

## **Turkish User and Toilet Culture: Understanding User Experience and the Perception of Cleanliness in Public Toilets**

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Toilet culture and the perception of cleanliness in Turkey are not only shaped by Islamic practices but also by the desire of westernization and modernization. By the introduction of water closet in the first half of 20th century, western ideas of hygiene and comfort were imported as well. Although the squat type toilets are replaced by their western successors in urban houses, the dilemma of squatting or sitting still exists in public space. Seen from this aspect, Turkish people represent a unique user profile.

The aim of the study is to identify the user behavior and experience in public toilets and to develop an understanding about the conception of hygiene in terms of public toilet use within the Turkish cultural context. The main focus of the research is considering the cultural and psychological aspects of public toilets and approaching the toilet not only as a functional object itself, but also as a cultural instrument charged with meanings. Because there are a number of challenges with the research methodology due to the highly private and sensitive nature of the research subject, “cultural probes” and semi-structured interviews are used to understand the users’ perspective. Understanding the user behavior will contribute not only to the academic discourse but also to the design practice of ceramic sanitaryware which is a massive industry in Turkey.

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