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Running Head: Turkish and American Retaliation for Honor Threats

A Price to Pay:

Turkish and Northern American Retaliation for Threats to Personal and Family Honor¹

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Abstract

Two studies investigated retaliatory responses to actual honor threats among members of an honor culture (Turkey) and a dignity culture (northern U.S.). The honor threat in these studies was based on previous research which has shown that honesty is a key element of the conception of honor and that accusations of dishonesty are threatening to one's honor. In both studies, participants wrote an essay describing the role of honesty in their lives and received feedback on their essay accusing them of being dishonest (vs. neutral feedback). Turkish participants retaliated more strongly than did northern U.S. participants against the person who challenged their honesty by assigning him/her to solve more difficult tangrams over easy ones (Study 1) and by choosing sensory tasks of a higher level of intensity to complete (Study 2). Study 2 added a relational honor condition, in which participants wrote about honesty in their parents' lives and examined the role of individual differences in honor values in retaliation. Endorsement of honor values predicted retaliation among Turkish participants in both the personal and relational honor conditions, but not among northern U.S. participants.

Word Count: 159 words

Keywords: honor, aggression, Turkey, Northern US, endorsement of honor values

In societies where the enhancement and protection of one's honor and social reputation is a primary goal, threats to a person's honor may come at a high price and can be a deadly matter. Protests and violence motivated by threats to honor have been reported in many different communities, including Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Jewish, Buddhist, and Confucian societies. Such events have confused Westerners, and there is a tendency to generalize such aggressive behavior to entire immigrant groups (see Korteweg & Yurdakul, 2009, 2010). In psychology, honor has typically been defined in terms of masculine reputation and strength, and research has focused on how threats to masculine honor can lead to aggressive responses. Honor, however, is more than its gendered forms; it also encompasses moral behavior, self-respect, and social reputation (Cross et al., 2014). The current studies extend existing research on honor-related aggression by: a) focusing on an honor culture (Turkey) that is different from those examined in most previous research (southern US), and b) examining an honor threat (accusations of dishonesty) that is different from that examined in most research on honor (insults), focusing on both its relational and individual forms. These studies also examine the role of individual endorsement of honor values in aggressive responses to honor threats.

Honor is typically viewed as having multiple components: it is tied to virtues such as honesty and loyalty, and it reflects a person's positive social standing and reputation in society (Cross et al., 2014; Pitt-Rivers, 1965). Members of many cultures, both cultures of honor and non-honor, tend to endorse the importance of the first component – honor as virtue. The social standing or reputation component, however, is considered to be more characteristic of members of honor cultures where prestige and respect are hard to gain and easy to lose. People in these cultures, therefore, engage in a variety of behavior in order to earn or maintain the respect of others, and they are socialized to vigorously defend their honor against any threats that might stain their social standing or reputation (Peristiany, 1965). Although the honor codes for men and women may differ, it is imperative that both men and women defend and protect their honor. Physical aggression in response to an

honor threat may be more likely for men, but women may be equally likely to engage in a variety of indirect or relational forms of aggression, including gossip, ostracism, or subtle forms of retaliation (Archer, 2004; Archer & Coyne, 2005; Card, Stucky, Sawalani, & Little, 2008).

In non-honor, or dignity, cultures (such as northern US states and Western European countries), the individual is assumed to have inherent worth that cannot be taken away by others (Leung & Cohen, 2011). In such cultures, it is internal standards and goals rather than social expectations and reputation concerns that act as ideal motivators of good behavior.

Indeed, both ethnographic work and social psychological evidence have shown that, when compared with cultures of dignity, in cultures of honor, events that threaten one's honor, such as humiliations or insults, are typically associated with strong emotional responses (e.g. Cohen, Nisbett, Bowdle, & Schwarz, 1996; Rodriguez Mosquera, Manstead, & Fischer, 2002a; Rodriguez Mosquera, Fischer, Manstead, & Zaalberg, 2008) and actions directed to regain one's reputation (e.g., Cohen et al., 1996; van Osch, Breugelmans, Zeelenberg, & Boluk, 2013). Experimental studies (e.g., Cohen, et al., 1996) and archival research in the U.S. (e.g., Brown, Osterman, & Barnes, 2009; Cohen, 1998; Nisbett, Polly, & Lang, 1995) have shown that actions taken by members of honor cultures to defend one's honor may be aggressive and typically are directed to those who threaten one's honor.

To date, the bulk of research on honor has focused on honor attacks directed to the individual and focused on masculine conceptions of honor (i.e., the importance of men's reputation for strength and willingness to retaliate against a threat; e.g., Barnes, Brown, & Osterman, 2012; Cohen et al., 1996; IJzerman, van Dijk, & Galluci, 2007; Vandello, Cohen, & Ransom, 2008), feminine conceptions of honor (e.g., Rodriguez Mosquera et al., 2002a), and honor resulting from attacks (e.g., insults) to one's competence or place in interpersonal relations (Rodriguez Mosquera et al., 2008; Osch et al., 2013; for exceptions on threats to family honor see Rodriguez Mosquera, Manstead, & Fischer, 2002b and

Rodriguez Mosquera, Tan, & Saleem, 2014). Moreover, with a few exceptions (e.g., Cohen et al., 1996; Cohen, Vandello, Puente, & Rantilla, 1999), most of the available evidence comes from investigations that used imagined or recalled honor threats. Notably, not all honor threats are public; honor threats are at times due to an interaction with only one other person (Cohen et al., 1996; Uskul, Cross, Sunbay, Gercek-Swing, & Ataca, 2012).

In the research presented here, we examine retaliation when honor attacks target individuals or their families using behavioral measures in controlled experimental designs (for other exceptions to the focus on individuals, see research targeting honor attacks against collectives such as national groups, e.g., Barnes, Brown, Lenes, Bosson, & Carvallo, 2014). Furthermore, most psychological evidence demonstrating a link between endorsement of honor and retaliatory responses comes from comparisons between honor and non-honor states in the U.S. In the present research, we examine this link in an honor culture that differs from American honor states in terms of region, religion, and historical background, as well as in the nature of the cultural ideal of honor experienced by its members. We turn to Turkey, a Muslim country situated in South-East Europe and bordering Mediterranean and Middle Eastern countries that are typically defined as cultures of honor. We view cultures of honor as cultural syndromes that refer to “a pattern of shared attitudes, beliefs, categorizations, self-definitions, norms, role definition and values that is organized around a theme” (Triandis, 1996, p. 408; also see Leung & Cohen, 2011).

Culture of Honor in Turkey

Similar to other Mediterranean and Middle Eastern cultures, the cultural context in Turkey is strongly shaped by sentiments concerning honor. Research in Turkey conducted primarily by cultural anthropologists and sociologists points to the importance of both individual and relational aspects of honor. Specifically, this research shows that honorable behavior is at the core of what defines an individual as a good and moral person, and that dishonorable behavior can easily lead to disrepute, ostracism, and sometimes violence (e.g.,

Bagli & Sev'er, 2003; Kardam, 2005; Pratt Ewing, 2008; Sev'er, & Yurdakul, 2001; Wikan, 2008). This research also reveals that honor belongs to individuals as members of families and sometimes of bigger social groups; both positive and negative acts committed by close others and ingroup members can affect individuals' own standing in the society by implicating their honor. Thus, in many collectivistic honor cultures (where the self is typically experienced as an interdependent and interpersonally connected entity, primarily defined by one's place in social relationships and others surrounding the self (e.g., Kitayama, Duffy & Uchida, 2007; Markus & Kitayama, 1991), such as Turkey, honor is a shared resource. In such cultures, individuals are socialized to be cognizant of the effects of their own behavior on the social reputation of their families and other ingroups (and expect close others to share the same sentiment), and to respond appropriately to honor threats to regain their reputation.

