

SELF-SILENCING AND WELL -BEING AMONG TURKISH WOMEN

BY

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Abstract

“Silencing the Self” theory (STST; Jack, 1991) posits that societal devaluation of female-related self promotes self-silencing among women in romantic relationships and thereby threatens their well-being. A cultural psychological (CP) perspective suggests that these dynamics may reflect the location of STST in cultural worlds that promote “independent” constructions of self. Drawing upon a CP analysis, the present study considers the hypothesis that implications of silence for well-being may be less damaging in Turkish settings that promote more “interdependent” constructions of self. Consistent with this hypothesis, but inconsistent with previous research, results of a survey study revealed that two dimensions of *Silencing the Self Scale*—*self-silencing* and *care as self-sacrifice*—were unrelated to relationship satisfaction and depression. Discussion considers implications for women’s silence and well-being in Turkish contexts.

Self-Silencing and Well-Being among Turkish Women

Silence has been a pervasive theme in the study of girls and women in multiple disciplines. Within the field of psychology, Jack (1991) proposed “silencing the self theory” (STST) to account for women’s higher rates of depression relative to men in North American contexts. Since then, scholars have employed STST in a wide array of research across subdisciplines within psychology. Jack’s model of self-silencing proposes a set of cognitive schemata and behaviors which depicts women’s experience in romantic heterosexual relationships. In brief terms, women are under strong pressure to conform to societal norms and feminine ideals prescribing silence. In conforming to these roles, women actively suppress their own thoughts and feelings if these are in conflict with their romantic partners. This process of devaluation and inhibition of one’s own feelings and opinions results in a fall in self-esteem and feelings of a “loss of self” (Jack & Dill, 1992), thus heightening women’s vulnerability to depression.

In this paper, I explore the phenomenon of self-silencing in the Turkish context. Given Jack’s (1991) conception of self-silencing as a gendered phenomenon, I begin by exploring the role of voice and silence on self and relationship processes from a feminist perspective, before drawing upon a cultural psychological perspective to propose an alternative account. Next I specify central points of STST, review the empirical literature stemming from it, and outline hypothesized implications of Turkish sociocultural contexts for STST. I then present findings of an initial study that examines self-silencing and its links to personal and relational well-being among Turkish women.

Voice and Silence

Silence- what is not voiced or heard- is an integral part of discourse and social interaction. The ambiguous nature of silence lends itself to a multiplicity of interpretations, ranging from an understanding of silence as active listening, consent, or reflection, to silence as resistance, inaction, or oppression. Numerous phrases such as “silent treatment”, “silent wall”, “pregnant silence”, and “silent war” reflect the variations in notions of silence and indicate that there are many forms of silence with many possible meanings and functions.

Mainstream Feminist Accounts

Feminist psychologists have offered a number of conceptualizations and models of silence among women over the past decades (Baker, 2006; Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Chodorow, 1989; Fivush, 2002; Gilligan, 1982; Jack, 1991). Throughout this literature, silence refers to the *lack* or *loss* of voice. Voice and silence reflect dynamic and relational processes emerging from one’s place (positioning in a particular time and place) and power (Belenky et al, 1986; Fivush, 2002).

The most influential model on the development of women’s voice and silence dates back to Gilligan’s work in 1982. According to Gilligan, the suppression or loss of voice among women starts in adolescence. During this developmental stage, girls begin to identify with and internalize the prevalent gender roles and cultural stereotypes of the “good woman” that often dictate being “nice, polite, pleasing to others, unassertive and quiet” (Harter, 1999). In addition, Gilligan emphasizes the importance of connectedness and the central role of relationships in female development (Belenky et al, 1986; Chodorow, 1989; Gilligan, 1982). According to this model, differential gender socialization patterns within North American contexts lead males to be more separate, autonomous and independent and females to be more related and

interdependent. More recent research within the field of psychology has indeed provided support for this argument (Cross & Madson, 1997; Josephs, Markus, & Tafarodi, 1992; Oyserman & Markus, 1993). In Gilligan's formulation, it is the devaluation of the related self in a predominantly independence-oriented setting which considers separation and autonomy as the benchmarks of adult development, coupled with adolescents girls' adherence to cultural feminine stereotypes, that leads to the suppression and silencing of their voices. Gilligan notes that as a result of such silence and suppression, girls come to dissociate from their actual experiences and true selves, hence the loss of voice that emerges in early adolescence leads to a loss of self over time.

Theorists concerned with levels of voice argue that lack of voice has negative consequences or correlates, involving low self-worth and depressive symptomology (Gilligan, 1993; Harter, Marold, Whitesell, & Cobbs, 1996; Jack, 1991). Researchers have further indicated that the negative depressive outcomes of lack of voice render adolescent females vulnerable to self-destructive behaviors, including suicide (Harter, 1999; Horesh & Apter, 2006). Moreover, research in mainstream psychology has emphasized the role of emotional intimacy and self-disclosure for relationship well-being and production of closeness (Lauranceau, Barrett, & Pietromonaco, 1998). This perspective assumes self-disclosure to be one of the key factors associated with the quality of close relationships. Numerous studies, conducted primarily in Western settings, have found that disclosure is positively related to relationship satisfaction and longevity (Hendrick, 1981; Hendrick & Hendrick, & Adler, 1988; Reis & Shaver, 1988). From this perspective, self-silencing, or the inhibition or suppression of personal thoughts and feelings, might promote a suboptimal form of self (e.g. false self, Harter, 1999) or relationship (e.g. avoidant attachment, Collins & Read, 1990; Mikulincer & Nachson, 1991). To the extent that

silence, as lack or loss of voice, is a gendered phenomenon which characterizes women's experience to a greater extent than men's experience, self-silencing might indeed pose a greater threat to women's personal and relational well-being, as numerous researchers have proposed.

A Cultural Grounding of Disclosure and Silence

Alternatively, one might consider the contextual, performative and normative dimensions of silence (Medina, 2004). The diverse meanings and interpretations attributed to silence (as with speech) might only emerge by reference to the particular social contexts and discursive practices in which silence occurs (Foucault, 1978). The findings of various studies examining cross-cultural differences in the use and valuation of silence validate this point (e.g., Basso, 1972; Giles, Coupland & Wiemann, 1991; Scollon, 1985). From a cultural psychological perspective, the hazardous impacts of silence, or self-silencing, might be a product of particular sociocultural worlds (e.g. North American or Western) which favor speech over silence (Jaworski, 1993) and where talking is equated with thinking and individuality, and silence, with the absence of either or both (Kim, 2002; Kim & Markus, 2002).

