness is a negative self-conscious emotion, shyness is also, based on the obtained result, a positive self-conscious emotion like pride.

Some cross-cultural study such as Xu et al. (2007) lends support to the positive functionality dimension of shyness. The authors indicated that regulated shyness is different from anxious shyness. As their study revealed, regulated shyness is appraised positively by peers because it signals the individuals' desires to fit in with the group (Leary & Buckley, 2000; Xu et al., 2007). Likewise, Chen et al. (1992) suggested that among Chinese culture, shyness among children reflects self-control and maturity. However, as Xu and Krieg (2014) clearly indicated, relative to the anxious-shyness, positive shyness did not receive adequate attention.

Overall, the general codes obtained from responses to the first questions conclude to overarching points. Looking at the connections between codes, we conclude that some codes represent appraisal process component, others feeling or experience component and others physical and behavioral components. Thus, codes "fear of negative evaluation" and "fitting or deviating from norms" stand as the appraisal components. Secondly, codes "timidity/ nervousness" and "*Mahcubiyet/ masumiyet*" represents feeling components. And lastly, while symptoms such as blushing, sweating, and stuttering represent physical reaction, codes "communication problem" "being passive" and "escaping" indicate the

behavioral component of shyness. On the other hand, the obtained results corroborate with mainstream literature as shyness is defined as being in a state of reserved (timidity) and nervousness in one part, while it also unveils an exclusive definition as shyness is viewed as being in a state of mahcubiyet in other part. Whereas fear of others' negative evaluation and lack of self-confidence works as the underpinning trigger for negative shy (timidity/nervousness), a desire to fit or deviating from norms functions as underlying trigger for feeling positive shy; (decency and mahcubiyet) respectively. Thus, from these points of view, shyness, like some other emotions such as surprise or curiosity, can be experienced as a negative or a positive emotion (see also Colonna et al., 2014).

Hence, based on the above discussion, shyness can be defined in two ways. First, shyness can be defined as a negatively valence emotion (timidity/nervousness) that arises from the fearing of negative evaluation from others or lack of self-confidence. As discussed above, this definition fits with the prevailing literature of shyness (Henderson et al., 2010; Zimbardo et. al, 1977). Second, in addition to this, however, shyness can be defined as an emotion that arises from being highly conscious of the societal norms. According to this definition, shyness is an emotion arises either when individuals feel they have done something that deviates from the social conventions or when they try to fit with it. One thing that has to be clear here is that, when we say shyness arises from being conscious of social norms, it should not be interpreted in a general sense. Relying on the participants' response, it can be said that shyness that arises from being conscious of social norms are limited to some defined (specific) situations. For instance, *it is the emotion that arises when he acts against the values of the society or the person. The discomfort felt by people acting out of certain social rules and behaviors that are not appropriate to do in society./Toplumun ya da kişinin değerlerine aykırı bir davranışta bulununca ortaya çıkan duygudur. insanın toplum içinde yapılması uygun olmayan davranışlar sergileme esi, belli toplumsal kurallar dışında hareket eden insanların hissettiği rahatsızlık geliyor.*

The second question participants asked was to describe *what type of feeling shyness is?* The participants' responses were categorized under two main themes; *Obstructive and Regulative feeling*. As discussed earlier, shyness is commonly conceptualized as a negative emotion that interferes with pursuing one's interpersonal or professional goals (Henderson et al., 2010). In line with the prevailing conceptualization of shyness, for most participants, shyness is a feeling that obstructs individuals from expressing their want and achieving their goals. As respondents indicated, when individuals feel shy, *they become less expressive of their feelings verbally and non-verbally and fail to take advantage of their social situations, this in turn, may hold them back from standing for their interest/kişinin günlük yaşantısını önemli derecede olumsuz etkileyen ve kişinin hayallerine giden yolda en büyük engellerden biri olabilir.* Furthermore, as respondents indicated, the feeling of shyness obstructs individuals from claiming high-status positions such as leadership. This is because, such positions require people to behave in bold and assertive way, while feeling shy precipitates avoidance or withdrawal from such situations. Thus, for majority of respondents' shyness is a feeling that hinders individuals from utilizing their potential properly. What can be inferred from the above discussion is that shyness is a feeling that falls in the category of avoidance emotions marked by withdrawing from the aversive conditions (Cheek & Buss, 1981). Note that, appraising shyness as negative emotion correspond with the two main themes (timidity and nervousness) discussed above. Such perception of shyness as an obstructive feeling generally corresponds to the anxious shyness literature.