Recent social psychological research supports these observations on the nature of honor in Turkey. For example, research designed to explore conceptions of honor reveals that Turkish participants have a more elaborate conception of honor (pointing to the greater salience of honor in this group) than do northern American participants (Cross et al., 2014). Moreover, when asked to generate honor-threatening situations, Turkish participants list more honor-threatening situations that involve close others and false accusations than do northern American participants. They also expect honor-threatening situations to impact on their own feelings and close others' feelings similarly, whereas American participants expect these situations to have greater impact on their own feelings than on the feelings of close others (Uskul et al., 2012).

Thus far, research focused on behavioral reactions to honor attacks suggests that Turkish participants should respond more aggressively than northern Americans. For example, Turkish participants are more likely than American participants to evaluate positively a person who confronts a false accusation rather than one who responds by withdrawing (Cross, Uskul, Gercek-Swing, Aozkan, & Ataca, 2013). Moreover, Cross et al.

(2013) found that compared to American participants, Turkish participants are more likely to think that others in their society would endorse confrontation more than withdrawal when actors experience honor attacks. Similarly, Turkish participants are more likely than Dutch participants to report that they would act aggressively when faced with an insult (van Osch et al., 2013) and, importantly, this cultural difference is driven by differences in family honor rather than differences in masculine honor. These findings provide initial psychological evidence from individuals of Turkish background for both cultural norms and individual readiness to retaliate in the face of threats to honor; however, no research so far has tested whether the above observations about the culture of honor in the Turkish context would translate into actual aggressive behavioral responses in the face of honor threats.

It is also important to establish the link between honor and aggression beyond the previously examined cultural contexts in southern U.S. that are predominantly individualistic (Hofstede, 1980) and loose (Gelfand et al., 2011) in cultural orientation and to extend this investigation to cultural contexts such as Turkey where the cultural orientation is predominantly collectivistic (Hofstede, 1980) and tight (Gelfand et al., 2011). In tight cultures, social norms and expectations for appropriate behavior are stricter than in "loose" societies, and individuals can expect harsher judgment in a tight culture when they violate a social norm. Thus, Turkish people may feel more compelled to respond to honor threats due to strong social norms. Moreover, a key element of cultures of honor in the southern regions of the U.S. is that men in these contexts are prepared to protect with violence their reputation for strength and toughness, which has been considered to result from the requirements of the type of economy (herding) that dominated in these sparsely settled, lawless regions (e.g., Fehrenbach, 2000; Nisbett & Cohen, 1996). Consequently, researchers investigating the culture of honor in southern U.S. primarily have examined masculinity threats (i.e., threats to men's reputation for strength and toughness) as a major source of threat to one's honor (e.g., Cohen et al., 1996, 1998; Cohen & Nisbett, 1994, 1997; Cohen et al., 1996; Cohen et al., 1999). The work summarized above on the

characteristics of the culture of honor in Turkey, however, suggests that different types of honor threats (e.g., those involving false accusations and those that are directed to close others) may be more culturally appropriate forms of threats to examine in relation to honor-aggression link. Thus differences in the characteristics of the cultural contexts in cultures of honor in the south of the U.S. and in the southeast of Europe necessitate a reexamination of the previously observed link between honor and aggression. Furthermore, as suggested by Henrich, Heine and Norenzayan (2010), generalizations to other cultural groups (in this case other cultures of honor) based on a thin (and sometimes rather unusual) slice of humanity (in this case southern regions of the U.S.) should be avoided and psychologists should strive to gather comparative data across diverse populations. Thus, following these suggestions by Henrich et al. (2010) and existing findings on the culture of honor in Turkey, in the current work, we examined the behavioral consequences of being subjected to individual (Studies 1 and 2) and relational (Study 2) honor threats in northern American and Turkish samples.

The Role of Honor Endorsement in Responses to Honor Threats

Not every member of a cultural group will internalize or endorse a cultural orientation or ideal to the same extent. In fact, some members of a cultural group may live their lives according to certain cultural ideals, whereas others may reject these ideals and engage in behavior that is in contradiction or in opposition to those that are culturally reinforced. To further complicate the picture, endorsement or rejection of cultural ideals may operate differentially across a variety of situations. For example, while individual honor threats may strongly influence individual behavior in a given cultural context, relational honor threats may have a weaker influence on individual behavior, allowing individual variations in endorsement of a cultural ideal to moderate the observed behaviors. Leung and Cohen (2011) elaborated on this three-way interplay between culture, individual, and situation in their Culture X Person X Situation (CuPS) approach, which allows the investigation of individual variation in a cultural ideal or value across different situations.

Following this approach, in Study 2 we examined the role of honor endorsement among Turkish and northern American participants in honor-threatening situations that are either individual or relational in nature.

Present Studies

In the current research, we focus on actual interpersonal threats directed to a person's honesty. Honesty is an important personal virtue considered to be a core determinant of honor in most societies (Pitt-Rivers, 1965); both Turkish and northern American participants view honesty as central to their lay conceptions of honor (Cross et al., 2014). Thus, using behavioral measures that serve as proxies of aggressive responding, we examine retaliatory responses to threats to one's personal honesty (Study 1) and to both one's personal honesty and the honesty of one's parents (Study 2). This way, we go beyond existing research on honor threats and aggressive responding by providing behavioral evidence of retaliation in the context of both personal and relational honor attacks.

STUDY 1

The goal of Study 1 was to examine cultural differences in retaliatory responses in the face of an honor attack, with members of an honor culture (Turkey) and members of a non-honor culture (northern US) and test the prediction that, although members of the northern American and Turkish cultures value honesty at similar levels, Turkish individuals would be more likely to retaliate when their honor is attacked. The honor attack was operationalized as negative feedback provided in response to participants' essays on honesty. We measured retaliation in the form of the degree to which participants made it difficult for the feedback writer to earn a cash prize by successfully completing tangram puzzles. We predicted that when exposed to an honor attack, Turkish participants would engage in greater retaliation compared to northern American participants by assigning more difficult tangrams compared to easy tangrams.

Method

Participants and Design. Participants were undergraduate students at a Turkish university who self-identified as Turkish ($n = 91$, 56 women, $M_{\text{age}} = 20.33$, $SD = 1.48$) and at a northern American university who self-identified as European-American ($n = 105$, 61 women, $M_{\text{age}} = 19.61$, $SD = 2.17$). All participants were recruited through departmental subject pools in return for course credit. The study used a 2 (cultural group: Turkey vs. northern US) x 2 (type of feedback: negative vs. neutral) between participants design.

Procedure and materials. Participants were invited to take part in a study of communication skills and critical thinking that required the involvement of two participants. Upon arrival to the lab, they were seated in a cubicle and told that the second participant had not yet arrived. After waiting a couple of minutes, the experimenter looked at her watch and began the introduction to the study, explaining that the study examined how personality and values relate to communication. One participant was to write a short persuasive essay on values (the writer role); the other participant was to complete critical thinking tasks which included evaluating the writer's essay (the evaluator role) and completing an additional task assessing critical thinking. The participant was then asked to choose a piece of paper from an envelope to be assigned to either the writer or the evaluator role. In reality, all participants were assigned to the writer role. After participants completed the consent form, the experimenter asked them to complete a short questionnaire to emphasize the cover story's focus on communication skills which also included demographic questions.

