

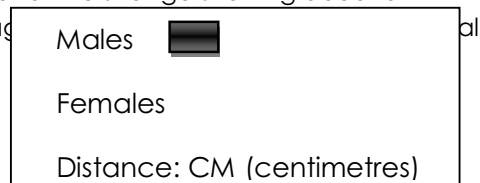
The introduction

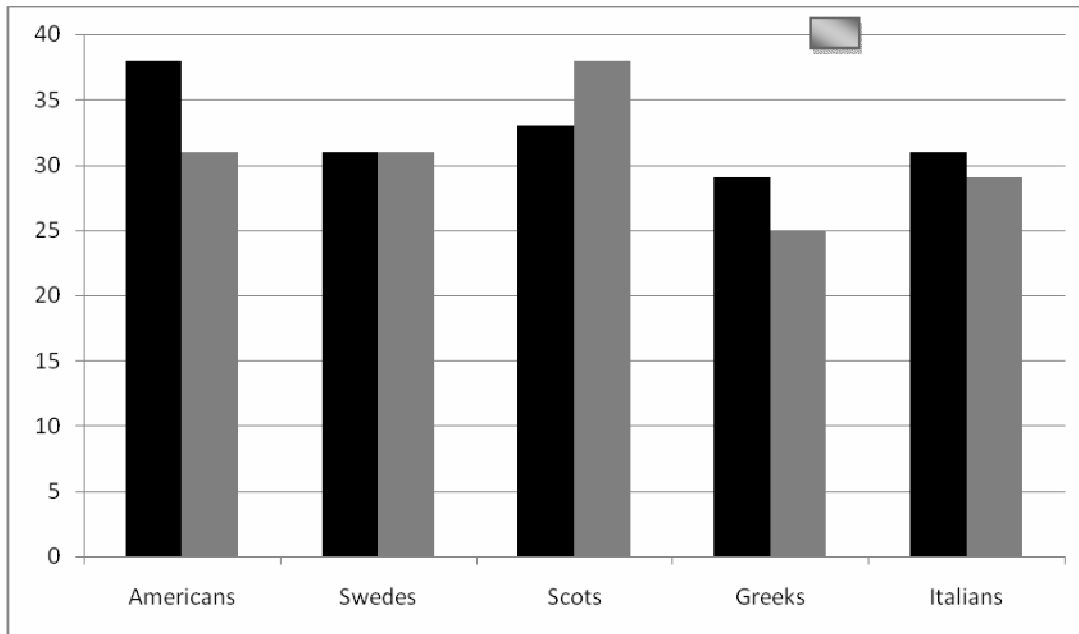
The aim of my coursework is to investigate gender differences in the amount of personal space people need.

Personal space is described as an invisible bubble that surrounds us. And that it changes shape and size depending on where we are and who we are with. Defensible space is described as a physical space that surrounds us and you want to protect it. Gender is the difference between sexes. Method is what happens in the experiment. Aim is what you hope to find in the experiment. Findings are what they find out in the experiment and conclusion is a summary of what has happened.

I am now going to describe 2 studies and a theory into personal space. I will start with a theory from Bell (1996). "Thus personal space is like a bubble. It changes shape depending on the situation we find our self's in", Bell defined personal space as a portable, invisible boundary surrounding us, into which others may not trespass. It regulates how closely we interact with others. It moves with and expands and contracts according to the situation in which we find our self's in. One study I am going to talk about Middlemist (1976). The aim of his study was to see what effects personal space had in a men's public toilet. They place 2 men at a time in different situations and measured how long it took for them to urinate. They found out that the closer the men are together, the longer it takes for them to start to urinate and less time to complete. The conclusion to that was that the more personal space invaded the more effect it has on a man's bladder. There are some criticisms. One of them is that they did not give consent to go ahead with the experiment.

Another study I will be talking about is Little (1968). He examined cultural differences over 19 different social situations in a sample of Americans, Swedes, Greeks, Italians and Scots. They had to place dolls at distances that reflected where they would stand in real social situations. The situations they had to assess included two good friends talking about a pleasant topic, a shop owner discussing the weather with his assistant, and two strangers talking about an unpleasant topic. Below is a figure showing the average distances in different social situations:





The results chart shows that women have a smaller personal space than men, and that the nationality that has the smallest personal space is the Scots.