Likewise, the devaluation of the female related self, which serves to promote silence among North American women in Gilligan's (1992) model, may itself be a symptom of particular worlds. Theorists and researchers in a wide variety of disciplines have emphasized the extent to which psychological experience in North American worlds is rooted in individualistic or independent constructions of self (Baumeister, 1987; Fiske, Kitayama, Markus, & Nisbett, 1998, Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Cultural worlds of voluntaristic independence promote an experience of self as a bounded, separate entity insulated from physical or social context and an associated experience of relationship as a tenuous, voluntary agreement between inherently unconnected selves (Adams, Anderson, & Adonu, 2004). In contrast, researchers working in

West African as well as East Asian settings have used phrases like collectivism, relational self or relational individualism to describe the prevalent constructions of self. These cultural worlds of embedded interdependence promote an experience of self in terms of inherent connection, not only to other people but also to land, spiritual forces and a sense of built-in-order (Fiske, 1991; Riesman, 1986).

Different constructions of self have implications for defining features of relationships. The thin, frictionless constructions of relationship associated with worlds of voluntaristic independence afford a relatively promotion-focused experience of relationship oriented toward pleasure-seeking, self-expression, emotional satisfaction, and inflated sense of self associated with affective individualism. This translates into an emphasis on intimate self-disclosure, emotional support, and pleasurable companionship as the defining features of close relationships. In contrast, the thick, sticky constructions of relationship associated with worlds of embedded interdependence afford a relatively prevention-focused experience of relationship oriented toward pain-avoidance, self-protection, attention to obligation, and dutiful obedience associated with authority-ranking models and circumscription regarding self-disclosure (Adams, 2005; Adams & Plaut, 2003; Adams, Anderson, & Adonu, 2004; Adams, Kurtiş, Anderson, Mensah, 2009).

Findings of cross-cultural studies suggest that while settings with predominantly independent constructions of self place heavy emphasis on intimate self-disclosure as a prerequisite for closeness, people in settings where interdependent constructions of self prevail report lower levels of emphasis on intimate self-disclosure (Adams, 2005, Adams et al, 2004; Adams et al, 2009). One reason for this difference might be due to motivation. People inhabiting worlds that promote independence may be particularly motivated to engage in self-

disclosure to build intimate relationships in the absence of an environmentally afforded sense of connectedness. In contrast, people inhabiting worlds of interdependence might need to rely less on self-disclosure as a path to relationship building, given the readily available social ties in which they are embedded. Another factor might involve motivations against disclosure. People in worlds that promote interdependence might have motivations against intimate disclosure and closeness, since revealing sensitive information about one's self might leave one vulnerable to betrayals of trust, gossip or other relational dangers. In such settings, psychological well-being may actually be associated with guarded management of personal information rather than open disclosure (Shaw, 2000).

In contrast to sociocultural worlds of independence, the implications of silence for the experience of personal or relational well-being may be less damaging in sociocultural worlds of interdependence. Self-silencing may even be valuable to the extent that inhibition of personal needs and opinions reduces the potential for interpersonal friction that can have particularly disastrous consequences in situations of low relational mobility that provide little opportunity of escape. Moreover, to the extent that self-silencing is a normative practice, it might not pose a threat to the psychological experience of people occupying such cultural worlds.

Silencing the Self Theory

The conceptual basis of STST (Jack, 1991) is the Self-in-Relation Model (Chodorow, 1978; Gilligan, 1982) which conceptualizes female development as occurring within relational contexts. This model assumes women's orientation to relationships to be the central component of female identity and emotional activity (Jack, 1991), hence associating women's depression with their experiences in close relationships. According to Jack, women are under strong pressure to conform to societal norms and feminine ideals, especially those prescribing feminine

relationship roles. In conforming to these roles, women actively suppress their own thoughts and feelings if these are in conflict with their partners' and adopt an attitude of agreement and compliance. Women may initially employ self-silencing as a strategy to maintain feelings of connectedness and prevent abandonment. However, because the process of self-silencing involves the devaluation and inhibition of one's own feelings, it leads to a decrease in self-esteem and feelings of a "loss of self" (Jack & Dill, 1992), which heightens women's vulnerability to depression.

In Jack's model, silencing the self entails four dimensions that underlie the dynamics of depression women develop in romantic relationships. These dimensions involve: (1) "externalized self-perception" which refers to a tendency to judge or evaluate the self by external standards, (2) "care as self-sacrifice", or putting the needs of close others before the self in order to secure relational attachments, (3) "silencing the self", or the inhibition of self-expression or action to prevent conflict or possible loss of relationships, and (4) 'the divided self' which refers to presenting an outer compliant self while the inner self experiences anger or hostility (Jack & Dill, 1992).

In order to test her model, Jack (1991) devised the Silencing the Self Scale (STSS) on the basis of a longitudinal study with 12 clinically depressed women. Jack and Dill (1992) tested the psychometric properties of the scale in an initial study where they administered the STSS along with the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) to three samples of women: college students, residents in battered women's shelters and mothers who used cocaine during their pregnancy. The findings yielded high levels of test-retest reliability and internal consistency. Moreover, in each sample, the STSS correlated significantly with women's levels of depression. In line with

researchers' hypotheses results revealed the lowest levels of self-silencing among college students, followed by cocaine-user mothers and battered women.

Since this seminal work by Jack and Dill in 1992, a wide range of research has documented the association of self-silencing with various personal and relational dynamics. Numerous studies indicated links between self-silencing and eating pathologies (Frank & Thomas, 2003; Piran & Cormier, 2005; Wechsler, Riggs, Stabb & Marshall, 2006; Zaitsoff, Geller & Srikrmaesworan, 2002), premenstrual distress (Perz & Ussher, 2006), poor adjustment in college settings (Haemmerlie, Montgomery, Williams, & Winborn, 2001), rejection sensitivity, poor relationship satisfaction and depressive symptomatology (Harper, Dickson, & Welsh, 2006; Harper & Welsch, 2007) as well as self-criticism and loneliness (Besser, Flett, & Davis, 2002).

A large majority of studies on self-silencing focused on the experiences of White women in primarily North American settings. One exception is a study where the researchers administered the STSS along with the BDI to both Black and White women with the goal of examining race as a potential moderator (Carr, Gilroy, & Sherman, 1996). Results suggested that while both racial groups indicated similar levels of self-silencing, the positive association between self-silencing and depression was significant only among White women. The authors' explanation for the observed pattern of results emphasized group differences in socialization, gender roles and relationships. More specifically, they argued that in the African American context, marriage and intimacy might hold different meanings while self-reliance, independence, and competence might characterize the experience of Black women to a relatively greater extent than that of White women. Of particular relevance to the phenomenon of self-silencing, the

authors suggested that Black women might endorse “voice” and “dialogue” more than White women (Carr et al., 1996).