Shortly after participants started working on the questionnaire, the experimenter opened the main door of the lab and pretended that the "other" participant had arrived. This pretense included greeting the (fictitious) participant, escorting him/her to a cubicle next to the participant's, and reading the same instructions previously given to the real participant, with the exception that he/she would be the evaluator (language indicated that this person's gender matched the actual participants). Pilot testing revealed that the actual

participant could hear enough of this charade to believe that a second participant was involved in the study.

After participants completed the initial questionnaire, the experimenter asked them to write a short essay focusing on how specific values influence one's life, and describing at least one specific episode or situation that reveals the role of this value in one's life. The instruction page included a list of 10 values (e.g., honesty, freedom, success, etc.), implying that participants could choose any value from the list for their essay. The experimenter, however, steered them toward writing on honesty explaining that essays on honesty were badly needed. Finally, the experimenter provided additional instructions by asking participants to write about an incident in which they behaved in an honest, trustworthy, and just way even when doing so could hurt them (i.e., when they could have behaved dishonestly to benefit themselves, but chose to behave honestly instead). All participants agreed to write about honesty, and they were given 10 minutes to work on this task alone in their cubicle.

Feedback manipulation. After 10 minutes, the experimenter saved each participant's essay to a flash drive to take to the other (imaginary) participant for evaluation. While waiting for the evaluation, participants were asked to read a short article about writing persuasive essays consistent with the cover story of the study.

The experimenter then selected a sealed envelope that contained a previously prepared feedback form. Feedback form envelopes were arranged in a random order and the experimenters remained blind to the feedback condition. To keep with the cover story, the feedback sheet contained a few filler items regarding the communication aspects of the essay (e.g., *How persuasive were this person's arguments?*). Negative feedback focused on questioning the truth value of the essay and had elements of false accusation (e.g., *Something like this is so easy to fake there is no way it can be tested. I bet the person made it all up.*). The feedback was based on findings obtained in a previous study (Uskul et al., 2012), which showed that disgracing someone and pointing out negatives in someone

were seen as attacks to honor among both Turkish and North American individuals. Neutral feedback did not comment on the credibility of the essay but provided generic comments on the task (e.g., *Writing about an incident that relates to a value is a difficult task, especially when it comes to remembering a specific event in one's life.*).

After waiting for a short period, the experimenter entered the cubicle of the imaginary participant and pretended to collect the completed feedback form. The experimenter then gave the sealed envelope to the real participant and provided instructions that emphasized that the experimenter was unaware of the feedback, saying "The other participant used this form to evaluate your essay. We think it is most informative for participants to have a chance to see what the other person wrote, but it is completely confidential. So when you finish reading it please put it back in the envelope and tape it closed." Participants were then left to read the feedback.¹

Dependent variable (Tangram assignment). After participants were given a few minutes to read the feedback, the experimenter told them that the other participant would also be asked to complete a critical thinking task that required him/her to solve several puzzles. Participants were then shown an example of a tangram task (see Bartlett & Anderson, 2011; Gentile et al, 2009; Saleem, Anderson, & Gentile, 2012 where this measure was employed previously), in which several small shapes (e.g., small square, large triangle) were used to form a larger figure (e.g., a boat, a bird). Figures that require more shapes are harder and more time consuming than are those requiring fewer shapes. To ensure that participants had an accurate understanding of how the task worked and its difficulty, they were asked to solve a tangram of medium difficulty. When they completed the sample tangram, the experimenter gave them a list of tangram puzzles consisting of 30 figures at three difficulty levels (easy, medium, and difficult) and asked them to select 11 figures to be solved by the other participant. They were told this was to avoid experimenter bias. They were informed that the other participant would win \$10 (15 TL in Turkey) if s/he solved 10 tangrams in 10 minutes. The experimenter reminded participants that they could

distribute tangrams as they wished and the other participant would not know who selected the tangrams. The experimenter then left the participants to assign tangrams in private. When finished, participants were given an evaluation form that contained a manipulation check question ("If you wrote the essay, how positive or negative was the other participant's feedback on your essay?" 1 = *very positive* to 9 = *very negative*) among other filler questions that focused on the general aspects of the study. We refrained from presenting participants with manipulation check questions that referred directly to their perceptions of honor threat to avoid the possibility of making transparent the purpose of the study. We expected no differences in how negatively this feedback would be perceived by members of the two cultural groups, especially given that we ran this study in an academic context where positive feedback was expected to be equally valued by all participants. This prediction was also based on the expectation that the critical difference between the two cultural groups would lie in how an honor threat influences subsequent behavior, not primarily in whether the manipulation threatens honor more in one cultural group than in another (see Leung & Cohen, 2011).

Before being debriefed, participants completed demographic questions including gender, age, and ethnicity. They also completed questions about family SES (1 = *very poor* to 5 = *middle class* to 9 = *very wealthy*), religious devotion (1 = *not at all devout* to 9 = *extremely devout*), and upbringing (1 = *very rural* to 9 = *very urban*). Participants in both the Turkish ($M = 5.46$, $SD = 1.00$) and northern American ($M = 5.51$, $SD = 1.21$) samples rated their SES similarly, identifying themselves as middle class, $F > 1$. Turkish participants, however, rated themselves as having significantly higher religious devotion ($M = 6.12$, $SD = 1.72$) and having more urban upbringing ($M = 6.55$, $SD = 1.79$) than did northern American participants ($M = 4.91$, $SD = 2.08$) and ($M = 5.46$, $SD = 1.00$, respectively). Covarying these measures in our analyses did not change the pattern of the reported findings.

Debriefing. When participants finished the final set of questions, the experimenter asked a series of questions to check for suspicion. Finally, the experimenter provided an

elaborate debriefing. Participants' comments during the debriefing period were noted by the experimenter and were used later to screen for suspicion. All participants were given the chance to participate in a \$10 (15 TL) drawing at the end of the data collection period.

Results and Discussion

We first screened for accuracy in following the instructions for the essay-writing task and for suspicion. All participants successfully followed the essay writing instructions. Five participants who were judged to have clearly seen through the cover study and understood the purpose of the study were excluded from the analyses. Thus, the sample used in the analyses below consisted of 90 Turkish (56 women) and 101 northern American (59 women) participants. The Turkish sample ($M_{\text{age}} = 20.31, SD = 1.47$) was significantly older than the American sample ($M_{\text{age}} = 19.60, SD = 2.17$), $F(1, 189) = 6.76, p = .01, d = .38$, thus age was controlled in the analyses reported below. We included gender as a variable in our analyses given that men and women may respond to honor threats in different ways (e.g., Rodriguez Mosquera et al., 2014; Rodriguez Mosquera et al., 2002a), and we report significant gender differences in a footnote which should be interpreted with caution given the unequal number of men and women. We should note, however, that we did not predict gender differences per se given that the honor threat used in both studies was not intended to target one's masculinity or femininity and was of nonsexual nature. Due to missing data, the degrees of freedom vary slightly across analyses.