My hypothesis is that women have a smaller personal space than men. The studies I have looked at so far agree with my hypothesis. My hypothesis is a directional hypothesis; this is because I am predicting that women have a smaller personal space than men.

The Method

I am going to use Questionnaires as my method to look and collect information at personal space; this is the best method for me because I can collect large amounts of information and analyse the data easily because I need to put these results in my coursework. A method that would not have worked was a longitudinal study, this is because I would only have a couple of weeks to complete my study, which is not enough time for a longitudinal study.

The independent variable for me is gender, so it will be operationalised as 1= male and 2= female. My dependent variable is personal space and I will be measuring it through questionnaires.

The materials I will be using are participants and a questionnaire. The participants I will be using are 5 boys and 5 girls from school, the 5 boys and girls will be in sixth form, and will be over 16 so I will not require a letter of consent from their parents. They will have to fill the questionnaire in tutor period, so they have time to complete it within school hours. I found the participants within school. I will be using 10 people all together, 5 boys and 5 girls and from 6th form. All these are friends of mine and are willing to participate. I needed to find them because they did not know about this questionnaire.

<u>Ethical Guideline</u>	<u>How my study followed the guideline.</u>
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Consent	My study consists of participants over the age of sixteen. Therefore I do not need to ask for consent of their parents/guardians. However I needed consent from them, which I asked in my speech, shown below
Deception	I made it perfectly clear that the participant in my experiment was aware of what they were doing.
Withdrawal	The participants can leave the experiment at any time they wish to, this was stated in my speech.
Protection	The participants must be safe at all times and not do anything illegal, or anything they don't want to do. I made sure that my questions were not breaching any ethical guidelines as my teacher read through them and corrected it.
Confidentiality	I will not be asking for the names, age or where they live. And I will not share out my results with anyone else, also stated below in my speech.

I had to create a speech to inform the participants of what was going on. Here is my speech:

I am a GCSE psychology student currently completing a personal space questionnaire and was wondering if you will be willing to take part. All information will be anonymous and will not be shared with anyone else. It will take approximately 2/3 minutes to complete and will consist of you ticking a box on the questionnaire. The questionnaire will have questions about different situations and moods and how close would you like certain people in. You have the right to withdraw from the questionnaire at any time you wish to. The information will be used in my psychology coursework.

A step by step guide was created to show another experimenter exactly what I did :

- First decide what group of people you would like to experiment
- Decide on some questions and create some questionnaires for participants to fill out
- Then create a speech, such as mine stated above, telling the participants who you are what you are wanting to do
- Then find the area which you want to ask people your questionnaire
- After you find someone, tell them your speech, if they say no then just leave them, if they say yes give them a questionnaire to fill out.

The Discussion

After analysing my results I found out that females have a smaller personal space than males. I asked how they would react around certain people in different situations.

The first question I asked was 'In an upset situation, how close would you let your mum near you?' My results show that all the females I asked said they didn't mind their mums to touch them; one male said that he would prefer his mum to be 3 metres away. This shows that females have a smaller personal space than males in this situation.

The second question I asked was 'How close would you let your sibling in a normal situation?' I found out that 2 males do not mind siblings touching them and only 1 female preferred their sibling to touch them. My results show that most females prefer to have some distance to their siblings. The next question I asked was about a stranger that they had met in town, most of the participants said they would prefer to be at least 1 metre away. I asked another question on the same topic about strangers, I asked how close they would let a homeless person near you. Most people said they would like a lot of distance between them. A brief conclusion to these questions is that most people prefer strangers to be at a distance, males more than females.

The 5th question I asked was 'How close would you let your best friend near you when you are angry?' my results show that about half of the participants would prefer them not to touch them. The last question I asked was ; how close would you let a waiter near you? The results show that most of the males would want them at a distance, and females would prefer them at the same distance.

My results agree with my hypothesis because I asked does gender effect personal space, my results show that males have a bigger personal space than females, showing that gender does affect personal space.

There was no problem in collecting participants, requiring materials and asking the questions . One advantage of my experiment was my way of collecting the information worked well and I was able to analyse the information and produce a table very easily. If I could do this experiment again I would like to have more money, go out into the public and perform my experiment to the public, and not just from one social group and I would have 100+ people rather than 10 people, resulting in me receiving a large amount of data from a wide variety of people.

The majority of my results matched my background research; all of my questions asked gave the results that woman have a bigger personal space than men, apart from one, question two which gave me the answer that men have a bigger personal space than woman.