Emotional Reactions to Violations of Honor: A Multi-Method Investigation of Gheirat in Iran
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Introduction

Gheirat is a moral-emotional concept ubiquitous in some Middle Eastern cultures and closely related to honor. People in these cultures experience gheirat in situations where there are violations related to namoos. Namoos refers to people (e.g., partner, siblings) or entities (e.g., religion, country) that are associated with a person, such that one feels protective towards them.

Study 1: Qualitative

Nineteen semi-structured interviews were conducted and transcribed (Participants: M_age = 29.68, 12 male).

Thematic analysis of the interviews (M_scale = 6580) using Braun and Clarke’s (2006) method indicated three distinct types of gheirat-elicitng situations, with distinct emotional, physiological, and cognitive profiles.

Study 2 and 3

Participants: 394 Iranian adults, M_age = 30.95, 52% female

Study 2: wrote about a time they experienced gheirat, and responded to questionnaires that measured their emotional, cognitive, and physiological reactions to the experience.

Study 3: reported their intensity of gheirat in 104 common scenarios that can elicit gheirat towards various targets.

Study 4: Social Consequences of Expressing Gheirat

Method: Participants (694 Iranian adults, M_age = 31.76, 50.39% female) read previously-piloted scenarios and made judgements about the protagonist. Protagonist’s gender and reaction to the event differed based on the experimental condition.

Example scenario: [Protagonist] is in the car with her/his spouse, and the spouse is driving. They get into a car crash, and the other driver insults the spouse and curses at her/him.

Protagonist’s reaction (experimental manipulation):
(a) “The protagonist feels gheirat and shows it by talking to the driver and giving him/her a strong warning.”
(b) “The protagonist experiences sadness, talks to the driver and shows the driver her/his sadness.”
(c) “without showing any emotional response to the situation. [the protagonist] gets out of the car and talks to the driver about repairing the damage.”

Discussion

There are both positive and negative social consequences to expressing gheirat. A gheirat-expresser is generally perceived as more warm and more obstructive. However, these perceptions are moderated by the expresser’s gender. Men (compared to women) are judged more positively if they express gheirat when it is expected, and become more desirable targets of affiliation.