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**Preferred Responses When Honor is at Stake: The Role of Cultural Background, Presence of Others, and Causality Orientation**

Short title: *RESPONSES TO HONOR THREATS*

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### Abstract

This study examined the factors that are likely to be associated with preferred behavioral and emotional responses to honor threatening situations and possible differences between a dignity culture (U.K.) and an honor culture (TR). We examined the role of cultural background, type of social setting, and participants' causality orientation in preferred emotional and behavioral responses to honor threatening situations. We first found that Turkish participants reported significantly higher levels of negative emotional response compared to British participants in the false accusation (not humiliation) scenario and in the public (not private) setting. Second, we found that TR participants reported a higher preference for retaliatory responses than did British participants when they imagined themselves being humiliated by one of their peers. Third, autonomy-oriented participants in the Turkish sample reported significantly higher levels of negative feeling (but not higher retaliatory intentions) compared with autonomy-oriented participants in the British sample; whereas controlled-oriented participants in the Turkish sample tended to report lower levels of negative feeling compared with controlled-oriented participants in the British sample. This interaction effect suggests that controlled and autonomy orientations may serve different functions in the Turkish and British settings.

*Keywords:* honor, dignity, controlled-orientation, autonomy-orientation, motivation, public vs. private setting

Imagine being humiliated or falsely accused of theft by one of your peers. How would being subjected to these situations make you feel and respond? Would you experience negative emotions and think of responding in retaliatory ways? Now add to these images other individuals who witness you being humiliated or falsely accused. Would this change how you feel and

respond? If yes, what factors would play a role in shaping your emotional and behavioral reactions?

How a person will emotionally and behaviorally respond to a threatening situation such as when they are falsely accused of conducting an immoral act or humiliated by others are likely to be shaped by various factors. One factor that has received increasing attention in the literature is individuals' cultural background. Research has shown that members of cultural groups in which a person's worth and status is likely to be shaped by others' positive or negative evaluations of them and that put a great emphasis on maintenance of positive social image (i.e., in honor cultures) may experience higher levels of negative emotions (e.g., anger) and choose to act in more retaliatory ways when faced with situations threatening their honor than members of cultural groups where a person's worth and status relies less on others' evaluations (i.e., dignity cultures) (e.g., Beersma et al., 2003; Cohen et al., 1996; Cross et al., 2013). In the current research, we build on this literature to examine emotional and behavioral responses of members of an honor (Turkey) and dignity (the U.K.) cultural group to situations involving false accusation or humiliation that can lead to one's honor being threatened and extend it by investigating the role of culture in conjunction with the role of audience in situations and individuals' dispositional causality orientation.

As stated in CuPS (Culture x Person x Situation) approach (Leung & Cohen, 2011), consideration of within-culture variation (in addition to between-culture variation) as well as situational characteristics is important in explaining psychological responses to situations. Following this approach, (in addition to the role of *cultural background*) we test the role of autonomy and control causality orientations in how individuals emotionally and behaviorally respond to honor-threatening situations focusing on the tenets of the Causality Orientations

Theory (a sub-theory of Self Determination Theory; Deci & Ryan, 1985) (*person*), as well as the role of the presence and absence of other individuals in honor-threatening situations (*situation*) in responses to these situations.

### **Cultures of Honor and Dignity**

Previous research has revealed a number of differences between honor and dignity cultures including how honor is understood (e.g., Cross et al., 2014; Rodriguez Mosquera et al., 2002a) and experienced (e.g., Uskul et al., 2012). In honor cultures, honor is described as “the value of a person in his own eyes, but also in the eyes of his society” (Pitt-Rivers, 1965, p. 21), highlighting the significant role of social image in a person’s worth, whereas in dignity cultures, honor is related to one’s own values, worth, principles, and moral standards rather than their social status (Ayers, 1984). Since honor is guided by others’ evaluations in honor cultures, it can be easily lost, unlike in dignity cultures where the honor is stable and inherent (Stewart, 1994).

Turkey has been considered to exhibit characteristics considered to be typical of cultures of honor, where individuals have been shown to put strong emphasis on being an honorable person and behaving in honorable ways to secure a positive reputation in their own and others’ eyes (e.g., Bagli & Sever, 2003; Kardam, 2005; Mojab & Abdo, 2004, for a review see Uskul & Cross, 2019). Similar tendencies have been observed in other cultural groups (e.g., other Mediterranean countries, the Arab world, South America), where honor is a powerful motive that shapes social behavior (for reviews see Uskul et al., 2019; Cross & Uskul, in press).

Western Europe and North America are regarded as exhibiting characteristics considered typical of dignity cultures (Leung & Cohen, 2011). Members of these cultures tend to view honor as personal property (Uskul et al., 2012). Although the overwhelming evidence in the comparative honor literature includes studies conducted in northern US as exemplifying dignity

cultural contexts, there is growing evidence from other regions of the world, such as Western Europe. For example, recent studies have shown that, in comparisons with honor cultures, majority culture members of the British society exhibit characteristics of a dignity culture (e.g., Guerra et al., 2013; Gul & Schuster, 2020; Gul & Uskul, 2019; Maitner et al., 2017) where honor is viewed as more internal, less fragile, and resistant to external factors, unlikely to be lost or gained by others' evaluations (Ayers, 1984).

Relevant to the current research, past studies have shown that members of honor and dignity cultural groups tend to respond differently (emotionally and behaviorally) to honor relevant situations (e.g., honor threatening and honor enhancing situations) (e.g., Cohen et al., 1996; Rodriguez Mosquera et al., 2002b; Rodriguez Mosquera et al., 2008; Uskul et al., 2014; Vandello et al., 2009). In honor cultures, people are expected to have an honorable reputation and when their honor is threatened, they are required to be willing to retaliate and to behave aggressively to maintain their honor. Research on behavioral responses to honor threatening situations suggests that people from honor cultures respond more strongly (and sometimes aggressively) to threats to their honor than do people from dignity cultures, because such threats can lead to loss in reputation and status and consequently damage one's social image (e.g., Cohen, 1998; Nisbett & Cohen, 1996; Uskul et al., 2012; Van Osch et al., 2013). Moreover, research revealed that in honor cultures honor-threatening events are guided with strong emotional responses, in particular anger, frustration, and resentment (Cohen et al., 1996; Rodriguez Mosquera et al., 2002a), which have been identified as emotions that prepare individuals for retaliation against the attacker as a way of restoring honor. Based on this past comparative research, we predicted differences between Turkish and British samples in how they would respond to honor threatening situations, such that participants from Turkey would (a) feel

more negatively and (b) think of responding in a more retaliatory way when falsely accused or humiliated than would participants from the U.K.