Another study examined links between self-silencing and depression among immigrant Caribbean-Canadian women and Caribbean women living in their homeland (Ali & Toner, 2001). The findings indicated higher levels of self-silencing and depression among the immigrant sample relative to women living in their homeland. An interesting difference between the two groups concerned participants’ “dominant domain of meaning” defined as the aspect of life from which one derives primary meaning for a sense of self. While the Caribbean women reported more relational domains, the immigrant participants reported more individualistic domains as primary.

Overall, these studies highlight the important role of voice and silence in personal and relational dynamics. Parallel to the vast research demonstrating positive personal and relational correlates of higher levels of self-disclosure, the literature on self-silencing suggests that absence or inhibition of self-expression might pose risks to both personal and relational well-being. There are, however, two major caveats to such generalizations. The first concerns the over-reliance on the experience of White, primarily North American, participants in much of the research on self-silencing (similar to research on self-disclosure). As the few aforementioned studies involving different ethnic/ racial groups point out, the level (Ali & Toner, 2001) or significance (Carr et. al, 2006) of the link between self-silencing and depression might vary as a function of differences in gender roles or understandings of self and relationships across different sociocultural contexts. Hence, research must examine self-silencing and its possible link to personal or relational well-being across different settings.

The second, though related point, involves a potential limitation in the premise and empirical assessment of the self-silencing theory. In Jack's argument (2001), the underlying factor in the link between self-silencing and depression is presumed to be the devaluation of the relational self characterizing women's development in primarily North American settings which are often characterized by an emphasis on independence, autonomy and separation as healthy benchmarks of adulthood. This argument equates femininity with relatedness, hence postulating a decontextualized, homogeneous and reductionistic link between gender and self-processes, as well as between gender and depression. To my knowledge, none of the previous studies on self-silencing has actually assessed self-construal or levels of relatedness among participants.

The current study is an attempt to fill some of these apparent gaps in the literature. I examine the phenomenon of self silencing and its association to self-construals, gender stereotypes about romantic relationships, romantic relationship satisfaction and depression among women in Turkey, a setting where researchers have not examined self-silencing.

The Turkish Sociocultural Context

Traditional Turkish society has been characterized as a collectivist culture (Hofstede, 1980), placing a strong emphasis on interpersonal relationships, family integrity, loyalty, closeness and harmony in relationships (Imamoğlu, 1987; Kağıtçıbaşı, 1973, 1984). One's self and identity within such a context is often defined by social roles and group membership, in particular by family membership. However, since the 1980s, Turkey has been going through significant changes due to the shift to a free market economy and trends toward liberalization and globalization in the world (Karakitapoğlu-Aygün, 2004), thereby resulting in more Western views and individualism in Turkish people's self-construals, values and attitudes (Çileli, 2000; Imamoğlu, 1987; Kağıtçıbaşı, 1990, 1996a, 1996b); Karakitapoğlu-Aygün, 2004).

Kağıtçıbaşı (1985) indicated that Turkey has been transforming from a traditional rural and agricultural structure, characterized by patrilineal and functionally extended family organization, to an urbanized structure which includes functionally composite nuclear families. In the traditional rural context, children are expected to contribute to their family's material well-being and provide old-age security to their parents. This is referred to as *the family model of interdependence* (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1990, 1996b). This pattern is in contrast with the urban middle-class context in which children provide little or no material contributions to their families. Children's psychological value, as opposed to their economic value, becomes salient in this family context, known as *the family model of independence* (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1990, 1996b).

The different values attributed to children and the corresponding family patterns have important repercussions for childrearing and the development of self. The family model of interdependence often employs obedience-oriented parenting, which restricts the development of autonomy and independence. The emphasis is rather on intergenerational interdependence. In contrast, the family model of independence promotes independence and autonomy, and separation from the family is considered a necessary corollary of maturation.

The family model of interdependence appears to correspond with collectivistic cultures, whereas the family model of independence seems to underlie individualistic cultures (Smith, Bond, & Kağıtçıbaşı, 2006). In the case of Turkey, a traditionally collectivistic culture, socioeconomic development and urbanization have introduced significant changes in lifestyles. Material interdependencies and the economic values of children have weakened, however, connectedness and emotional interdependencies in family relations have remained (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1990, 1996b, Kağıtçıbaşı & Ataca, 2005). This emerging third pattern, referred to as *the family model of psychological interdependence*, emphasizes both relatedness and independence in the

growing child. Kağıtçıbaşı has referred to the type of self construal fostered by this family model as *the autonomous-relational self* (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1996a, 1996b, 2005)¹.

The co-existence of relatedness or interpersonal integration oriented tendencies with autonomy or intrapersonal differentiation oriented tendencies as distinct and complementary dimensions of Turkish people's self-construal has been documented by a number of recent studies (Imamoğlu, 1998; Imamoğlu & Karakitapoğlu, 2004; Karakitapoğlu-Aygün, 2004; Üskül, Hymie, & Lalonde, 2004). Particularly among more educated young people in urban contexts, both independent and interdependent orientations have emerged as integral aspects of self (Karakitapoğlu- Aygün, 2004).

With respect to gender, Turkey is in transition from traditional gender roles to egalitarian views about gender roles (Tekeli, 1995), particularly among the better-educated segments of the society (Imamoğlu & Yaşak, 1997). Traditionally, men are considered more independent, autonomous, dominant, competitive and achievement-oriented, whereas women are expected to be more (inter) dependent, relational, submissive, caring and emotional (Geis, 1993). However, a recent study with university students (Imamoğlu & Karakitapoğlu-Aygün, 2004) indicated both more individuated and more related self-construal among Turkish women than among Turkish men. These findings suggest that Turkish women might be moving in the direction of increased autonomy and individuation while maintaining their tendencies for relatedness.

The Present Study

The central argument of silencing the self theory is that women's higher depression rates relative to men reflect or result from their experiences of self-silencing in romantic relationships. The underlying factor in this link is the devaluation of women's relational self in a cultural setting where an experience of self as inherently unconnected, separate and autonomous prevails.

In contrast, Turkey has been categorized primarily as a collectivistic culture in Western literatures, which in psychological terms, corresponds to an experience of self in terms of interdependence or inherent connection. Moreover, research conducted by Turkish social scientists in recent years suggests that as Turkey is going through a rapid social change, the current sociocultural context- especially as pertaining to urban settings- reflects an amalgamation of collectivist and individualistic tendencies. As a result, contemporary theories of self in the Turkish settings depict varying levels of coexisting tendencies for autonomy (i.e. differentiation) and relatedness (i.e. integration).

