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Relational Mobility and Self-Disclosure in the Post-Pandemic Era: A Cross-Cultural Replication Study

Relational mobility, a socioecological variable, reflects the degree to which individuals in a society have opportunities to form new relationships and leave old ones. Previous research suggests that higher levels of relational mobility are associated with greater self-disclosure as an adaptive strategy to maintain valuable social ties. However, the advent of COVID-19 pandemic has significantly altered social dynamics, which has potentially reshaped relational mobility and interpersonal behaviors through emerging social norms implemented during the pandemic. The present study aims to: (a) replicate the findings of Schug et al. (2010) on the relationship between relational mobility and self-disclosure to close friends in Japan and the US; (b) investigate whether the post-pandemic social environment has influenced the association between relational mobility and self-disclosure. We will employ a 2×2 between-subjects design with college students from Japan and the US. Participants will complete validated scales measuring perceived relational mobility, self-disclosure tendencies toward close friends, and subjective closeness to their best friend. We aim to replicate the main effects of country and gender on self-disclosure. An additional mediation analysis will be conducted to test whether relational mobility mediates the cultural differences in self-disclosure. By using larger samples in the post-COVID era, this replication study will provide insights into the dynamics of relational mobility and self-disclosure across cultures. Findings will contribute to the refinement of socioecological theories and offer new perspectives on how infectious diseases reshape social norms and behaviors.

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