On the other hand, some respondents indicated that shyness is also a feeling that regulates behaviors of individuals that help them fit with societal norms. They indicated that shyness makes individuals to feel responsible for their action and motivate them to abstain from repeating mistakes. For instance, respondents described shyness as *"a feeling that makes individuals feel responsible for their action/kişinin yaptığı eylemin sorumluluğunu almasını sağlar.* Participants further stated that shyness *"precipitates commitment not to repeat the past wrong doings/Davranışın tekrar edilmemesiyle ilgili bir taahhüt sunar".* This could be related to the conceptualization of shyness as *decency or innocence*. As discussed above, shyness is also conceptualized as feeling individuals experience when they perceive that they fail to fulfill one's responsibility, promises or receive unrequited gifts or praises. As it is apparent from earlier discussion, failure to fulfill one's responsibility or meeting certain norms result to *"Mahcubiyet"*. As indicated by respondents, *this feeling prevents individuals from being punished by the community and ensures that the norms of society continue/ kişinin toplum tarafından cezalandırılması engellenir ve toplum normlarının sürmesini sağlar".* Thus, feeling shy is interpreted as an attempt to gauge oneself under the existing condition and see to what degree one is compatible with norms required by such condition. Hence, contrary to the view that describes shyness as an obstructive feeling invariantly, this view tends to highlight the goal of shyness being positive in some situations.

Therefore, shyness or being shy appears to be more desirable feeling as it enhances individuals' behaviors fitting with society. Interestingly, some respondents described *shyness to be more likely as a child feeling that implies innocence, naive, sincerity, pure heart "Masumane, saflık çağrıştıran insandaki en çocuksu duygu"*. Note that, these adjectives don't imply negative side rather they suggest the degree of sensitivity individuals demonstrates in such situations. Furthermore, the physiological or behavioral expression of *Mahcubiyet* signals that the individual admits his/her mistakes

and care about others around him/her. This in turn, makes observers to recognize *Mahcub* individual's expressions as a sign of prosocial behavior and commitment to social relationship which ultimately leads to increased trust (see Feinberg, et al., 2012). Besides, the description of shyness as regulative feeling corresponds to studies by Xu et al. (2007), Leary and Buckley (2000), and Chen et al. (1992).

The third question participants asked was according to you what are the defining characteristics of shy individuals? The respondents were classified into nine themes. Relying on the nature of the characteristics, these themes could be grouped into two main categories; *antecedent* and *outcome*. The first category comprises features that may leads to certain outcomes. Thus, the antecedent category constitutes features such as fear of negative evaluation, lack of self-confidence, fear of making mistakes, and fear of hurting others. The second category, on the other hand, consists behavioral outcomes that may result due to the aforementioned antecedents. This category includes behavioral characteristic such as inability of expressing oneself, staying quiet, avoiding social contact, and conformity. In line with the prevailing approaches, for the majority of participants, shy individuals described as kind of people who tend to stay quiet in social gathering and fail to express themselves. Implying that, shy individuals would frequently prefer staying quiet or fail to express themselves when found in social situations that requires otherwise. As explained above, this may be because of being occupied by the fear of negative evaluation, making mistakes or lack of self-confidence. This can be explained by responses such as *because of not doing a mistake and saying something wrong or understood wrongly, I hardly express myself/Toplum içinde konuşmaktan çekinen, bir şey yapsam yanlış anlaşılır mı diye düşünen kendini ifade etmeye zorlanan ve yanlış anlaşılmaktan korkan*. I think classroom situation could be a good handy example to grasp these characteristics. In this situation, a shy student would prefer staying quiet and refrains from asking a teacher even though he or she wants to ask due to being shy. Overall, responses of participants show staying quiet, inability of expressing oneself, avoiding social contacts, lack of self-confidence and fear of either negative evaluation or making mistakes to be conspicuous characterizes of shy individuals. In addition to these, shy individuals may also stay quite or confirm with other due to the excessive fear of hurting others. As respondents indicated that *they may prefer staying quiet or withdrawn in order to conform to societal norms/Toplumda kabul görmek için sessiz kalmayı ve içine kapanmayı tercih ederler*.