Since silencing the self is conceptualized by Jack (1991) as a gender specific phenomenon, this study begins by exploring Turkish women's levels of individuation versus connectedness tendencies. I predict that women with higher levels of integration yet lower levels of differentiation will exhibit higher levels of self-silencing. In contrast, women with lower levels of integration and higher levels of differentiation should score lower on the self-silencing dimension.

Recent research has raised a number of objections to the "gender-difference" paradigm in studies of self or depression (Harter, 1999; Stoppard, 1999). One objection concerns the treatment of gender in terms of a female/male dichotomy. The other concerns the conceptualization of autonomy and relatedness as diametrically opposed and mutually exclusive constructs. Studies employing a gender difference paradigm presume all women to be interdependent or related with others and men to be generally independent and autonomous. This notion of a fundamental distinction between men and women is further held accountable for the differences in false-self behavior or depression. However, the findings of contemporary studies in Western settings (Harter et. al, 1997; Helgeson, 1994; Kirsh & Kuiper, 2002; Ryff & Keyes,

1995) have challenged the dichotomous understanding of autonomy and relatedness, or their general characterization of men and women, respectively². Furthermore, a number of studies have found no systematic gender differences in levels of voice (Harter et al., 1997), levels of autonomy versus relatedness (Ryff & Keyes, 1995) or levels of depression (Hurst & Genest, 1995). Individual differences within each gender, such as gender orientation (Harter, 1999; Hurst & Genest, 1995) or levels of autonomy and relatedness (Kirsh & Kuiper, 2002) emerge as stronger predictors of levels of depression than gender alone. In light of these criticisms, a second set of measures in this study involves participants' attitudes toward gender stereotypes about romantic relationships in order to assess women's endorsement of traditional versus egalitarian gender roles concerning romantic relationships. I expect that women who indicate agreement with statements on male assertiveness and female passivity in romantic relationships will score higher on self-silencing as opposed to women who indicate disagreement.

A third variable of interest is women's levels of romantic relationship satisfaction. Previous studies have indicated negative correlations between romantic relationship satisfaction and self-silencing (Harper & Welsch, 2007). However, a cultural psychological perspective suggests that an emphasis on intimate self-disclosure as a prerequisite for relationship satisfaction might be a product of particular cultural worlds where independent constructions of self prevail. In contrast, worlds with predominantly interdependent constructions of self might promote circumscription regarding self-disclosure, hence the absence or inhibition of self-disclosure might not be linked to relationship satisfaction. Similarly, care as self-sacrifice, which Jack (1991) conceptualizes as another dimension of self-silencing, might not pose a threat to relationship satisfaction in predominantly interdependent settings where relationships often involve mutual obligations for the provision of practical support and care. From this perspective,

one might expect the dimensions of self-silencing or care as self-sacrifice to be unrelated to relationship satisfaction in predominantly interdependent Turkish settings. The other two dimensions of Jack's self-silencing model which involve the experience of externalized self-perception and the divided self might indeed be negatively related to relationship satisfaction, as these constructs involve a more intrapersonal and negatively charged dimension of self-evaluation and efficacy. Following a similar line of thinking, I expect the dimensions of externalized self-perception and divided self to be positively associated with depression, while I predict no such links for the self-silencing and care as self-sacrifice dimensions. Finally, I expect a negative relationship between relationship satisfaction and depression.

Method

Participants

302 women ranging in age from 18 to 69 ($M = 27.2$, $SD = 8.58$) who were either currently in a romantic heterosexual relationship or had previously been in a relationship lasting at least three months participated in the study. Participants were recruited directly from various public settings and online from 19 different cities in Turkey and invited to participate in a study on romantic relationships. Of these 302 women, 76.5% of them were single, 23.2% were married and the remaining 0.3% were divorced. Participants' years of education varied from 5 to 26 years (mean = 15.68 years, $sd = 2.97$). 77.8% of the participants reported being currently in a romantic relationship, while 22.2% of them were presently not involved in a romantic relationship, but indicated having been in one lasting at least three months in the past.

Measures

Silencing the self: Participants completed the Turkish adaptation of Jack's (1991) Silencing the Self Scale (STSS) to assess their levels of self-silencing in romantic heterosexual relationships. I

translated the scale from English to Turkish as *Kendini Susturma Ölçeği* (KSÖ). In translating the scale to Turkish, I paid special attention to retaining the original meaning of the items as opposed to a verbatim replication. A Turkish bilingual scholar then back translated the Turkish version of the measure into English. In order to assess the reliability of the Turkish version, I administered the scale to a bilingual sample (N=12) consisting of graduate students at Koç University. The bilingual sample took both the Turkish and English versions of the scale, with a range of eight weeks in between. Test-retest reliability was found as 0.70. I further interviewed the twelve participants in the bilingual sample on each of the 31 items of the measure and asked to elaborate on their understanding of the items and their responses in an open-ended fashion. Based on these interviews, I revised some of the items. The scale, overall, appeared to provide a culturally and linguistically applicable instrument to assess levels of self-silencing in the Turkish context. Participants used a 5-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree) to indicate their agreement with each item (see Table 1).

Self-construal: I used Imamoğlu's (1998) *Balanced Differentiation-Integration Scale* (BID) to assess participants' self-construal. The BID is a 29-item self-report instrument in which 13 items tap individuation (e.g. "It is very important for me that I develop my potential and characteristics and be a unique person") and 16 items tap relatedness with family and others (e.g. "I believe that I will always feel close to my family"). Participants used a 7-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree to 7= strongly agree) to indicate their agreement with each item.

Romantic relationship satisfaction: I used Sakallı-Uğurlu's (2003) Romantic Relationship Satisfaction scale to assess participants' levels of satisfaction in romantic relationships. This scale consists of 9 adjectives (passionate, rewarding, full of love, satisfying, enjoyable, happy, good, exciting, content) describing key dimensions of romantic relationships. Participants rated

the extent to which each adjective described their romantic relationship overall, using a 7-point Likert scale (1=not at all to 7=very much).

Attitudes toward gender stereotypes: I used Sakallı-Uğurlu's (2003) Attitudes toward Gender Stereotypes about Romantic Relationships Scale to assess participants' attitudes toward gender stereotypes concerning romantic relationships. The scale consists of 10 items where 5 items tap attitudes toward male assertiveness (e.g. "In romantic relationships, the first step must come from the man") and 5 items tap attitudes toward female submissiveness (e.g. "A woman should not act in ways that will oppose her partner in a social setting") in romantic relationships.

Participants used a 7-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree) to indicate their agreement with each item.