### **The Role of Causal Orientation Theory (COT)**

An individual difference variable that has so far not examined within the literature on cultures of honor, which is likely to shape responses to honor threatening events, is dispositional motivational orientations. The COT distinguishes between an *autonomy-orientation* in which behaviors are motivated by internalized self-regulation with high degrees of volition and choice, and a *controlled-orientation* in which behaviors are motivated by internal and/or external pressures such as gaining rewards, approval, and a favorable impression onto others. *Controlled-orientation* has been shown to correlate with behaviors such as cheating on an exam, plagiarism, and antisocial behaviors such as vandalism (McHoskey, 1999), intimate partner violence perpetration (Hove et al., 2010), and higher prejudice toward outgroups (e.g., Duriez, 2011; Fousiani et al., 2016). Furthermore, individuals with high controlled-orientation tend to be more hostile, defensive, vulnerable to peer effect (Deci, & Ryan, 1985; Neighbors et al., 2008) and emotionally reactive (Koestner & Losier, 1996) compared with individuals with low controlled-orientation. *Autonomy-orientation* has been found to correlate with characteristics such as flexibility, creative thinking (Deci & Ryan, 1987), an internal sense of right and wrong (Neighbors et al., 2008), prosocial behavior (Gagné, 2003), initiative-taking approach and psychological freedom (Knee & Zuckerman, 1996), and constructive lifestyle changes (Williams et al., 2005).

A study designed to examine reputation (a concept closely related to honor) demonstrated that individuals with high controlled-orientation attached more importance to the protection of their reputation compared to those with low controlled-orientation (Hodgins et al., 1996). In a

similar vein, Deci and Ryan (1985) found a strong positive relationship between controlled-orientation and sensitivity toward others' evaluations. Furthermore, individuals with high autonomy-orientation were found to be less open to environmental influences than individuals with low autonomy-orientation (Neighbors et al., 2008).

Also relevant to the current context, examining the relationship between self-determination and impression management, Lewis and Neighbors (2005) found that individuals who were higher (vs. lower) in autonomy-orientation used less (vs. more) self-presentation, and those who were higher (vs. lower) in controlled-orientation engaged in more (vs. less) self-presentation to bolster self-image. Moreover, they demonstrated that controlled-orientation was associated positively with greater use of intimidation (i.e., one of the self-presentation strategies, which occurs “when individuals project their power or ability to punish to be viewed as dangerous and powerful” [p. 470], Jones & Pittman, 1982). Research also showed that individuals with high autonomy-orientation were likely to be less defensive in their social interaction compared with those with low autonomy-orientation (Hodgins & Knee, 2002).

Because individuals with *controlled-orientation* are likely to be extrinsically motivated (driven by external incentives and sanctions), their responses to situations are likely to be shaped by external factors (e.g., being accepted and approved by others) (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Because others' approval would be difficult to secure but easy to lose, individuals with controlled orientation tend to use increased effort to regulate their actions (Nguyen & Neighbors, 2013). However, since their decisions how to act is guided by external factors, they feel less control in their behaviors. This tension can lead controlled-orientation individuals act in negative ways such as responding aggressively (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Building on these past findings, we predicted that controlled-orientation (but not autonomy-orientation) would be associated

positively with more (a) negative emotional and (b) retaliatory responses when faced with false accusation and humiliation. In addition, we examined whether causality orientation interacted with cultural background to test the prediction that members of an honor culture who are controlled-oriented would respond more (a) negatively emotionally and (b) retaliatory behaviorally compared with all other groups.

### **The role of social setting**

Another variable expected to play a role in emotional and behavioral responses to honor-threatening situations is the presence or absence of other individuals witnessing an honor threat directed to an individual. A limited number of studies that examined the role of public versus private nature of the setting in responses to honor relevant situations (e.g., Cohen et al., 1996; Uskul et al., 2015) have not revealed conclusive evidence on the role of others' presence in honor threatening situations in relation to feeling of anger and retaliatory reactions. Following the call for further research to examine the role of this variable in honor-related outcomes (see Uskul et al., 2019), we sought to obtain further evidence by examining the public versus private nature of the situation as an additional variable in the current study. Based on previous theorizing, we predicted that individuals would (a) feel higher levels of anger and (b) be more likely to prefer retaliatory behaviors when other individuals witness them being subjected to an honor-threatening situation compared with when there is no one to witness the same situation. In addition, we examined whether social setting interacted with cultural background to test the prediction that members of an honor culture who are in public setting condition would respond (a) more negatively emotionally and (b) retaliatory behaviorally compared with all other groups. We also asked whether this pattern would interact with individuals' cultural background and causality orientation. We predicted that members of an honor culture who are controlled-oriented

and find themselves subjected to a publicly witnessed honor-threatening situation would respond (a) more negatively emotionally and (b) retaliatory compared with all other groups.

### **Current Research**

In the current study, we examined cultural, person-based, and situational factors that are likely to shape emotional and behavioral responses to honor threatening situations. To that aim, we asked participants from an honor cultural group (Turkey) and a dignity cultural group (U.K.) to imagine themselves participating in a school trip during which they are falsely accused of theft (false accusation scenario) or being humiliated by one of their peers in the classroom as a boring person (humiliation scenario) either in a private (with no one watching) or in a public (with others witnessing the situation) setting and to then indicate how they would feel and behave. We predicted significant differences as a function of cultural group, social setting type, and causality orientation such that participants from Turkey (vs. the U.K.), those in public (vs. private) setting, and those with controlled-orientation (vs. autonomy-orientation) would report more negative and retaliatory responses. We also tested predictions that involve interactions between these variables as outlined earlier.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

Participants from the U.K. were undergraduate students from a British University ( $n = 213$ ). Forty-seven participants were excluded from the initial sample because they reported not having spent their entire life in the U.K. or being originally from a non-dignity cultural background (e.g., Spain, Italy), leaving 166 participants for analyses (128 women,  $M_{age} = 19.73$ ,  $SD_{age} = 2.54$ ; 54.2% White-British, 19.9% Other-British [e.g., Black-British], 20.5% Non-British U.K.-born residents<sup>1</sup> [e.g., Filipino, Indian], and 5.4% other White [e.g., Danish, German]).