The positive category subsumes characteristics related to self-control and conformity to norm. Unlike negative characteristics, some participants appeared to describe shy individuals as innocent people who attempt to control themselves and conform to norms entrenched in a given situations. That is to say, shy individuals are kind of people whose personality characterized by constant attempt to fit with societal norm and self-control. This were similar with Xu et al. (2007) findings that revealed the regulated form of shyness that involves self-control and social restraint behavior with the desire to fit in with others. Similarly, within Turkish cultural context, shy individuals are sometimes viewed as people who have good characteristics or personalities. Therefore, these characteristics might further benefit personality studies and widen the list of shy personality. Simply put, the implication of the above discussion is that characteristics of shy individuals could be grouped into two main categories; either antecedent or outcome and negative or positive characteristics.

The last question participants asked was how people behavior when feeling shy? Relying on the meaning of the responses, five main themes were extracted; nervousness, physical symptoms, staying quiet, partial avoidance and escape. As indicated by overwhelming respondents, when individuals feel shy, they tend to behave nervously, involving stuttering, inability to converse or compose a complete sentence. And this nervous behavior is more likely to be accompanied by physical symptom such as blushing, shaking hands and sweating etc. That is demonstration of physical symptoms is a clear indicator of the degree of tension individuals feel due to the shyness. Moreover, as showed by respondents, when feeling shy, individuals may also demonstrate partial avoidance which includes behavior like bowing one's head, avoiding eye contact, retreating to a corner or shrinking, changing the topic and etc. Note that, partial avoidance distinguishes from general avoidance, because the latter refers avoiding the aversive situations before taking place such as avoiding attending a workshop in which one will have to make public speech (Fuller, 1984). In contrast, partial avoidance involves demonstration of numbers of shyness related behaviors (such as staying passive, hiding) while not trying to move away (leave) the place causing the shyness (Fuller, 1984). Hence, these partial avoidance behaviors aim to attenuate the nervousness caused by shyness.

### 3.2. Shyness Feeling, Eliciting Factors, and Duration from Individual's Personal Experience

Opposite to the general feeling, the second objective of the study was identifying specific feelings of shyness, evaluating of the experienced shyness and the period it lasted from personal experiences. This objective is addressed using three questions, in which participants were primed to introspect their previous shy experience and respond to the questions accordingly. In the first question, participants were asked what you felt when experienced shy. Relying on the underlying meaning, the responses were clustered into six themes; Negative feeling, Negative self-evaluation, Hiding, Physical symptoms, Fear of negative evaluation, and *Mahcubiyet*. The majority of respondents reported they felt generally