Depression: I used the Turkish version of the *Beck Depression Inventory* (BDI) to assess levels of depression (Teğin, 1980). The BDI (Beck, 1967) is a 21-item checklist of depressive symptoms (e.g. sadness, guilt, insomnia, loss of appetite) and one of the most widely used depression scales to measure the intensity of depression, Participants rated each item on a 4-point scale to indicate the degree of severity of each feeling or attitude.

Procedure

Participants completed the questionnaires individually in the following order: the demographic information sheet, Balanced Differentiation-Integration Scale, Silencing the Self Scale, Romantic Relationship Satisfaction Scale, Beck Depression Inventory and Attitudes toward Romantic Relationships Scale. Upon completion of the scales, the experimenter thanked and debriefed the participants.

Analyses

I tested hypotheses using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM). Test of hypotheses required models. Because the STSS has not been validated with a Turkish sample, I first verified its factor structure with CFA using LISREL (version 8.7). Using LISREL, I then analyzed the latent correlations among the four STSS subscales, integration and differentiation as measured by the BID, the Romantic Relationship Satisfaction Scale, the two subscales from the Attitudes toward Gender Stereotypes about Romantic Relationships Scale, and the three BDI subscales. Items were parceled within each construct, with three parcels indicating each construct. I used parceling because item parcels are more likely to conform to the assumptions of CFA and SEM such as normality (Little, Cunningham, Shahar, & Widaman, 2002). I identified the constructs using the fixed factor method, allowing latent covariances to be interpretable as correlations.

The third model tested the hypothesis that integration and differentiation interact to predict self-silencing. This model was identical to the original structural model, but with an additional latent interaction term and structural paths through which integration, differentiation, and their interaction all predicted the four STSS subscales. The interaction model was run in Mplus (version 5.0) because Mplus' XWITH command can better accommodate latent variable interactions than features available in LISREL.

Results

I tested the three models in order of complexity and present the results accordingly. I first present results confirming the factor structure of the STSS, followed by the structural model and finally results from the latent interaction model.

Factor Structure of the STSS

Jack and Dill (1992) designed the STSS to tap four constructs underlying self-silencing: externalized self-perception (6 items), care as self-sacrifice (9 items), silencing the self (9 items), and divided self (7 items). I used CFA to verify the factor structure of the four subscales in a Turkish sample. Items only loaded onto their corresponding factors and items were not parceled. Parceling could potentially mask heterogeneity within individual items.

Results of the CFA indicated moderately good model fit ($\chi^2_{(428)} = 957.729, p < .001$; RMSEA = .065 (.059, .070); CFI = .909; TLI = .901; AIC = 1105.531), with a majority of the items significantly loading onto their respective constructs (see Table 1). Only the loadings for items 1 (“I think it is best to put myself first because no one else will look out for me” and 11 (“In order to feel good about myself, I need to feel independent and self-sufficient”) were not significant.

Both items belong to the Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale, which represents securing attachments by putting the needs of others before the needs of the self. Most items in this subscale emphasize integration, however the two that did not load significantly appear to emphasize differentiation. Integration and differentiation are uncorrelated (e.g., Imamoğlu & Karakitapoğlu-Aygün, 2004), indicating that they are not opposite ends of a single continuum. Because the items were neither statistically significant nor theoretically consistent with the larger construct I dropped them from all subsequent analyses as Jack and Dill (1992) recommended. I ran a CFA without these items which indicated improved model fit (AIC = 986.003).

Test of Structural Model

The second model was the structural model that included all of the study's constructs. As described above, indicators were parceled such that each construct was indicated by three parcels and latent variances were standardized to equal one.

Results from the CFA indicated good model fit ($\chi^2_{(528)} = 1228.667, p < .001$; RMSEA = .063 (.058, .068); CFI = .949; TLI = .939), but examination of the latent correlations showed that the three BDI subscales were unidimensional in this sample (all r 's < .95). Unifying the three subscales into a single depression construct did not significantly reduce model fit ($\Delta\chi^2_{(21)} = 30.373, p > .05$), and subsequent results/analyses treat items from the BDI as representing a single construct.

Table 1.

Loadings, Residuals, and R² Values for Each Indicator – CFA of the STSS

<u>Indicator</u>	<u>Loading</u> <u>(S.E.)*</u>	<u>Theta</u>	<u>R²</u>
<u>Externalized Self-Perception:</u>			
I tend to judge myself by how I think other people will see me.	0.53 (0.06)	0.69	0.31
I feel dissatisfied with myself because I should be able to do all the things people are supposed to be able to do these days.	0.50 (0.06)	0.78	0.22
When I make decisions, other people's thoughts and opinions influence me more than my own thoughts and opinions.	0.47 (0.06)	0.78	0.22
I often feel responsible for other people's feelings.	0.57 (0.06)	0.67	0.33
I find it hard to know what I think and feel because I spend a lot of time thinking about how other people are feeling.	0.65 (0.06)	0.57	0.43

I never seem to measure up to the standards I set for myself.	0.52 (0.06)	0.73	0.27
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Care as Self-Sacrifice:

Caring means putting the other person's needs in front of my own.	0.56 (0.06)	0.69	0.31
Considering my needs to be as important as those of the people I love is selfish.	0.42 (0.06)	0.82	0.18
In a close relationship, my responsibility is to make the other person happy.	0.54 (0.06)	0.71	0.29
Caring means choosing to do what the other person wants, even when I want to do something different.	0.55 (0.06)	0.69	0.31
One of the worst things I can do is to be selfish.	0.39 (0.07)	0.85	0.16
Doing things just for myself is selfish.	0.41 (0.07)	0.83	0.17
In a close relationship I don't usually care what we do, as long as the other person is happy	0.59 (0.06)	0.65	0.35

Silencing the Self:

I don't speak my feelings in an intimate relationship when I know they will cause disagreement.	0.61 (0.06)	0.63	0.38
When my partner's needs and feelings conflict with my own, I always state mine clearly.	0.46 (0.06)	0.79	0.21
Instead of risking confrontations in close relationships, I would rather not rock the boat.	0.70 (0.05)	0.51	0.49
I speak my feelings with my partner, even when it leads to problems or disagreements.	0.53 (0.05)	0.72	0.28
When my partner's needs or opinions conflict with mine, rather than asserting my own point of view, I usually end up agreeing with him/her.	0.62 (0.06)	0.62	0.38
When it looks as though certain of my needs can't be met in a relationship, I usually realize that they weren't very important anyway.	0.49 (0.06)	0.76	0.24
I rarely express my anger at those close to me.	0.31 (0.06)	0.91	0.09
I think it's better to keep my feelings to myself when they do conflict with my partner's.	0.74 (0.05)	0.46	0.54
I try to bury my feelings when I think they will cause trouble in my close relationship(s).	0.78 (0.05)	0.39	0.61

Divided Self:

I find it is harder to be myself when I am in a close relationship than when I am on my own.	0.53 (0.06)	0.72	0.28
I feel I have to act in a certain way to please my partner.	0.55 (0.06)	0.69	0.31
Often I look happy enough on the outside, but inwardly I feel angry and rebellious.	0.47 (0.06)	0.78	0.22
In order for my partner to love me, I cannot reveal certain things about myself to him/her.	0.67 (0.06)	0.55	0.45
When I am in a close relationship I lose my sense of who I am.	0.54 (0.06)	0.71	0.29
My partner loves and appreciates me for who I am.	0.42 (0.06)	0.82	0.18
I feel that my partner does not know my real self.	0.58 (0.06)	0.66	0.34

* Estimated and standardized loadings were equivalent because latent variances were fixed to 1.0.