Participants from Turkey were undergraduate students recruited at two Turkish Universities in a large city ( $n = 130$ , 120 women,  $M_{\text{age}} = 21.75$ ,  $SD_{\text{age}} = 2.55$ ; 86.2% Turkish, 5.4% Kurdish, and 8.5% other [e.g., Arab]). All participants received course credit for their participation.

Sample sizes were not determined a priori; we aimed to recruit approximately 150 participants in each sample following previous research (e.g., Maitner et al., 2017). A post-hoc power analysis using G\*Power 3 (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007) indicated that sample size of 296 had 93% power to detect a small effect size ( $f = 0.1$ ) with alpha at 0.5.

### **Procedure**

Participants were invited to take part in the study in a research lab where they complete an online questionnaire using computers located in private cubicles. After providing consent, participants first read two scenarios (the order was counterbalanced) and then responded to questions about each scenario. Next, they completed the Honor Scale, General Causality Orientation Scale (the order was counterbalanced), and, finally, provided demographic information.

### **Measures**

**Scenarios.** We developed two scenarios to present participants with different honor-threatening situations (see Appendix I for full versions. The content of the scenarios was created based on results obtained in Uskul et al. (2012) which focused on honor-attacking situations generated by an honor (Turkey) and dignity cultural (northern U.S.) group. In this research, situations involving false-accusation and humiliation were two of the most common honor-relevant situations identified by both groups. We thus used these two situations to create content for the scenarios to tap into the salient aspects of the honor construct in an honor and dignity group. We informally checked the content of the false accusation and humiliation scenarios with

a small group of university students before employing them in the main study to ensure they were being viewed as accusing one falsely of cheating and as humiliating.

The false accusation and humiliation scenarios were described as taking place either in a public setting with other individuals witnessing the event (public condition) or in private with no one witnessing the event (private condition) to examine the effect of presence and absence of others in these situations on our outcome measures. Participants were randomly assigned to one of these two conditions.

**Emotional responses to false accusation and humiliation.** Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they would feel anger, frustration, and resentment if they found themselves in the described situation (1 = *not at all* to 7 = *extremely*). Responses on these three emotion items were averaged to form a composite Emotional Response measure (for false accusation,  $\alpha_{U.K.} = .76$ ;  $\alpha_{TR} = .70$ ; for humiliation,  $\alpha_{U.K.} = .82$ ;  $\alpha_{TR} = .74$ ).

**Behavioral responses to false accusation and humiliation.** Participants were also asked to indicate how they would respond if they found themselves in the situation described in the scenarios using the following items: “I would start talking negatively about the person to other people”, “I would try to embarrass this person publicly”, and “I would make him somehow pay for this later on” (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*). Responses to these items were averaged to form a composite retaliation measure (for false accusation,  $\alpha_{U.K.} = .80$ ;  $\alpha_{TR} = .69$ ; for humiliation,  $\alpha_{U.K.} = .70$ ;  $\alpha_{TR} = .69$ ).

**Honor Concerns.** Honor concerns were assessed using the Honor Scale developed by Rodriguez Mosquera et al. (2002b) which asks participants to rate the extent to which they would feel bad in 25 different situations using a 7-point Likert-type Scale (1 = *not at all* to 7 = *very bad*). The situations focused on four aspects of honor: feminine honor ( $\alpha_{U.K.} = .84$ ,  $\alpha_{TR} = .85$ ;

e.g., “if you wore provocative clothes”), masculine honor ( $\alpha_{U.K.} = .70$ ,  $\alpha_{TR} = .72$ ; e.g., “if you lack authority over your own family”), family honor ( $\alpha_{U.K.} = .80$ ,  $\alpha_{TR} = .81$ ; e.g., “if your family had a bad reputation”), and moral integrity ( $\alpha_{U.K.} = .87$ ,  $\alpha_{TR} = .91$ ; e.g., “if you did not keep your word”).

**General Causality Orientation Scale.** We assessed general causality orientation using a scale developed by Deci and Ryan (1985) to measure people’s relatively stable motivational tendencies across autonomy and control causality orientations<sup>2</sup>. The scale is composed of 12 short stories followed by two items for each story. Each item describes a situation, which is fictionalized based on two different orientations. For example, one story states: You have been offered a new position in a company where you have worked for some time. The first question that is likely to come to mind is: a. Will I make more at this position? (controlled-orientation;  $\alpha_{U.K.} = .66$ ,  $\alpha_{TR} = .62$ ); and b. I wonder if the new work will be interesting (autonomy-orientation;  $\alpha_{U.K.} = .74$ ,  $\alpha_{TR} = .80$ ). Participants rated each item using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). Following previous studies (e.g., Koestner & Zuckerman, 1994; Weinstein & Hodgins, 2009), we constructed two groups using the difference score between the Z-scored controlled and autonomy measures (autonomy-oriented group: Z-scored autonomy > Z-scored control, controlled-oriented group: Z-scored control > Z-scored autonomy).