negative feelings subsuming a variety of feelings. Such as feeling panic, fear, and feeling lonely. The significance of these responses is that feeling negative emerge to be the underpinning feeling of shyness experienced by participants. Besides, as a result of experiencing shy, participants indicated also they tended to either evaluate themselves negatively, experience a number of physical symptoms, occupied with the desire of hiding from the aversive context, or occupied with fear of being evaluated. As for negative self-evaluation, it involved criticizing oneself, perceiving oneself as ignorant and underestimate oneself, while fear of negative evaluation entailed feeling as if all eyes on her/him, or interpreting others' glances as if they deride him/her and thinking as if others steering at him/her in awful or disgust way. On the other hand, whereas feeling of hiding pertained the desire of wanting an aversive event to end immediately, or the desire to disappear from that shy triggering situations, physical symptoms included feeling the increasing body temperature, experiencing slow movement or difficult in moving parts of the body. However, contrary to the above negative feelings, others participants indicated that when experienced shyness, they felt Mahcub.

Overall, regarding in the throes of shyness what respondents felt, a diverse of feelings was reported. That includes feeling generally negative, tending to evaluate oneself negatively, fear of being evaluated negatively by others or tending to interpret others' reactions in bad motives, experiencing physical symptoms and hiding oneself. Moreover, the personal experiences reported by participants appear somewhat to correspond to the prevailing literature and general feeling mentioned earlier, in addition to revelation of novel feeling that is exclusive to Turkish contextual culture.

In the second question, participants asked to evaluate their shyness experience. The responses revolved around three main themes. The majority of respondents tended to evaluate their shyness experience negatively. And this view is in line with mainstream of literature that virtually describes shyness as aversive feeling (Cheek & Buss, 1981; Henderson et al., 2010; Leary, 1986). However, contrary to this, some participants also assessed their shyness experience as positive, while others assessed their shyness experience both negative and positive. And this is regarded to be defining contribution that suggests that a part from the prevailing notion that construe shyness as aversive feeling, shyness is also viewed as positive and desirable feeling in some situations. Hence, it is plausible to posit perception of shyness as positive or negative is more likely influenced by the cultures that permeate in a given society and also the way the respondents conceptualize shyness. While participants who conceptualize shyness as deficit considered their personal experience of shyness negatively, those who conceptualize shyness as innocence or modesty tend to appraise shyness positively.

The third question participants asked was for how long did the experienced shyness last? The responses fell into three groups, short, middle and long. Most respondents tended to report their shyness experience lasted for a short time expanding from 0 up to 60 seconds, followed by those who said last for 1 up to 10 minutes (middle) and those who said lasted for more than 10 minutes (long). Note that, though emotions known to be a rapid experience that occurs within seconds (Martin, & Tesser, 2006), respondents here appear to perceive as if their experience lasted for minutes. Hence, it is not about the experienced shyness lasted for long rather is about their perception which may implies how tense or aversive it was.

Overall, the second objective was identifying specific feelings, and evaluating the personal experienced shyness in terms of positive and negative and how long it lasted. And this objective was encapsulated by three questions as stated in the above discussion.

### **3.3. Shyness Eliciting Factors**

The third objective was identifying factors/situations that elicit shyness. The first question participants asked was under which situation do you think people experience shyness? Relying on the responses, eight themes were extracted. For the overwhelming respondents, crowded places were the most eliciting situation in which individuals feel shy, followed by novel conditions, meeting strangers, meeting people who have high status, and meeting/takin g with opposite sex. Taken together, the eliciting situations identified in this study emerge to be consistent with the prevailing literature. For instance, Buss (1986) suggested three situational factors that elicit shyness; novelty, presence of others, and the actions of others. The author further explained that novelty includes new physical environment (such as new school), new social gathering (such as meeting unfamiliar persons), and assuming new role (such as assuming new position). Besides, shyness could be elicited by the presence of others by virtue of formality (participating in wedding ceremony), high status (meeting authorities), and conspicuousness. Buss (1986) also forwarded three situations in which the actions of others trigger shyness; excessive attention, insufficient attention, and intrusiveness. These classifications have got support from various literatures. Henderson et al. (2010), for instance indicated that one-on-one interaction with opposite sex, interaction with unfamiliar persons and high-status individuals are among the most typical situations that trigger shyness. Besides, respondents indicated some other eliciting situations which could be regarded as exclusive contribution of this study. As such, participants indicated that individuals are more susceptible to feel shy when deviating from norms. Interestingly, this point unduly stressed or stated by rural inhabitants compared to the rest groups. Moreover,

respondents indicated that individuals are more likely to feel shy in the presence of elders, when praised or received unrequited gift. Association of shyness with deviation from norms was mostly reported by participants from rural area. Thus, feeling shy here is not about being in crowded place or novel situation etc... Rather is about perceiving one's behavior deviating from the norms.