The model was re-tested with a solitary depression construct and showed good model fit ($\chi^2_{(549)} = 1259.040, p < .001$; RMSEA = .062 (.057, .067); CFI = .948; TLI = .941). All indicators loaded significantly onto their respective constructs in this model (see Table 2). Because the latent constructs were standardized to have variances of one, the latent covariances from this model can be interpreted as correlations and used to test several hypotheses regarding the data. Correlations are provided in Table 3.

I hypothesized that women who agree with statements expressing male assertiveness and female passivity in romantic relationships would show higher levels of self-silencing than women who disagree with these statements. Results support this hypothesis. Endorsement of male assertiveness was positively correlated with three of the STSS subscales, and endorsement of female passivity was positively correlated with all four STSS subscales. Only the correlation between externalized self perception and male assertiveness was not significant.

With regards to the links between self-silencing and romantic relationship satisfaction, I hypothesized that the dimensions of self-silencing or care as self-sacrifice would not be related to relationship satisfaction, while the dimensions of externalized self-perception and the divided self would negatively correlate with relationship satisfaction. Results confirm these hypotheses. The correlations between self-silencing and depression were similar to the relationship between self-silencing and relationship satisfaction (albeit reversed). Externalized self-perception and the divided self were positively correlated with depression while care as self-sacrifice and silencing the self were not significantly correlated with depression.

Table 2.

Loadings, Residuals, and R² Values for Each Indicator – Full CFA

<u>Indicator</u>	<u>Loading (S.E.)*</u>	<u>Theta</u>	<u>R²</u>
<u>Externalized Self-Perception:</u>			
Parcel 1	0.72 (0.06)	0.49	0.51
Parcel 2	0.67 (0.06)	0.55	0.45
Parcel 3	0.66 (0.06)	0.56	0.44
<u>Care as Self-Sacrifice:</u>			
Parcel 1	0.68 (0.06)	0.54	0.46
Parcel 2	0.62 (0.06)	0.61	0.39
Parcel 3	0.60 (0.06)	0.64	0.37
<u>Silencing the Self:</u>			
Parcel 1	0.76 (0.05)	0.42	0.58
Parcel 2	0.84 (0.05)	0.30	0.71
Parcel 3	0.74 (0.05)	0.45	0.55
<u>The Divided Self:</u>			
Parcel 1	0.73 (0.05)	0.47	0.53
Parcel 2	0.69 (0.06)	0.53	0.47
Parcel 3	0.57 (0.06)	0.67	0.33

Integration:

Parcel 1	0.81 (0.05)	0.35	0.65
Parcel 2	0.74 (0.05)	0.46	0.54
Parcel 3	0.81 (0.05)	0.34	0.66

Differentiation:

Parcel 1	0.79 (0.05)	0.37	0.63
Parcel 2	0.90 (0.05)	0.19	0.81
Parcel 3	0.78 (0.05)	0.39	0.62

Relationship Satisfaction:

Parcel 1	0.90 (0.05)	0.19	0.81
Parcel 2	0.83 (0.05)	0.31	0.69
Parcel 3	0.60 (0.06)	0.64	0.36

Depression (BDI):

Cognitive 1	0.86 (0.05)	0.26	0.74
Cognitive 2	0.78 (0.05)	0.40	0.60
Cognitive 3	0.86 (0.05)	0.26	0.74
Affect 1	0.85 (0.05)	0.29	0.71
Affect 2	0.68 (0.05)	0.54	0.46
Affect 3	0.74 (0.05)	0.46	0.54
Somatic 1	0.65 (0.05)	0.58	0.42
Somatic 2	0.74 (0.05)	0.45	0.55
Somatic 3	0.71 (0.05)	0.49	0.51

Female Submissiveness:

Parcel 1	0.68 (0.06)	0.53	0.47
Parcel 2	0.68 (0.06)	0.54	0.46
Parcel 3	0.60 (0.06)	0.64	0.36

Male Dominance:

Parcel 1	0.83 (0.05)	0.30	0.70
Parcel 2	0.86 (0.05)	0.26	0.74
Parcel 3	0.74 (0.05)	0.45	0.55

Table 3

Latent Correlations – Full CFA

	External RelSat	Care BDI	Silence FSub	Divide MDom	Integrate	Differ	
External	1.00						
Care	0.45 ^{***}	1.00					
Silence	0.59 ^{***}	0.56 ^{***}	1.00				
Divide	0.67 ^{***}	0.41 ^{***}	0.71 ^{***}	1.00			
Integrate	-0.46 ^{***}	-0.45 ^{***}	-0.48 ^{***}	-0.33 ^{***}	1.00		
Differ	-0.30 ^{***}	-0.03	-0.21 ^{**}	-0.52 ^{***}	-0.08	1.00	
RelSat	-0.14 [*]	0.05	-0.06	-0.51 ^{***}	-0.09	0.32 ^{***}	
BDI	0.22 ^{***}	-0.05	0.05	0.19 ^{**}	0.18 ^{**}	-0.26 ^{***}	-
FSub	0.23 ^{**}	0.56 ^{***}	0.43 ^{***}	0.38 ^{***}	-0.62 ^{***}	-0.02	
MDom	0.13	0.39 ^{***}	0.39 ^{***}	0.33 ^{***}	-0.51 ^{***}	0.09	-
	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00			
	0.01	-0.27 ^{***}	1.00				
	0.03	.85 ^{***}	1.00				
	-0.22 ^{***}						

Correlations for Externalized Self-Perceptions (External), Care as Self Sacrifice (Care), Silencing the Self (Silence), the Divided Self (Divide), Integration (Integrate), Differentiation (Differ), Relationship Satisfaction (RelSat), Depression (BDI), Female Submission (FSub), and Male Dominance (MDom)