## Results

### Preliminary analyses

We first compared honor concern scores of the Turkish and British samples using a mixed ANOVA with four honor subscales (dignity, feminine, masculine, family) as a within subjects and cultural group (UK vs. TR) as a between subjects variable to check if our

expectations concerning cultural differences in honor endorsement were met. The analysis revealed significant main effects of honor,  $F(3, 292) = 328.32, p < .001, \eta^2 = .53$ ; cultural group,  $F(1, 294) = 26.47, p < .001, \eta^2 = .08$ ; and a significant honor x cultural group interaction,  $F(3, 292) = 17.02, p < .001, \eta^2 = .06$ . Overall, Turkish participants ( $M = 4.69, SD = .08$ ) reported greater honor concerns than did British participants ( $M = 4.11, SD = .07$ ). Concerns about integrity honor ( $M = 5.82, SD = .06$ ) were higher than all other types of honor concerns (all  $ps < .001$ ); concerns about feminine honor ( $M = 4.07, SD = .08$ ) and masculine honor ( $M = 4.11, SD = .05, p = .593$ ) were comparable and significantly higher than family honor ( $M = 3.58, SD = .08, p < .001$ ). Unfolding the interaction analysis revealed that participants in the Turkish (vs. British) sample reported higher concerns about feminine honor ( $M = 4.59, SD = 1.55$  vs.  $M = 3.54, SD = 1.35; p < .001, \eta^2 = .12$ ), masculine honor ( $M = 4.27, SD = 1.07$  vs.  $M = 3.95, SD = 0.92; p = .006, \eta^2 = .03$ ), and family honor ( $M = 4.02, SD = 1.61$  vs.  $M = 3.15, SD = 1.28; p < .001, \eta^2 = .08$ ). There was no significant group difference between the moral integrity scores ( $p = .439$ ). These results show that, in line with other studies (e.g., Gul & Uskul, 2019), British individuals endorsed different aspects of honor less strongly than members of a cultural group (TR) that has been identified as an honor culture in past studies (see for a review Uskul & Cross, 2019).

Next, given that honor concerns were measured following our manipulation, we examined using the same mixed ANOVA as above whether the four aspects of honor concern scores varied as a function of condition. Honor concern x condition interaction was not significant ( $p = .708$ ), indicating that the condition did not influence participants' honor concern scores.

We also compared causality orientation scores of Turkish and the British samples using a mixed ANOVA with causality orientations (controlled vs. autonomy) as a within subjects

variable and culture (TR vs. UK) as a between subjects variable, which revealed no significant differences (autonomy-orientation: British sample,  $M = 5.63$ ,  $SD = .62$ ; Turkish sample,  $M = 5.49$ ,  $SD = .84$ ;  $p = .094$ ; and controlled-orientation: British sample,  $M = 4.56$ ,  $SD = .65$ ; Turkish sample,  $M = 4.44$ ,  $SD = .79$ ;  $p = .166$ ). Next, given that causality orientation was measured following our manipulation, we inspected using a mixed ANOVA with autonomy and controlled orientations as within subjects and condition as between subjects whether the two aspects of causality orientation score varied as a function of condition. Causality orientation x condition interaction was not significant ( $p = .158$ ), indicating that the condition did not influence participants' causality orientation scores.

### **Emotional responses to false accusation and humiliation**

To test our predictions, we first examined participants' emotional responses to false accusation and humiliation situations using a  $2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2$  mixed-design ANOVA with cultural group (U.K. vs. TR), social setting (private vs. public), and causality orientation (controlled-orientation vs. autonomy-orientation) as between-subjects factors, and scenario type (false accusation vs. humiliation) as a within-subjects factor. This analysis revealed a significant main effect of scenario type,  $F(1, 288) = 148.35$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .34$ , and significant two-way interactions between cultural group and scenario,  $F(1, 288) = 7.54$ ,  $p = .006$ ,  $\eta^2 = .03$ , cultural group and setting,  $F(1, 288) = 4.25$ ,  $p = .040$ ,  $\eta^2 = .02^1$ , and cultural group and causality orientation,  $F(1, 288) = 10.51$ ,  $p = .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .04$ . All other main effects and the three-way interaction were not significant (all  $ps > .05$ ).

Our predictions that, when faced with an honor threat, participants from Turkey, those with controlled orientation, and individuals in situations involving others witnessing the event

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<sup>1</sup> We recommend caution in interpreting the findings emerging for this effect, as the sample size fell short of providing the adequate power for this effect.

(public) would respond emotionally more negatively than would participants from the U.K, those autonomous orientation, and individuals in situations involving no witnesses (private) (respectively), were not confirmed. Similarly, our prediction that members of an honor culture who are controlled-oriented and find themselves subjected to a publicly witnessed honor-threatening situation would respond emotionally more negatively compared with all other groups, was also not supported.

The main effect of scenario type revealed that participants responded to the false accusation scenario ( $M = 5.11, SD = .08$ ) more emotionally negatively than they did to the humiliation scenario ( $M = 3.89, SD = .09; p < .001, \eta^2 = .34$ ). As can be seen in Figure 1, Turkish participants ( $M = 5.29, SD = .12$ ) reported significantly higher levels of negative emotional response compared to British participants ( $M = 4.92, SD = .10; p = .025, \eta^2 = .02$ ) in the false accusation scenario, whereas the two samples did not differ in their emotional response in the humiliation scenario ( $p = .314$ ). This was perhaps not surprising given the impact a false accusation can have compared with being humiliated. The fact that Turkish participants responded emotionally more strongly to the false accusation situation compared with the humiliation situation suggests that that situation may have been more relevant to honor values.

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Insert Figure 1  
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We unfolded significant two-way interactions using simple effects analysis and present findings focusing on between-culture differences. The cultural group x social setting interaction revealed that in the public condition, Turkish participants ( $M = 4.74, SD = .15$ ) reported higher levels of negative feeling compared to British participants with the difference approaching

statistical significance ( $M = 4.36$ ,  $SD = .13$ ;  $p = .061$ ,  $\eta^2 = .01$ ); the two samples did not differ in their emotional response in the private condition ( $p = .302$ ).

Finally, cultural group x causality orientation (see Figure 2) interaction revealed that, as expected, autonomy-oriented participants in the British sample ( $M = 4.21$ ,  $SD = .13$ ) reported significantly lower levels of negative feeling compared with autonomy-oriented participants in the Turkish sample ( $M = 4.76$ ,  $SD = .15$ ;  $p = .007$ ,  $\eta^2 = .03$ ); whereas unexpectedly, controlled-oriented participants in the Turkish sample ( $M = 4.33$ ,  $SD = .15$ ) reported lower levels of negative feeling compared with controlled-oriented participants in the British sample, but this difference only approached significance ( $M = 4.70$ ,  $SD = .13$ ;  $p = .062$ ,  $\eta^2 = .01$ ).