Manipulation check. We conducted an ANOVA on the manipulation check question using cultural group (TR vs. US), participant gender (women vs. men), and type of feedback (negative vs. neutral) as between-participant variables. As expected, the negative feedback ($M = 6.31, SD = .97$) was rated more negatively than was the neutral feedback ($M = 2.46, SD = 1.56$), $F(1, 181) = 427.38, p < .001, d = 2.96$. In addition, Turkish participants ($M = 4.62, SD = 2.20$) evaluated the feedback across the two conditions more negatively than did North American participants ($M = 4.21, SD = 2.43$), $F(1, 181) = 8.08, p = .012, d = .18$. These main effects were qualified by a significant cultural group X condition interaction,

$F(1, 181) = 16.96, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .09$. American participants ($M = 1.88, SD = .81$) evaluated the feedback less negatively in the neutral condition than did Turkish participants ($M = 3.09, SD = 1.92$), $F(1, 181) = 23.95, p < .001, d = .82$. Importantly, however, the two groups did not differ in their evaluation of the feedback in the negative condition ($M_{US} = 6.45, SD = .78$; $M_{TR} = 6.16, SD = 1.13$), $F(1, 181) = .76, p = .38$. No other main or interaction effect was significant. Thus, as expected, participants in both samples evaluated the honor threatening feedback equally negatively.

Tangram assignment. Participants chose the tangrams mostly from the medium category ($M_{\text{medium}} = 4.30, SD = 1.66$), followed by the easy category ($M_{\text{easy}} = 3.69, SD = 2.57$) and the difficult category ($M_{\text{difficult}} = 2.98, SD = 2.69$), $F(2, 380) = 9.98, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .05$. Following past research (e.g., Gentile et al, 2009; Saleem, et al., 2012) that employed this measure, we conducted analyses with difficult and easy tangrams only as this contains information about the number of selected tangrams of medium difficulty, rendering analysis on the medium category redundant. Moreover, number of medium tangrams assigned is not informative in terms of whether the participants choose an aggressive or lenient response to the 'other' participant's feedback.

We subtracted the number of easy tangrams selected from the number of difficult tangrams and subjected this difference score to an ANOVA with cultural group (TR vs. US), condition (negative vs. neutral), and participant gender (women vs. men) as between-participants variables. This analysis revealed significant main effects of condition, $F(1, 182) = 58.34, p < .001$, and cultural group, $F(1, 182) = 6.19, p = .014$. As expected, compared to participants who received neutral feedback ($M = -3.08, SD = 3.41$), those who received negative feedback on their essay assigned the imaginary participant a higher number of difficult tangrams relative to easy ones, ($M = 1.65, SD = 5.20$), $d = 1.08$. Overall, American participants ($M = -1.18, SD = 5.13$) chose a higher number of easy tangrams relative to difficult ones for the imaginary participant to solve than did Turkish participants ($M = -.18,$

$SD = 4.81$), $d = .20$. These main effects were qualified by a significant cultural group X condition interaction, $F(1, 182) = 5.99, p = .015, \eta_p^2 = .03$. The simple effects analysis showed that, both Turkish ($M = 2.87, SD = 4.19$) and northern American ($M = .57, SD = 5.78$) participants assigned significantly more difficult tangrams than easy ones after receiving the negative feedback compared to neutral feedback ($M_{TR} = -3.22, SD = 3.19$; ($M_{US} = -2.96, SD = 3.63$), however this effect was stronger for Turkish participants than it was for northern American participants, $F_{TR}(1, 182) = 47.15, p < .001, d = 1.64$; $F_{US}(1, 182) = 14.56, p < .001, d = .73$. Moreover, as hypothesized, compared to American participants ($M = .57, SD = 5.78$), Turkish participants ($M = 2.87, SD = 4.19$) assigned significantly more difficult tangrams relative to easy ones after receiving negative feedback, $F(1, 182) = 12.22, p = .001, d = .46$; there was no cultural group difference in the neutral condition, $F(1, 182) = .003, p = .96$ (see Table 1 for descriptive statistics and Figure 1 for differences in the number of difficult vs. easy tangrams assigned in each condition and cultural group).²

This study revealed that Turkish participants were more likely than American participants to retaliate against a person they perceived to have challenged their honesty, a core part of honor in both Turkish and northern American cultural worlds. By assigning more difficult tangrams (relative to easy ones) to the other participant who attacked their honesty, they made it less likely that the evaluator would be eligible to win a prize. Importantly, we found that the extent to which members of these cultural groups selected difficult versus easy tangrams did not differ in the neutral feedback condition, ruling out the possibility that Turkish participants had a general tendency to prefer difficult tangrams to easy ones. Moreover, the results of the manipulation check revealed that observed cultural differences in retaliation following negative feedback cannot be attributed to cultural differences in perceptions of the negativity of the feedback. Thus, as expected, cultural differences emerged in behavioral responses to this negative feedback, rather than in how

negative perceptions of the feedback. In Study 2, we turn to honor attacks directed to close others (parents) and the role of individuals' honor endorsement in retaliatory responses.

STUDY 2

One of the distinguishing characteristics of honor cultures, especially those in the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern regions, is the rootedness of personal honor in the actions of close others and in how they are socially evaluated (Miller, 1993; Pitt-Rivers, 1965, 1977; Stewart, 1994). Thus, honor does not rely exclusively on one's own actions and the ability to protect oneself against honor threats, but also on the actions of close others and their ability to protect their honor. These ethnographic observations have been supported by recent social psychological research conducted with members of different honor cultures in the Mediterranean and south Asian contexts, albeit with measures that relied exclusively on self-report (e.g., Rodriguez Mosquera et al., 2002a; Rodriguez Mosquera et al., 2014; Uskul et al., 2012). The present study thus extends this literature by using an actual honor threat (rather than an imaginary or recalled threat) and employing an outcome measure that (presumably) has real consequences for the attacker.

As mentioned earlier, the importance of protecting and maintaining one's own and one's family's honor may not be uniformly endorsed in a society. Just as with any other cultural ideal, individuals can react towards or against the honor ideals endorsed by the members of their society (see Leung & Cohen, 2011 for individual differences and cultural logics in honor societies). Thus, even in a traditional honor society, some people hold this value quite strongly, whereas others may question or reject its importance. Following this reasoning and to address a limitation of Study 1, in Study 2, we examined the extent to which individual differences in endorsement of honor values predict retaliation against an honor threat. Consistent with earlier work by Leung and Cohen (2011), we predicted that the notion of protecting one's honor in the face of a threat will be most salient for participants from an honor culture, but those who reject the importance of honor values will

react against this threat and will be less likely to retaliate compared to those who strongly endorse this value. Among members of a non-honor culture, we expected degree of endorsement of honor values to have little relation to retaliation, because honor is not a strong cultural ideal.

Thus, our first goal in this study was to replicate the cultural differences in retaliation to an honor threat directed at the self observed in Study 1 using a different behavioral outcome variable. Our second goal was to examine behavioral responses to honor threats directed to a person's family (parents) and thereby go beyond past research which has predominantly asked participants to imagine or recall family honor-threatening experiences. Our third goal was to investigate how individual differences in honor endorsement are associated with responses to honor threats.