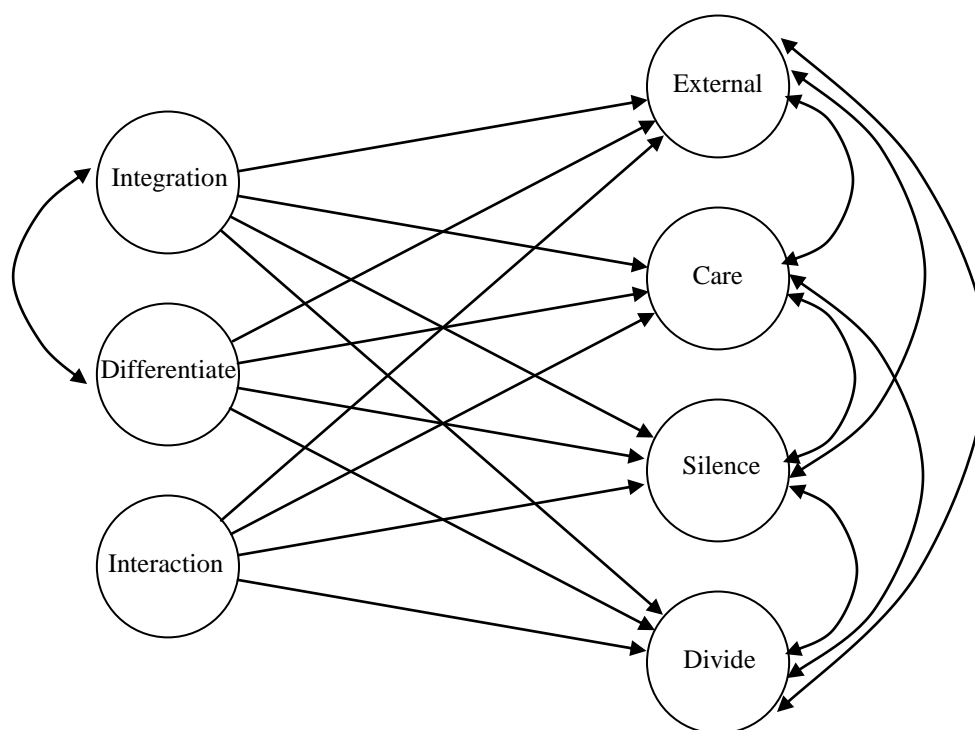
* $p < .05$
 ** $p < .01$
 *** $p < .001$

Latent Interaction

The third and final model tested whether integration and differentiation interact to predict self-silencing. I based this model on the previously described structural model, but with two changes – I included an interaction term and regressed the self silencing constructs on integration, differentiation, and their interaction (see Figure 1). Results indicated that integration and differentiation negatively predicted self-silencing, but that their interaction was not significant. Table 4 provides the unstandardized regression coefficients for this model because standardized values are not available when testing interactions using Mplus' XWITH command. I provide standard errors to facilitate interpretation.

Figure 1

Structural Component of the Interaction Model



*Table 4**Predicting Self-Silencing – Interaction Model*

Subscale	Integration	Differentiation	Interaction
External	-0.24 (0.053)**	-0.40 (0.06)**	0.07 (0.07)
Care	-0.05 (0.06)	-0.36 (0.07)**	0.05 (0.10)
Silence	-0.19 (0.06)*	-0.42 (0.07)**	0.12 (0.12)
Divide	-0.40 (0.07)**	-0.32 (0.07)**	0.05 (0.09)

Integration, Differentiation, and their interaction predicting Externalized Self-Perceptions (External), Care as Self Sacrifice (Care), Silencing the Self (Silence), the Divided Self (Divide)

* $p < .01$

** $p < .001$

Discussion

As an initial attempt at a systematic analysis of Turkish women's self-silencing in romantic heterosexual relationships and its links to women's personal and relational well-being, this study yielded multiple interesting findings. To begin, I adapted and validated the Turkish version of the STSS. Results indicated a moderately good fit where majority of the items on the scale loaded onto their respective constructs. This finding suggests that the Turkish version of the STSS is congruent with Jack & Dill's (1992) model, hence may be incorporated in future research involving Turkish samples.

As silencing the self theory assumes women's relational self to underlie the phenomenon of self-silencing and its links to depression and since previous studies to our knowledge have not actually assessed levels of relatedness, I began the study by exploring participants' levels of independence versus interdependence. I predicted

that the tendencies of integration and differentiation would interact such that women with higher levels of integration yet lower levels of differentiation would exhibit higher levels of self-silencing. In contrast, I expected women with lower levels of integration and higher levels of differentiation to score lower on the self-silencing dimension. Results provided partial support for these hypotheses. I observed no evidence for the expected interaction between integration and differentiation. Moreover, I found that both integration and differentiation dimensions of self-construal negatively predicted self-silencing among participants. This finding presents a stark contrast to the findings of previous studies in North American settings, which associate higher levels of self-silencing among women with high levels of integration and low levels of differentiation.

One possible explanation for this apparent difference might be due to differences in prevailing experiences of self. As I previously noted, recent research among Turkish as well as international scholars has indicated autonomy or differentiation and relatedness or integration as two qualitatively distinct and complementary orientations of the self, the balanced co-existence of which promotes health and well-being not only in collectivistic, but also in individualistic settings (Chirkov, Kim, Ryan, & Kaplan, 2003; Grossman, Grossman, & Zimmerman, 1999; Imamoğlu, 1987, 1998; Kağıtçıbaşı, 2005; Ng, Ho, Wong, & Smith, 2003). Moreover, a recent study with university students indicated both more individuated and more related self-construal among Turkish women than among Turkish men (Imamoğlu & Karakitapoğlu-Aygün, 2004). These findings suggest that Turkish women might be moving in the direction of increased autonomy and individuation

while maintaining their tendencies for relatedness. In light of this research, high levels of both integration and differentiation among Turkish women – to the extent that the co-existence of these tendencies promotes health and well-being – might serve as a buffer against the potentially hazardous experience of self-silencing.

A second set of hypotheses involved the role of attitudes toward gender role stereotypes in romantic relationships. I expected women endorsing stereotypes about male assertiveness and female passivity in romantic relationships to score higher on self-silencing as opposed to women who indicating disagreement with either dimension. Results confirmed these hypotheses, drawing attention to the role of gender role orientation as an important correlate of self-silencing. This finding is congruent with Jack's assertion that conforming to traditional gender roles might render women more likely to self-silence in romantic relationships. In addition, this finding suggests that rather than being a gendered phenomenon pertaining to all women, self-silencing might instead characterize the experience of women endorsing a traditional gender role ideology in romantic relationships.