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 Insert Figure 2  
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### **Behavioral responses to false accusation and humiliation**

We examined participants' behavioral responses using the same analysis as above which revealed significant main effects of scenario type,  $F(1, 288) = 21.12$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .07$ , cultural group,  $F(1, 288) = 8.35$ ,  $p = .004$ ,  $\eta^2 = .03$ , social setting,  $F(1, 288) = 4.09$ ,  $p = .044$ ,  $\eta^2 = .01^2$ , and causality orientation,  $F(1, 288) = 19.00$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .06$ , and significant the two-way interactions between scenario and cultural group  $F(1, 288) = 4.82$ ,  $p = .029$ ,  $\eta^2 = .02$ , and scenario and causality orientation,  $F(1, 288) = 5.55$ ,  $p = .019$ ,  $\eta^2 = .02$ . Unlike expected, the cultural group x causality orientation and the cultural group x social setting two-way interactions and the three-way interaction were not significant (all  $ps > .05$ ). As above, we unfolded

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<sup>2</sup> We recommend caution in interpreting the findings emerging for this effect, as the sample size fell short of providing the adequate power for this effect.

significant two-way interactions using simple effects analysis and present differences that involve cultural groups.

As predicted, the main effects showed that Turkish participants ( $M = 2.78$ ,  $SD = .09$ ) reported significantly higher levels of retaliatory intentions compared with British participants ( $M = 2.41$ ,  $SD = .08$ ;  $p = .004$ ;  $\eta^2 = .03$ ), participants in the public condition ( $M = 2.72$ ,  $SD = .08$ ) reported significantly higher levels of retaliatory intentions compared with participants in the private condition ( $M = 2.47$ ,  $SD = .08$ ;  $p = .044$ ,  $\eta^2 = .01$ ), and controlled-oriented participants ( $M = 2.87$ ,  $SD = .08$ ) reported significantly higher levels of retaliatory intentions compared with autonomy-oriented participants ( $M = 2.32$ ,  $SD = .08$ ;  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .06$ ). These findings support our predictions and are in line with past studies.

Although we did not have a specific hypothesis on it, we found that the main effect of scenario showed that participants reported higher levels of retaliatory intentions in the humiliation scenario ( $M = 2.76$ ,  $SD = .07$ ), compared to the false accusation scenario ( $M = 2.43$ ,  $SD = .07$ ;  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .07$ ), which seemed to have been driven by Turkish participants ( $M = 3.02$ ,  $SD = .11$ ) reporting significantly higher levels of retaliatory intentions compared with British participants ( $M = 2.50$ ,  $SD = .10$ ;  $p = .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .04$ ) in the humiliation scenario, but not in the false accusation scenario ( $p = .140$ ), as reflected by the significant cultural group x scenario interaction (see Figure 3).

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Insert Figure 3  
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Finally, scenario x causality orientation interaction revealed that autonomy-oriented participants in the humiliation scenario ( $M = 2.58$ ,  $SD = .10$ ) reported significantly higher levels

of retaliatory intentions compared with autonomy-oriented participants in the false accusation scenario ( $M = 2.07$ ,  $SD = .09$ ;  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .08$ ). The behavioral response toward scenarios did not differ for controlled-oriented participants ( $p = .111$ ).

### **Correlation analyses**

We examined the correlations between emotional responses and retaliation by culture, social setting and situation. As can be seen in Table 1, we found that in both British and Turkish samples when the setting was private there was a significant correlation between emotional responses and retaliation in the humiliation scenario, but not in the false accusation scenario. In the British sample when the setting was public there was a significant correlation between emotional responses and retaliation for both the humiliation and the false accusation scenario. In the Turkish sample when the setting was public, there was a significant correlation between emotional responses and retaliation in the humiliation scenario, but not in the false accusation scenario.

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Insert Table 1  
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We also examined the relationships between honor values and causality orientations. As can be seen in Table 2, we found that in both British and Turkish samples autonomy-orientation was significantly and positively correlated with masculine honor and moral integrity. In both samples, controlled-orientation was positively correlated with masculine honor. We also found significant positive correlations between controlled orientation and feminine, family, and moral integrity honor concerns in the British sample only.

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Insert Table 2

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### **Discussion**

In the current study, following the CuPS (Culture x Person x Situation) approach introduced by Leung and Cohen (2011), we examined the role of cultural group (honor [TR] vs. dignity [UK]), social setting (private vs. public), and causality orientation (controlled-oriented vs. autonomy-oriented) in emotional responses and preferences for retaliatory behavior in the face of two different honor threatening situations. Our analyses revealed that all our main effect-based predictions were confirmed in relation to behavioral intentions, replicating previous findings in the cultural and motivational literatures using different types of offensive situations. Overall, being a member of an honor (vs. dignity) cultural group, being exposed to an honor threat publicly (vs. privately), and having a controlled- (vs. autonomy-) oriented motivation resulted in stronger retaliatory intentions when imagining being faced with an honor threat. These findings demonstrate that the scenarios employed in this study were successful in evoking behavioral intention responses similar to those used in past studies. These main effects were not observed in relation to emotional responses, however; the cultural group main effect emerged only in the context of false accusation (not in the context of humiliation) with Turkish participants reporting higher negative emotions than did British participants.

The cultural group main effect is in line with previous research demonstrating that when faced with an honor threat, individuals with a strong adherence to honor or originate from a cultural group that puts heavy emphasis on the protection and maintenance of social image are more likely to engage in aggressive and retaliatory behaviors than those with a weak adherence to honor or come from cultural groups where there is less emphasis on honor (e.g., Cohen et al.,

1996; IJzerman et al., 2007; van Osch et al., 2013; Uskul et al., 2015). In the honor literature, studies addressing the absence versus presence of others in an honor-threatening situation have provided inconclusive (e.g., Cohen et al., 1996; Uskul et al., 2015). The social setting main effect in this study revealed that participants were more likely to express retaliatory behaviors when there were others witnessing the honor threatening situation (vs. not). This effect did not interact with cultural group. Yet, an interaction term emerged when inspecting emotional responses to honor threatening situations, with Turkish participants reporting more negative feelings in the public (but not in the private) condition. The differential effect of the role of audience across emotional and behavioral intentional measures observed in this study suggests that which type of dependent measure we work with might influence how the effects works and explain why past evidence on audience effect has not been univocal.