Method

Participants and design. Participants were undergraduate students at a Turkish university who self-identified as Turkish ($n = 138$, 72 women, $M_{\text{age}} = 20.27$, $SD = 1.47$) and at a northern US university who self-identified as European-American ($n = 169$, 91 women, $M_{\text{age}} = 19.52$, $SD = 1.58$). All participants were recruited through departmental subject pools in return for course credit. The study used a 2 (cultural group: Turkey vs. northern US) \times 2 (type of feedback: negative vs. neutral) \times 2 (essay content: self vs. parents) between participants design. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions.

Procedure and materials. The procedure and materials were identical to those used in Study 1 with the following exceptions. First, the initial questionnaire included a measure of honor values embedded within other measures tapping communication skills to keep with the cover story. Second, we introduced an additional essay condition in which participants were asked to write about their family's honesty. Third, the feedback given to participants in the family condition targeted their family (instead of the participants themselves). Fourth, we asked participants to write an essay describing how honesty (as

one of the listed values on the sheet) influences their lives, thus employing a somewhat less specific set of instructions compared to Study 1 (instructions were otherwise identical to those used in Study 1). Finally, we used a new dependent measure to serve as a different proxy for retaliation. Participants were told the other participant would participate in a subsequent study of perception and problem solving, and they were asked to select the intensity level of stimuli to which the 'other' participant would be exposed.

Honor values. We assessed the endorsement of honor values using a 5-item measure developed by Rodriguez Mosquera et al. (2008) (e.g., "It is important that others have a positive image of me", 1 = *not at all* to 5 = *extremely*, $a_{TR} = .87$, $a_{US} = .83$).

Feedback manipulation. As in Study 1, participants were given feedback on their essay, ostensibly written by the 'other' participant, but this time the feedback targeted either the participants themselves or their family (matching the focus of the essay). As in Study 1, the negative feedback focused on questioning the truth value of the essay and had elements of false accusation (*"This essay isn't very persuasive, because I think this person just made this up and doesn't really mean it. It's easy [for someone's parents] to say that you value honesty, but do you really live it out? I think this person is just trying to make himself/herself [his/her family] look good. Nobody [Nobody's family] is really like this."*). The neutral feedback did not comment on the credibility of the essay, but provided generic comments on the task (*"Writing about our values is a difficult task. Most of the time, we hardly recognize what our [parents'] values are and how much they shape our [our parent's] life [lives]."*).

Dependent variable (stimuli intensity index). After participants read the feedback from the imaginary participant, the experimenter introduced the second experiment as one that involved problem solving while engaging in a variety of sensory tasks such as keeping one's hand in ice water or listening to background noise (modified after Mussweiler & Förster, 2000). While the other participant was ostensibly completing another task (measures the participant had already completed), the experimenter asked the

participants to help choose material for a subsequent study the other participant would complete immediately afterwards. As in Study 1, they were told this was to avoid experimenter bias.

The participants were given a form (labeled as part of another study by another research group) that asked them to select the intensity of various sensory tasks for the other participant. Instructions were framed to link sensory experience to problem solving (e.g., "*Some research suggests that exposure of the skin to cool temperatures enhances problem solving ability, compared to exposure to warm temperatures . . . Other research suggests that any temperature that causes pain can impair problem solving ability . . . For this task, the participant must keep his/her hand in ice water while completing a variety of problem solving puzzles.*"). For each task, participants chose the level of intensity that the other participant should be exposed to (e.g., *How long should the person be required to keep his/her hand in the icewater?*). Participants could choose among 8 possible intensities that ranged from very low (e.g., 30 seconds) to very high exposure (135 seconds). The main dependent variable was the average intensity level chosen for the five sensory perception tasks ($a_{TR} = .66$, $a_{US} = .72$); higher scores indicated more intense and potentially painful sensory experiences. Finally, participants completed the same manipulation question as in Study 1 embedded in other questions.

Debriefing. The same debriefing procedure adopted in Study 1 was used to screen for suspicion and to explain the true purpose of the study.

Results and Discussion

Seventy-one participants failed to follow the essay writing task instructions due to one of the following reasons: a) they wrote about honesty in general without any reference to themselves (or their parents; $n = 57$); b) they wrote about dishonesty (instead of honesty; $n = 11$); c) they wrote an essay on a topic other than honesty ($n = 3$). The accuracy rate did not differ by cultural group, $\chi^2(1) < 1$, *ns*. Twenty-seven participants were judged to have seen through the cover story and understood the purpose of the study.

Some participants both failed to follow instructions and showed suspicion, hence the excluded number of participants does not add to the number of individuals in both groups reported here. After the exclusion of these participants, the sample used in the analyses consisted of 99 Turkish (45 women) and 106 North American (56 women) participants.³ The Turkish sample ($M_{\text{age}} = 20.24$, $SD = 1.42$) was significantly older than the American sample ($M_{\text{age}} = 19.46$, $SD = 1.40$), $F(1, 203) = 15.64$, $p < .001$, $d = .55$, thus age was controlled in the analyses reported below. There were no significant effects involving gender.

Manipulation check. An ANOVA on the manipulation check question using cultural group (TR vs. US), type of feedback (negative vs. neutral), essay content (self vs. parent), and participant gender (women vs. men) as between subject variables showed, as expected, a significant main effect of feedback type, $F(1, 187) = 310.15$, $p < .001$; negative feedback ($M = 5.89$, $SD = 1.34$) was rated more negatively than neutral feedback ($M = 2.48$, $SD = 1.36$), $d = 2.52$. Although there was a trend for Turkish participants ($M = 4.22$, $SD = 2.17$) to evaluate the feedback across the two feedback conditions more negatively than did North American ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 2.17$) participants, $d = .17$, this effect was non-significant, $F(1, 187) = 3.42$, $p = .066$. Although no other main or interaction effect was significant, for exploratory purposes, we examined the pattern of cultural differences in how neutral versus negative feedback conditions were evaluated and found that American participants ($M = 2.16$, $SD = 1.06$) evaluated the neutral feedback as more positive than did Turkish participants ($M = 2.80$, $SD = 1.56$), $F(1, 187) = 4.08$, $p = .045$, $d = .48$, whereas this group difference was not significant in the negative feedback condition, ($M_{\text{TR}} = 6.00$, $SD = 1.36$ and $M_{\text{US}} = 5.80$, $SD = 1.32$), $F(1, 187) < 1$, $p = .49$, $d = .15$. This pattern replicates group differences in the evaluations of the feedback observed in Study 1, although the interaction was not statistically significant.

Honor values. An inspection of honor endorsement scores in both samples did not yield a significant difference, $F(1, 202) = 1.59$, $p = .21$. This replicates the pattern of other comparisons of honor value ratings of Turkish versus northern American participants (e.g.,

Cross et al., 2014) and northern versus Southern American participants (D'Andrade, 2000). We discuss this finding in the general discussion section below.

Stimuli intensity index. We subjected the stimuli intensity index to an ANOVA, with essay content, cultural group, type of feedback, and participant gender as between-participants variables. This analysis revealed a significant main effect of culture, $F(1, 188) = 14.40, p < .001$, with Turkish participants ($M = 4.61, SD = 1.25$) assigning more intense stimuli than northern American participants ($M = 3.93, SD = 1.29$), $d = .54$, and a marginally significant three-way interaction between cultural group X type of feedback X essay content, $F(1, 188) = 3.78, p = .053, \eta_p^2 = .020$. Decomposing this interaction using simple effects analysis revealed a significant difference in the self/negative feedback such that Turkish participants ($M = 5.08, SD = 1.19$) assigned more intense stimuli than did northern American participants ($M = 3.70, SD = 1.28$) (which replicates the pattern observed in Study 1), $F(1, 188) = 12.10, p < .001$, but not in the parent/negative condition, $F(1, 188) < 1, p = .33$ ($M_{TR} = 4.54, SD = 1.36$ and $M_{US} = 4.17, SD = 1.29$) (see Table 2 for descriptive statistics and see Figure 2 for intensity of stimuli as a function of feedback target and cultural background).

