

Przeczytaj fragment tekstu, a następnie wybierz poprawną odpowiedź lub odpowiedzi do każdego z pytań.

People surround themselves with a 'bubble' of personal space that they claim as their own, and they tend to become stressed when other people invade their 'bubble'. Our personal space protects us from interference and helps us feel comfortable when we communicate with other people. How far we prefer to be from others depends on who they are and the environment we are in. The people who we interact with tend to have the same preferences as us so we may not usually notice that we carefully maintain the same physical distance from each other during an interaction. However, we may feel odd or uncomfortable if someone else 'breaks the rules' by being too close or too far away.

1. People tend to maintain a distance from other people

- a) because it helps avoid the discomfort of having one's privacy disturbed.
- b) the range of which is determined by their relationship and circumstances.
- c) without being aware that they are also approached with reserve of the same kind.

The nature of the social situation determines the proximity people maintain to others. People try to maintain a balance between being uncomfortably close to and awkwardly distant from the people with whom they are interacting. Friends typically stand closer to each other than acquaintances, people who are attracted to each other stand closer than those who are not and those that wish to appear friendly tend to choose smaller interpersonal distances.

2. The extent of distance that interacting people maintain

- a) does not matter in the case of those who know each other very well.
- b) reflects a person's attitude toward his or her interlocutor.
- c) may cause emotional discomforts if it is too big or too small.

There is some variation in how rigidly social distance is applied. We may allow 'nearstrangers', such as doctors, dentists and hairdressers, into our intimate distance zone as physical contact is a necessary part of our interactions with them. People may be prepared to modify their response to the proximity of others when the physical environment prevents them from maintaining preferred social distance, as when travelling in a lift or on a crowded train.

3. If there is no possibility of maintaining the appropriate distance, people

- a) usually adjust their attitude to the conditions they are in.
- b) try to avoid interactions at all costs.
- c) keep it as remote as possible.

In addition, there are considerable cultural and individual differences in what is considered appropriate social distance. Failure to maintain appropriate social distance results in psychological discomfort for the person who feels their space has been invaded. The source of this discomfort is increased autonomic irritation, which can result in the experience of anxiety. Men and women define and use their personal space differently, although there is considerable variation between and within cultures. It has been found that two men interacting prefer greater social distance than two women, who in turn prefer a greater distance than a male-female interaction. Still, it might be expected that people in a romantic relationship will tend to sit closer to each other, regardless of their sexual orientation. Trends in gender and personal space are not clearly recognizable except when other factors, such as ethnicity, age and relationship are accounted for.

4. People may usually accept a closer social distance

- a) if they are of mixed sexes.
- b) even though their relationship is not emotional.
- c) when they are a loving couple of the same sex.

As with many aspects of social behaviour, there are distinct differences between cultures in what is considered an appropriate distance for conducting different types of social exchanges. These differences become noticeable when members of different cultural groups interact. Similar differences can be observed between people from different cultural regions. For instance, North Americans and Northern Europeans prefer the largest interpersonal distances while Southern Europeans tend to stand closer. The closest conversational distances are found between people from Arab and Latin American backgrounds. Such differences have important consequences, especially in a world where contact between members of different cultures is frequent, for example in business.

5. Which of the pairs is/are more likely to get along in business?

- a) Northern Europeans and North Americans
- b) Southern Europeans and Latin Americans
- c) Arabs and Southern European

A North American typically prefers social distance of more than one meter whereas a Pakistani would typically stand closer to a conversational partner. As each attempts to shift to a comfortable distance, the Pakistani ends up feeling that the American is distant and unfriendly whilst the American feels that the Pakistani is overfamiliar. Such perceptions could have consequences for the outcome of their business discussions and examples like this highlight the need for sensitivity towards the expectations of other cultures.

6. Both a North American and a Pakistani

- a) may fail in business relations unless they suit their social distance to the range accepted by people they interact with.
- b) should become aware of the background and customs of their foreign business partners.
- c) usually find it hard to do business with nations that present different expectations in the field of social proximity.