Following this, to further understand factors that elicit shyness, participants were asked to respond where were they when they experience shyness? Responses were arranged on three themes; schools, crowded place and home. The majority of respondents indicated they were in school or crowded places when they felt shyness. Listing school as the most eliciting situation might be surmised to the fact that students represented high proportion of the participants. Nevertheless, these school and crowded places correspond to the eliciting situation discussed above. On the other hand, some respondents indicated they were at home when they felt shy. Implying that, in Turkish culture individuals may feel shy even when they are at home, which is something very scarce to come across in other cultures. This might be surmised to the possibility that individuals may feel shy at home in the presence of elders or relatives. The significance of this theme is people not only feel shy in the presence of unfamiliar, but also in the presence of familiars. All in all, responses of personal experiences emerge to correspond to eliciting situations mentioned in the general question addressed above, in addition to the revelation of a significant eliciting situation, home which is exclusive for Turkish cultural context.

The last question participants asked was who were with you when you felt shy? The responses were extracted into four themes. The majority of respondents indicated they were with friends, then relatives, strangers and teachers. And these could be grouped into two main clusters; familiar (friends, relatives and teachers) and unfamiliar (strangers). The implication of this result is future studies could benefit in terms of merging the type of people one was with when feeling shy with eliciting situation in exploration shyness. For instance, one may manipulate eliciting situations and check with whom individuals are more likely to feel shy?

### 3.4. Ways to Reduce Shyness

The fourth objectives were identifying the ways participants utilized for attenuating the experienced shyness. This objective is encapsulated by one question, in which participants were asked to report, how they react (what they did) the moment they experience shyness. Relying on the responses derived from the question what did you do when you felt shy, five themes were extracted? The majority of respondents indicated they preferred staying quiet when they felt shy, hence letting shyness go away as time passes. Other respondents indicated they tried to ignore the shyness situation and continued as if nothing has happened, while others tried to change the topic as way of assuaging the experienced shyness. These two ways are regarded be representing partial avoidance. In contrast, some respondents indicated they tried to avoid or leave the areas that trigger shyness. Lastly, respondents indicated they tried to explain and justify themselves when feely shy. This theme or method seems to indicate to the *Mahcubiyet* type of shyness, in which individuals feel shyness as a result of perceiving one has deviated from the norms. Overall, staying quiet, ignoring the situation as if nothing has happened, changing the topic or escaping completely from the situation are consistent with ways individuals used to reduce shyness mentioned in the literature. For instance, in the throes of shyness, individuals are more likely to manifest behavioral inhibition, freezing and escape (Buss, 1986; Schmidt & Buss, 2010 ) and avoid social interaction (Asendorpf, 1990). On the other hand, explaining and justifying oneself could be claimed as a specific way used by individuals when feeling *Mahcubiyet*.

### 3.5. Others' Evaluation of Shyness

So far, we have seen how individuals construe shyness by stressing on exploring the meaning of shyness and situations that could potentially elicit shyness. In this section, we tried to explore participants' perception on how shyness is viewed by the society. To do so, first two questions, participants were requested to report their perception and the society's perception regarding shy individuals. In the course of soliciting this, diverse responses were proffered. The responses were categorized in to three main categories; Negative, Positive, and Indifferent.