Next, to examine the role of honor endorsement in responses to feedback, we conducted a hierarchical regression analysis with the stimuli intensity index as the criterion variable and the type of feedback, essay content, and cultural group as categorical predictors (all effect-coded), and endorsement of honor values as a continuous predictor (centered). In Step 1, we found a significant main effect of cultural group, as reported above. The addition of two- and three-way interactions in Steps 2 and 3, respectively, did not increase the predictive value of the model (Step 2: $R^2_{\Delta} = .02, F[6, 176] < 1, p = .75$; Step 3: $R^2_{\Delta} = .03, F[4, 172] = 1.61, p = .18$).

Step 4, however, revealed a significant 4-way interaction between the predictors, $R^2_{\Delta} = .02, \beta = .15, t(171) = 2.09, p = .038$ (which held when controlling for participants' perception of feedback obtained in the manipulation check question, $\beta = .15, t(171) = 2.04,$

$p = .043$). Decomposing this four-way interaction revealed a significant three-way interaction between type of feedback, essay content, and endorsement of honor values in the Turkish sample, $R^2_{\Delta} = .06$, $\beta = .26$, $t(85) = 2.52$, $p = .014$, but not in the American sample, $\beta = -.04$, $t(85) < 1$, $p = .70$. The simple slope analysis in the Turkish sample showed that endorsement of honor values significantly predicted the level of intensity of selected sensory stimuli only when the essay content concerned parents' honesty and when the feedback was negative, $\beta = .74$, $t(85) = 3.03$, $p = .003$. Thus, when participants received negative feedback about their parents, their likelihood of retaliating increased as their endorsement of honor values increased. The slope of honor endorsement in the parent/negative feedback condition was significantly or marginally significantly different from all other slopes (see Figure 3). When the self was the focus of the negative feedback, there was a non-significant trend for higher endorsement of honor to predict greater retaliation for self-targeted honor threat, $\beta = .33$, $t(85) = 1.71$, $p = .09$. In short, Turkish participants who cared less about their social image retaliated less when parents were attacked than did those who cared a great deal about their social image. Social image concerns were less relevant to retaliation level when negative feedback targeted the self.

General Discussion

These are (to our knowledge) the first studies to experimentally show that members of a non-U.S. honor culture retaliate against a person who threatens their honor. Although other researchers have found a link between honor endorsement and retaliatory responses to honor attacks, most of this evidence comes from research comparing honor and non-honor states within the U.S. or focuses on self-report responses to imagined situations or recalled experiences involving honor attacks. Moreover, with a few exceptions, honor attacks have been operationalized as being directed to one's personal honor, leaving the consequences of attacks directed to one's relational honor understudied. The current research begins to fill these gaps in the literature by (a) extending the study of the honor-

retaliation link to an understudied honor culture, Turkey, in comparison to a dignity culture, northern U.S., (b) examining lab-based behavioral responses that served as proxies for aggressive responding, and (c) investigating retaliation in the face of honor attacks directed to either the individual or to one's parents. Moreover, it highlights the role of honor endorsement as an individual difference variable in retaliatory responses in these two cultural groups.

Study 1 showed that members of an honor culture retaliated more strongly than did members of a non-honor culture against the person who challenged their honesty by assigning him/her more difficult puzzles to be completed in an unrelated study, making it less likely the other person could win a prize. We replicated this pattern in Study 2, where we employed a different proxy for aggressive responding; Turkish participants retaliated more strongly than did northern American participants against the person who challenged their honesty by assigning them more intense unpleasant physical stimuli to be used in a second unrelated study. Thus, across two studies, Turkish participants engaged in behavior that they expected to lead to negative consequences for the person challenging their honesty. The members of the two cultural groups did not differ in their retaliatory behavior in the absence of an honor attack, demonstrating that Turkish participants do not show a general tendency to be harsher than do northern American participants.

This observed cultural difference in retaliation to honor threats directed to the individual was not replicated when the honor threat was directed towards one's parents, but this was due to moderation by honor values endorsement. Here, three important findings emerged. First, in the Turkish sample, but not the U.S. sample, endorsement of honor values was a predictor of retaliation when threatening feedback targeted the person's parents and oneself (the association was weaker in the latter case). Although these are correlational data and do not speak to causal processes, this cultural difference suggests that personal attitudes about the importance of social image are more likely to be associatively linked to reactions to honor threats among Turkish participants compared to

northern Americans. This points to the importance of honor as a cultural value shaping social behavior in the Turkish context, but not in the northern American context. Second, those who rejected honor values tended to shirk their obligation to retaliate, especially when honor threat was directed to the person's family. This pattern is in line with the notion of "cultural rejectionism" – that is, people who reject the ideals of their culture tend to act the least appropriately when it is most incumbent upon them to act correctly (Leung & Cohen, 2011). Just as the participants from an honor culture who rejected the concept of honor actively rejected the ideals of reciprocity in Leung and Cohen's (2011) study (reciprocity is an important norm defining honor cultures), Turkish participants who weakly endorsed honor values chose to respond less aggressively to an honor threat compared to those who endorsed honor strongly. It remains to be explored, however, whether such rejectionist patterns can be observed outside the lab, where pressures to behave in culturally expected ways may be difficult to resist.

Third, endorsement of honor values as an individual difference variable predicted retaliation only in the conditions where Turkish participants received an honor threat; it did not have any predictive power in the conditions where the feedback was neutral and thus not threatening to honor. This pattern further contributes to the previous observation that honesty is an important component of honor in this cultural context (also see Cross et al., 2014). Overall, these findings point to the importance of studying both within- and between-culture variation; examining individual variation in the level of endorsement of cultural values can inform us about the behavioral patterns of both those who fully endorse those cultural values and those who do not (see Leung & Cohen's [2011] CuPS approach on this point). Not all individuals in a cultural context where honor is an important driving force can be expected to behave uniformly even in the face of a threat to a culturally endorsed value.

Finally, we should note that Turkish and northern American participants did not differ in their honor value ratings. This might come as a surprise as this research is based on previous findings that have demonstrated honor to be a more salient concept for Turkish

individuals than for northern American individuals (Cross et al., 2014; Uskul et al., 2012). Lack of significant differences in mean ratings obtained from self-reports is, however, not uncommon in culture comparative research; examples of non-significant differences in self report ratings can be found in both honor research (e.g., Cross et al., 2014; D'Andrade, 2000) and other areas of cultural research (e.g., Kitayama, Park, Sevincer, Karasawa, & Uskul, 2009; Oyserman, Koon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002) despite significant cultural differences observed in behavioral or implicit measures in expected directions. Thus, mean differences between cultural groups calculated using self-report, Likert-scaled measures have not been recommended as reliable indicators of cultural differences; instead, on-line behaviors are viewed as better indicators of cultural shaping (e.g., Kitayama, 2002), which reflects the approach we took in both of our studies. The use of self-reports is, however, recommended for investigating within culture variation and relationships between variables within a cultural context (Leung & Cohen, 2011; Kitayama, 2002; Uchida, Kitayama, Mesquita, Reyes, & Mohrling, 2008). This is the approach we took in Study 2.