The final set of questions concerned potential links between self-silencing, romantic relationship satisfaction and depression. As predicted, romantic relationship satisfaction was negatively correlated with depression, a finding that is congruent with previous research. However, the link between romantic relationship satisfaction and self-silencing yielded mixed results. Despite the findings of existing literature which suggests negative correlations between romantic relationship satisfaction and self-silencing, a cultural psychological perspective proposes that an emphasis on self-disclosure as a marker of relationship satisfaction may not necessarily hold true in

cultural worlds of interdependence. Hence, although I expected the dimensions of externalized self-perception and divided self to act in the ways proposed by Jack (i.e. negative correlations with romantic relationship satisfaction), I hypothesized that the self-silencing and care as self-sacrifice dimensions of Jack's (1991) model might not correlate with romantic relationship satisfaction in my sample. Moreover, I expected similar (albeit reversed) patterns of associations between these two sets of self-silencing dimensions and depression. Results confirmed these hypotheses, suggesting that Turkish women with higher levels of externalized self-perception and divided self indeed reported less satisfaction and higher depression compared to women scoring lower on either dimension. In contrast, I found no evidence for a link between the other two dimensions-self silencing and care as self-sacrifice- and romantic relationship satisfaction or depression.

The observed pattern of results deviates from previous studies on self-silencing conducted in North American settings. The externalized self perception and divided self dimensions of the phenomenon of silencing the self might capture an intrapersonal aspect of self – hence diminishing both personal and relational well-being in a comparable fashion across North American and Turkish settings – while the dimensions of self-silencing (as the inhibition or suppression of self-disclosure) and care as self-sacrifice dimensions might tap a more relational and sociocultural tendency – yielding a pattern that differs from the one observed in North American settings. The lack of associations between self-silencing and care as self-sacrifice dimensions with either romantic relationship satisfaction or depression might suggest that in Turkish settings, self-silencing or self-sacrifice may be less threatening for

women's personal and relational well-being. One possible explanation might be due to silence or sacrifice being more normative among Turkish women, hence impairing their psychological functioning to a lesser extent compared to women in North American settings. A second explanation would suggest that the implications of silence for the experience of personal or relational well-being may be less damaging in sociocultural worlds of interdependence, in line with a cultural perspective. Additional studies are required to examine both possibilities.

Limitations and future directions

As an initial test of self-silencing in the Turkish context, this study has several limitations which constitute new directions for future research. One limitation is the correlational nature of the findings. In order to arrive at a causal understanding of self-silencing in romantic relationships, future research would benefit from incorporating experimental procedures. One possible idea might be to prime participants with interdependent or independent self-construal prior to an assessment of their levels of self-silencing. Another possibility involves experimentally manipulating participants' access to self-disclosure versus silencing and examining the potential impact of the manipulation on their reports of personal and relational well-being. Similarly, the phenomenon of self-silencing implies a relational process, which is likely to vary as a function of relationship quality, type or duration. Future studies would greatly benefit from assessing self-silencing and its possible outcomes for personal and relational well-being in a developmental design not only in the context of romantic relationships, but in other close relationships (e.g. family or friendship) as well.

Another limitation of the study concerns the assessment of self-silencing. This phenomenon might not be easily available to introspection, hence self-reports might not be appropriate instruments. Future studies might employ behavioral or observational assessments to overcome this potential weakness. A third set of limitations concerns the sample I employed in this study. While I recruited participants from diverse settings in Turkey, the women in my sample came from relatively affluent, urban settings and had high levels of education which might be associated with their self-construal, relationship quality and overall well-being. In order to ascertain the generalizability of the findings of this study, additional studies which examine the experience of women from rural settings where educational levels among women might be particularly low and the associated experiences of self-construal might vary.

Finally, this study is silent with respect to the different meanings and values that might be ascribed to voice and silence in the Turkish sociocultural context. This issue poses a number of interesting questions that future research might pursue: What are the different functions of talking, in particular self-disclosure, and silence in the Turkish context? What do Turkish people disclose or keep silent about, and to whom? These questions require qualitative data and analyses to arrive at a more local understanding of what self-silencing might actually mean in the Turkish context.

Conclusion

Previous research has not considered the phenomenon of self-silencing and its implications for personal and relational functioning in Turkish settings. This study constitutes a first attempt at a systematic analysis of Turkish women's silence.. The

study further contributes to the international literature on self-processes and psychological functioning by outlining a model of self-silencing in a non-Western context. In this sense, the study gives voice to several silences within mainstream psychology, which is too often characterized by an Anglo-Saxon, White, middle-class (Espin, 1993) and androcentric (Bem, 1993) perspective. Such a viewpoint privileges some realities, while suppressing or marginalizing others. One major and much disputed silence within this perspective concerns the under or misrepresentation of the female experience (Hegarthy & Buechel, 2006; Gilligan, 1993; Espin, 1993; Lykes, 1985; Joseph & Lewis, 1981).

Another less salient yet equally significant silence is the devaluation of silence itself as a worthy subject of scientific study. Given the meanings attributed to speech and silence within primarily Western or North American contexts, studies on the self, too, tend to focus on what is disclosed or reported about the self, as opposed to what is hidden or silent. By foregrounding the role of silence in self processes, and focusing on women's silence in particular, the present study highlights the necessity of incorporating women's experiences as well as silent/ silenced aspects into the study of the self.

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Footnotes

¹ The autonomous-relational self-construal involves the co-existence of autonomy and connectedness as two distinct dimensions of the self, in contrast to the Western unidimensional bipolarity conceptualization. Several researchers have supported the view that autonomy or individuation and relatedness are qualitatively distinct and complementary orientations (Imamoğlu, 1987, 1998; Ng, Ho, Wong, & Smith, 2003). Cross-cultural research suggests that the autonomous-relational self construal is associated with health and well-being not only in collectivistic cultures, but also in individualistic cultures like the USA (Chirkov, Kim, Ryan, & Kaplan, 2003) or Germany (Grossman, Grossman, & Zimmerman, 1999).

² Some researchers in non-Western contexts have argued that what is conceptualized as a gender difference in self processes with regard to autonomy and relatedness in fact reflects cultural differences among individualistic and collectivistic cultures (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1990; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Singelis, 1994; Triandis, 1995). Markus & Kitayama (1991) and Singelis (1994) have proposed the independent and interdependent self construals which characterize a focus on autonomy and separateness or a focus on relationships and connectedness, respectively. Implicit in these models as well as Triandis' classification of individualism and collectivism is an understanding of autonomy and relatedness as bipolar opposites on a single dimension. More recently, Kağıtçıbaşı (1996a) and Imamoğlu (1998) have developed the autonomous-related self and balanced differentiation and integration models which conceptualize autonomy and relatedness as distinct dimensions of the self, the

balanced amalgamation of which are believed to result in optimal psychological functioning and mental health.