First, majority of participants believed that shy individuals are construed negatively among the society. As can be inferred from the responses, shyness is considered as an individual problem that arises due to lack of certain social skills. For instance, regardless of group difference, participants indicated that shy individuals are construed by the society as individuals with communication problem, lack self-confidence, and anxious. Hence, shyness is construed as a deficit in some basic social skills. Such deficit may put shy individuals to be vulnerable to exploitation. As it is explained above, shy individuals inhibit themselves from expressing what they want which may make them to be susceptible to be abused by others. Individuals may take advantage of shy persons' silence and exploit them.

Perhaps, as a result, shy persons are appraised as persons who need some psychological treatments. Such perception is in line with the mainstream approach of shyness. For instance, Rubin and Asendorpf (2014) indicated that in North

American context, shy children are considered as at risk for being neglected or rejected by peers, which may contribute to some psychological problems such as depression and other adjustment problems (see Henderson, et al., 2010).

The survey responses have indicated, however, that shy individuals could also be appraised positively by the society. As responses indicated, among Turkish community, there are instances wherein shy individuals are appraised as sincere, humble, and obedient to the norms and values of the society. Furthermore, participants also indicated that shy persons are considered as pure hearted, innocent, and person with high moral standards. Unlike to the mainstream approach that construe shyness as dysfunctional construct that refrains individuals from wide ranging of social settings, this study reveals, at least in some particular circumstances, shyness behavior is appraised as a virtue that signals good manner, thoughtfulness and sensitiveness to societal norms. Besides, considerable size of participants also indicated that shy individuals are not considered differently from the 'normal' person. Corresponding to this, Gough and Thorne (1986) stated that the ways shyness is appraised affects the way others/observers construe shy individuals. Explaining this, the authors stated that if shyness is perceived as fear, anxiety, or indecisiveness in dealing with others, then shy individuals are appraised as weak or timid. However, if observers define shyness using positive attributes such as patience, modesty, or self-control, then their evaluation of shy person will be more favorable.

### 3.6. Gender Difference

The six objectives were exploring if there are gender differences in experiencing shyness. To do that participants were asked to respond to 'Do you think there is a difference between men and women in terms of shyness?' The obtained responses yielded three themes. Contrary to the common belief that associates shyness behavior more with women comparative to men, majority of respondents indicated there is no difference between men and women in the likelihood of feeling shyness. However, some participants suggested existence of difference between male and females in the experience of shyness. As for the latter, some respondents tended to see women are more likely to feel shy, while for some others men are more susceptible to shyness. Interestingly, shy individuals and rural inhabitants represented a high proportion of those who said women have high tendency of feeling shy. Nevertheless, the prevailing view is most people see there is no difference between men and women in terms of feeling shy. This finding was in line with Zimbardo (1974) finding. In his study Zimbardo (1974) revealed that women are no shyer than men.

### Recommendations

The current study revealed that shyness is construed both positively and negatively. For majorities shyness is a deficit in social skills and self-confidence that obstruct individuals from expressing their feeling and achieving their goals. As a result, shy individuals are considered as lacking some basic social skills and therefore needs some level of psychological treatments. For others, however, shyness is a sign of modesty, mahcubiyet, or sensitiveness to societal norms. Correspondingly, shy individuals are appraised favorably and shyness behavior considered as a sign of maturity or pure-heartedness.

On another front, the study revealed a variety of shyness eliciting situations that grouped into corresponding eliciting situations (consistent with literature) and exclusive to Turkish context. The corresponding shyness eliciting situations include crowded places, novel context, strangers, difference status and opposite sex, while exclusive shyness eliciting situation consists of in the presence of elders, when being praised, deviating from norms. Overall, the significance of the obtained results lies in two fold points. Firstly, the results corroborates to the mainstream as it revealed shyness is construed negatively and shyness eliciting situations that consistent with literature. Secondly, the results unveiled exclusive findings as shyness, at times, is construed positively in addition to pinpoint to new eliciting situations of shyness.

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