There are few limitations in this current work that we would like to acknowledge. One limitation of the current work is that it focused on one honor culture compared to one dignity culture; hence, generalizations to other honor and dignity cultures must be made with caution. A second limitation concerns the number of participants that had to be excluded in Study 2. Although this might suggest a methodological weakness, the debriefing session revealed that the more generic nature of the instructions used in Study 2 (compared to Study 1) led some participants to write about honesty in general (without reference to their own honesty experiences) or about different aspects of honesty (e.g., dishonesty). We took a conservative approach and decided to eliminate these participants as we suspected that the negative feedback would have a weaker (or no) effect when the essay was not about the person's own honesty experiences. A third limitation concerns the nature of the samples we included in this research. Our samples consist of university students in urban centers of two heterogeneous cultural contexts (US and Turkey). Although focusing on

student samples allows us to compare individuals who are likely to resemble each other in many respects (e.g. education level, daily life experiences), it also narrows our understanding of the potentially different ways in which honor threats are acted upon in a given national culture. We should also note that students' reports of personal characteristics (such as honor endorsement) or behavior (e.g., responding in a retaliatory way to an honor attack) should not be taken as always representative of their culture (see Williams & Best, 1990). Having more diverse samples in future studies would help alleviate these limitations.

A fourth limitation is that we did not provide direct evidence that the negative feedback used in both studies threatened participants' honor; this was inferred based on previous work (Cross et al., 2014; Uskul et al., 2012). Future research would benefit by testing this link more directly and assessing its mediating role in cultural differences in aggressive responding to honor threats. Finally, some readers may conclude that our studies did not adequately threaten honor because there were no additional witnesses to the honor attack. Other honor studies have shown no differences in behavior when an observer was present or not (Cohen, et al., 1996, Study 2). In addition, when Turkish and American participants were asked to list honor-attacking situations in another study (Uskul et al., 2012), content coding revealed that only 25% of the situations involved explicit reference to an audience. The presence of others at the time of the honor attack might not always lead to more extreme pattern of responses (see Cohen et al., 1996, Study 2). Nonetheless, future research should test the effect of the presence of witnesses when a person's honesty is under attack.

In conclusion, the current findings make a novel contribution to the literature on the honor-retaliation link by providing lab-based behavioral evidence of retaliation in the face of personal and relational honor threats in an understudied honor culture compared to a dignity culture. Moreover, by jointly considering the role of culture and individual differences in retaliation in the face of honor attacks, this work highlights the importance of not treating cultures uniformly. The current findings help us understand behavior observed among

members of honor cultures in the face of honor attacks that are not directed to a person's masculinity, which has been a common way of examining the honor-aggression link. This way, they shed light on different forms of everyday behaviors outside of the laboratory, such as why some individuals react aggressively when falsely accused of having engaged in an action incompatible with the honorable image they strive to possess. So what is the price to pay when one accuses another person of dishonesty? It depends on the challenged person's cultural background and personal attitudes.

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Footnotes

¹This study also included a separate 'public' condition where participants were made to think that their response was seen by the experimenter and would be seen by others. Our observations during the study and the conversations we had with participants in the debriefing period, however, suggested that Turkish participants construed the situation in the public condition as surveillance by the experimenter alone rather than being public in the sense that others learn about it. We therefore do not report this condition as part of the procedure as our observations suggest that it did not work as intended. We would be happy to share the details of this condition and associated results with interested readers.

²This analysis also revealed a significant cultural group X gender, $F(1, 182) = 6.92, p = .009$, and cultural group X gender X condition interactions, $F(1, 182) = 6.20, p = .014$. Northern American male participants assigned more difficult tangrams compared to easy ones in the negative condition ($M = -2.43, SD = 6.14$) compared to neutral condition ($M = -3.53, SD = 3.34$), however this difference was not statistically significant ($p = .43$), whereas all other groups differentiated between the two conditions by assigning a significantly higher number of difficult tangrams over easy ones (all $ps < .001$).

³We started running Study 2 earlier than Study 1. When finalizing the instructions for the essay task for Study 1, we decided to make the instructions somewhat more concrete to help participants focus on honesty examples from their lives. As evidenced by all participants in Study 1 writing on the expected content in the essay task, this change increased accuracy in following instructions.

Table 1

Tangram Assignment by Cultural Group and Type of Feedback*

	Turkey		Northern US	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Negative Feedback	2.87	4.19	.57	5.78
Neutral Feedback	-3.22	3.19	-2.96	3.63

* The numbers correspond to the number of easy tangrams subtracted from the number of difficult tangrams.

Table 2

Stimuli Intensity Index by Cultural Group, Essay Content, and Type of Feedback

	Turkey		Northern US	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Self				
Neutral Feedback	4.31	1.31	4.03	1.26
Negative Feedback	5.08	1.19	3.70	1.28
Parent				
Neutral Feedback	4.68	1.06	3.84	1.46
Negative Feedback	4.54	1.36	4.17	1.14

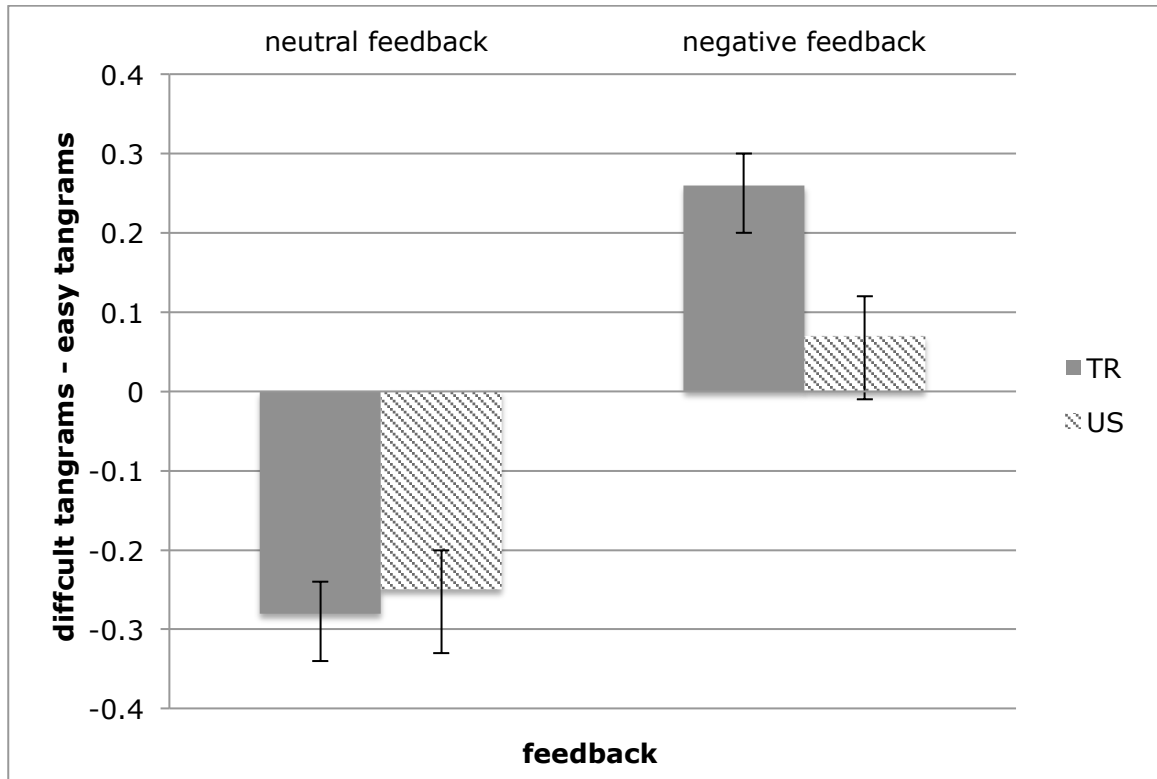
Figures

Figure 1. Difference in the number of difficult tangrams (relative to the number of easy tangrams) assigned to the imaginary participant as a function of type of feedback (neutral vs. negative) and cultural background (TR vs. US) (Study 1)