To the best of our knowledge, no study so far examined the relationship between causality orientation and responses to honor threatening situations. Based on the literature on Self Determination Theory and tenets of Causality Orientation Model, in this study we tested and found confirming evidence for the prediction that when their honor is threatened individuals with controlled-orientation compared to ones with autonomy-orientation would be more likely to engage in retaliatory behavior. This is in line with previous research showing that individuals with high controlled-orientation tend to be more hostile, defensive, and vulnerable to peer effect (Deci, & Ryan, 1985; Neighbors et al., 2008). This study further shows that honor threatening situations are among the situations that evoke retaliatory intentions in individuals with controlled-orientation.

We also observed several two-way interactions, which revealed that cultural differences in emotional and behavioral responses varied as a function of type of honor-threatening situation.

We opted for two honor threatening events inspired by previous work (Uskul et al., 2012) with one being potentially more emotionally involving and provocative than the other. Indeed, overall, participants responded to the false accusation scenario more emotionally negatively than they did to the humiliation scenario. Cultural differences emerged in the false accusation scenario with Turkish participants reporting more negative emotional responses in the false accusation scenario than did British, yet the two groups reported comparably negative emotional responses in the humiliation scenario. In addition, we found that Turkish participants reported a higher preference for retaliation than did British participants when they imagined themselves being humiliated by one of their peers, but not when they imagined being falsely accused. These findings highlight the importance of investigating different honor-relevant situations that vary in severity in relation to different types of psychological processes (emotional vs. behavioral). Our findings indicate that not all situations that evoke a stronger anger-related emotional response are associated with a stronger retaliatory response (which was also evident in the correlational findings). Other negative self-conscious emotions such as shame evoked by the same situation or social norms concerning appropriate responses to different types of situations may explain the discrepancies we observed in the current research between emotional and intentional responses and cultural differences in these two. These findings are also in line with the CuPS approach (Leung & Cohen, 2011) and its emphasis on the interaction between culture and situation.

One important goal of this study was to examine the role of absence versus presence of audience in honor-threatening situations. We found that when the honor threatening situation was witnessed by others (vs. not), both Turkish and British participants were likely to show a greater preference for retaliatory behaviors. There was a trend for Turkish participants to report more negative feelings compared with British participants when imagining the honor threatening

situations being witnessed by others, yet this difference was not significant. Thus overall, in the current study, we did not find evidence that presence of others in honor threatening situations influences emotional and behavioral responses among individuals from an honor culture in a differential way when compared with individuals from a dignity culture. This finding contributes to a small pool of research which has examined the role of social setting in honor relevant situations as a likely factor shaping how individuals respond in those situations. Given the greater importance of social image in honor cultures, this finding remains puzzling. We call for future research to further examine the role of audience in different types of situations and with different age samples. It may be that in situations where others' evaluations have more tangible consequences (e.g., at the work place) or in older age groups where social belonging concerns are not as salient as in groups of young people, the role of audience emerges as a stronger factor.

Another important goal in the current study was to examine the role of controlled and autonomy-oriented causality orientations and tested predictions that involved their interactions with cultural group and type of social setting. Results revealed that when their honor was threatened, autonomy-oriented participants in the Turkish sample reported significantly more negative emotions (but not higher retaliatory intentions) compared with autonomy-oriented participants in the British sample; whereas controlled-oriented participants in the British sample tended to report higher levels of negative feeling compared with controlled-oriented participants in the Turkish sample. This effect was not further qualified by a three-way interaction involving type of social setting, indicating that whether an audience was present or not did not influence how autonomy and controlled oriented individuals emotionally responded to the honor threatening situations both in the Turkish and the British samples. The two-way interaction between causality orientation and cultural group suggests that controlled and autonomy

orientations may serve different functions in the Turkish and British settings. There is some evidence showing that controlled orientation may hold different cultural meanings for members of different cultural groups (e.g., Nguyen & Neighbors, 2013). In the absence of further evidence in our study of the culturally informed meanings that causality orientation may take, our interpretation of this finding inevitably remains speculative and this interesting effect asks for future research to flesh out the why and the how.

This study comes with several limitations, which should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the current study has included only two different scenarios as examples of honor threatening situations. The predictions need to be reexamined in the context of other honor-threatening situations to investigate how they generalize to other offensive incidents. Second, the sample in the U.K. included only participants from England. In future studies, it would be interesting to compare northern and southern U.K., especially Scotland. Previous research has consistently shown that individuals from southern US were more likely than those in northern US to endorse higher levels of honor and engage in behaviors that served reputation maintenance and repair. Cohen and Nisbett explained this difference partly due to the residents of southern US originating from the borderlands of England, Scotland, and Northern Ireland, where they relied on herding economies, in company with lawlessness, loose authority, and instability (Cohen, 1996; Cohen, 2001; Nisbett & Cohen, 1996). It would be interesting to examine if similar regional variations might be observed in the U.K. Third, our findings are based on self-report responses to hypothetical situations, which need to be complemented by evidence on actual behaviors in real life settings. Fourth, majority of our sample includes woman participants. Given the gender differences in honor concerns (e.g., Guerra et al. 2013), the findings need to be interpreted with caution in terms of generalizability across both genders.

Finally, findings would benefit from being tested in larger samples with greater power. The relatively small sample sizes in each group might have prevented us from discovering some of the effects and group differences.