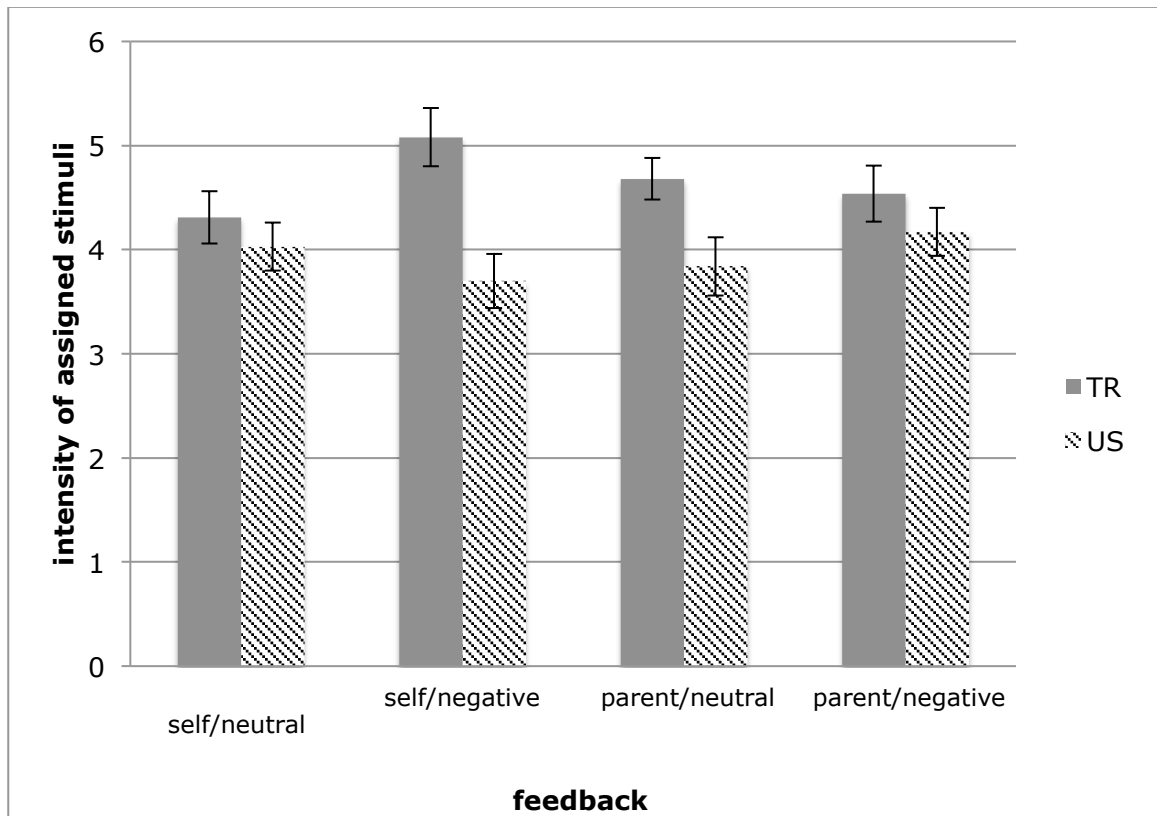


Figure 2. Intensity of stimuli assigned to the imaginary participant as a function of type of feedback (neutral vs. negative), target (self vs. parent) and cultural background (TR vs. US) (Study 2)

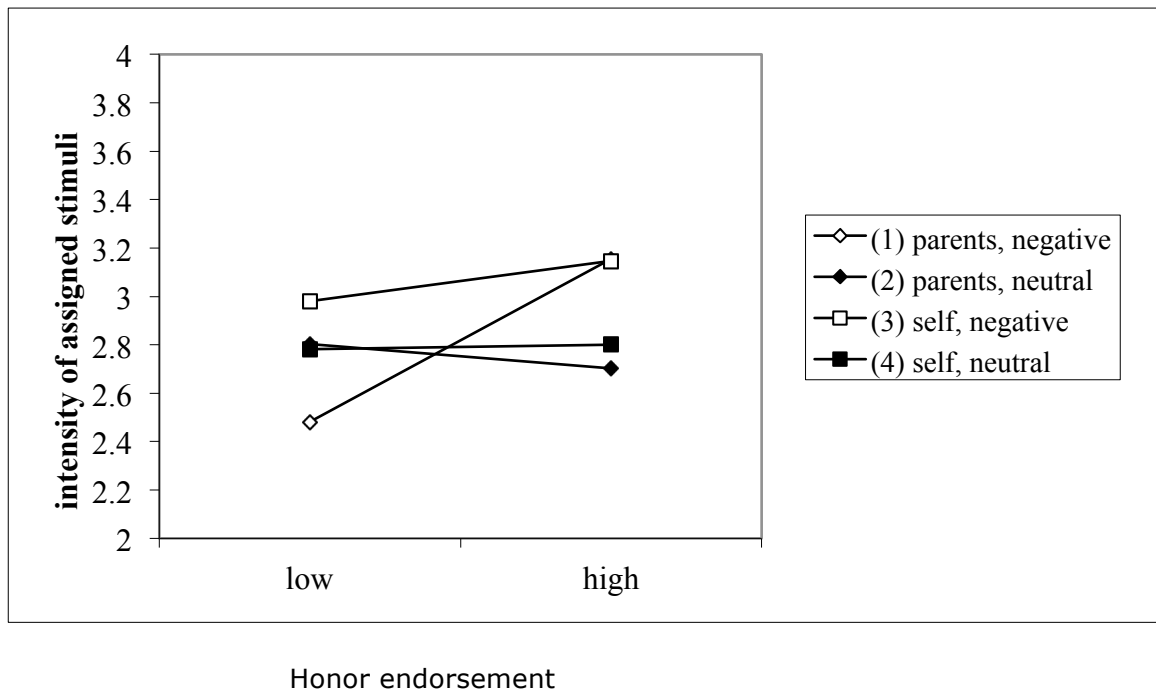


Figure 3. Intensity of sensory stimuli assigned to imaginary participants as a function of type of feedback (neutral vs. negative), essay content (self vs. parents), and endorsement of honor values within the Turkish sample (Study 2)

Note: Simple slope differences (only significant or marginally significant one differences are reported):

$$(1) \text{ and } (2) \ t = 2.84, \ p = .006$$

$$(1) \text{ and } (3) \ t = 1.76, \ p = .08$$

$$(1) \text{ and } (4) \ t = 2.01, \ p = .048$$

Note: The standardized values for honor endorsement were used in plotting this graph.