The current study makes important contributions to the literature on cultures of honor and motivational psychology. First, it attempts to connect culture and responses to honor threatening situations with causality orientation, which allows us to examine how enduring motivational tendencies (Deci & Ryan, 1985) can interact with cultural and situational factors. Second, it provides information from an understudied culture, the U.K., in the culture comparative research and shows that when compared with a sample recruited in a cultural group considered to exemplify cultures of honor (Turkey), participants in the British sample endorsed gendered and relational components of honor less strongly. These group differences are in line with findings reported in several recent studies (e.g., Guerra et al., 2013; Gul, & Schuster, 2020). Third, it contributes to the scarce evidence on the role of public versus private setting in emotional responses to honor threatening situations by highlighting that experiencing an honor-threatening situation alone or in the presence of other individuals makes a difference for individuals from both an honor and a dignity culture. Finally, it highlights the importance of taking a CuPS approach in understanding how cultural setting, individual and situational factors interact in shaping responses to honor threatening situations. This is especially important in culturally diverse environments such as the U.K. where the role honor plays in social interactions is typically perceived to be culturally specific (see Korteweg & Yurdakul, 2014). We hope that the current study will spark further research on the role of causality orientation in honor related processes and on understanding honor-related processes in the U.K. (especially taking into

account its multicultural composition) where social psychological research on honor is still scarce.

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**Data availability statement:** The datasets generated during and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on request.

**Ethical statement:** This study was performed in line with the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki. Approval was granted by the Human Research Ethics Committee of Kent University.

## Endnotes

1. Based on the possibility that this group could show characteristics similar to members of honor-cultures, we checked the pattern of results after excluding them from the analyses. When we reran all analyses without this group, we found that the pattern of results remained the same except for the cultural group x scenario interaction, which became non-significant ( $p = .087$ ). Because the general pattern of results was not affected, we decided to keep them in the British sample.

2. Given the diversity represented in the UK sample, we considered within-country variability in the effects/interactions that are examined, and rerun the analyses including it as a variable.

However, we did not observe any statistically significant effect of diversity in the UK sample.

All  $ps > .05$

3. We did not include the third subscale that assesses impersonal causality orientation because individuals with an impersonal orientation are likely to think that they cannot control their behavior (i.e., an amotivational orientation). We were interested in the role of motivation in the responses to honor threatening situations, not the role of amotivation.

**Table 1.** Correlations between emotional and behavioral responses by cultural group, setting, and situation

|                | False accusation    |                     | Humiliation         |                     |
|----------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
|                | Private             | Public              | Private             | Public              |
| British sample | $r = .18; p = .095$ | $r = .27; p = .014$ | $r = .55; p < .001$ | $r = .54; p < .001$ |
| Turkish sample | $r = .02; p = .870$ | $r = .04; p = .733$ | $r = .29; p = .019$ | $r = .29; p = .019$ |

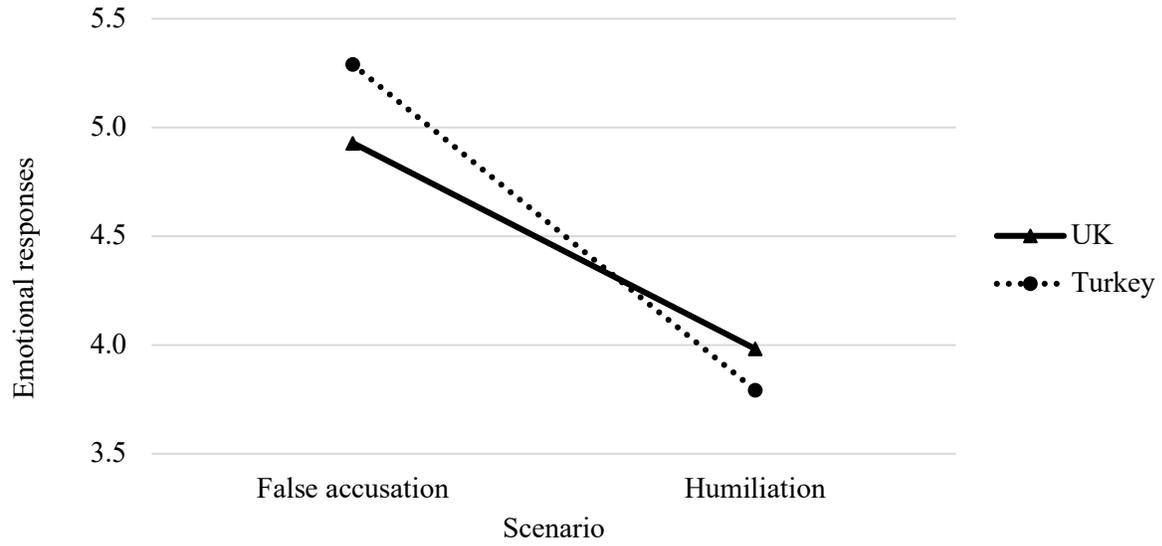
**Table 2.** Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations between Individual Measures

| <i>Variables</i> | 1     | 2     | 3     | 4     | 5     | 6     | 7     | 8      | 9     | 10    |
|------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|
| 1. FAB           | -     | .39** | .58** | .26** | .02   | .10   | -.05  | -.23** | -.11  | .16*  |
| 2. FAE           | .08   | -     | .24** | .39** | .10   | .14   | .02   | .14    | .15*  | .26** |
| 3. HB            | .46** | .08   | -     | .55** | .076  | .081  | .015  | -.18*  | -.092 | .17*  |
| 4. HE            | .03   | .33** | .30** | -     | .104  | .115  | .078  | .098   | .015  | .17*  |
| 5. MH            | -.051 | .18*  | .048  | .066  | -     | .49** | .94** | .21**  | .03   | .23** |
| 6. FEH           | -.055 | .057  | .075  | .073  | .28** | -     | .42** | .23**  | .18*  | .44** |
| 7. FAH           | -.046 | .142  | .048  | .054  | .94** | .20*  | -     | .24**  | .05   | .19*  |
| 8. MI            | -.139 | .27** | -.041 | .060  | .47** | .50** | .33** | -      | .43** | .22** |
| 9. AO            | -.072 | .38** | .074  | .18*  | .17   | .22*  | .092  | .47**  | -     | .41** |
| 10. CO           | .21*  | .115  | .22*  | .096  | .169  | .29** | .147  | .173   | .42** | -     |

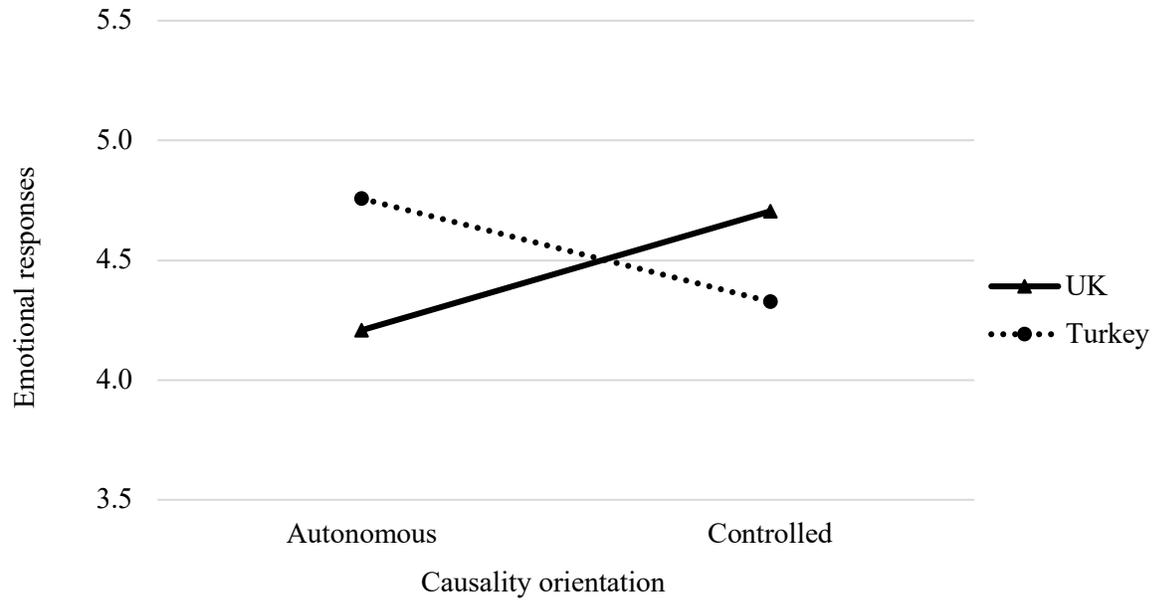
*Note.* Correlations for the British Sample are above the diagonal and correlations for the Turkish Sample are below the diagonal.

FAB = False Accusation - Behavioral Response; FAE = False Accusation - Emotional Response; HB = Humiliation - Behavioral Response; HE = Humiliation - Emotional Response; MH = Masculine Honor; FEH = Feminine Honor; FAH = Family Honor; MI = Moral Integrity; AO = Autonomous Orientation; CO = Controlled Orientation.

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ .



*Figure 1.* Emotional response ratings as a function of cultural group and scenario type



*Figure 2.* Emotional response ratings as a function of cultural group and causality orientation

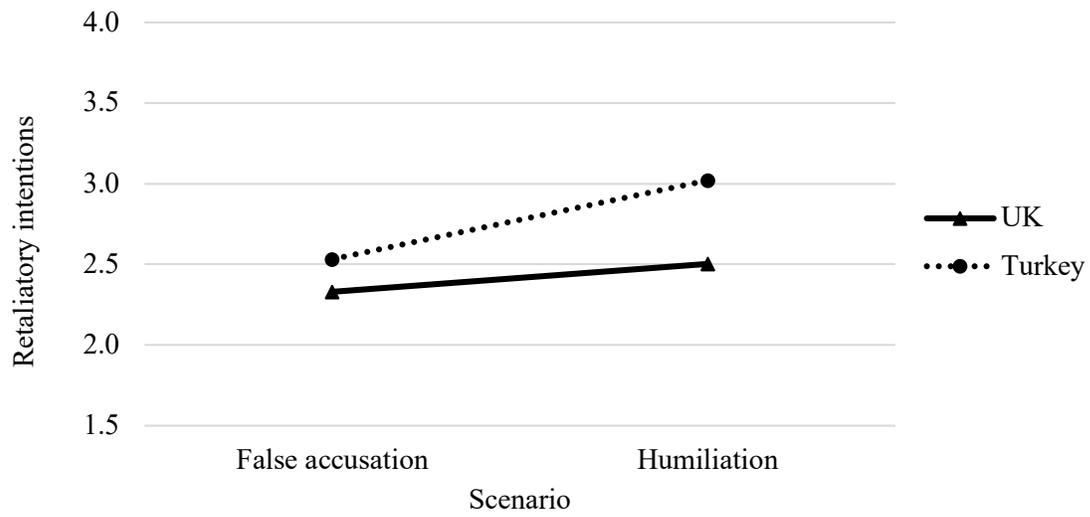


Figure 3. Retaliatory intention ratings as a function of cultural group and scenario type

## Appendix I

### **False Accusation Scenario:**

Imagine that you are on a school trip to London with students from your course. You all get on the coach together. An hour passes, and people are starting to get hungry. So the coach driver stops at a service station in Ashford. Everybody gets off the coach, leaving all their belongings behind. You realize you forgot something, and you walk back to the bus to get it. After eating, you all continue the journey to London. When you arrive, one of your classmates says that some money is missing from his bag, and he thinks that it has been stolen. Since you were the only one to go back to the bus, he thinks that it was you. However, you did not take his money.

#### *Private ending:*

He catches you while you are walking alone to the bus and accuses you of stealing his money.

#### *Public ending:*

He catches you while you are walking to the bus with your friends in a group and accuses you of stealing his money. Everyone in the group hears it.

### **Humiliation Scenario:**

Imagine that it is the first week of the academic year. You are in class one day, and you have a new lecturer teaching a third-year research module. He asks everyone to introduce themselves and say one interesting fact about themselves. Until it is your turn, all students in the class are able to tell interesting or unique things about themselves. When your turn comes, you introduce yourself, and for your interesting fact, you cannot think of anything to say. Being under pressure, you can only stammer out a few uninteresting words. Everybody looks at you.

#### *Private ending:*

After a brief awkward silence, one of your classmates whispers in your ear and says: "You must be a very boring person, huh?" The others don't hear it.

#### *Public ending:*

After a brief awkward silence, one of your classmates says: "You must be a very boring person, huh?" Everyone else laughs.