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Self-Blaming and Other-Blaming Moral Emotions Are Complementary: Two Studies in Turkish Culture

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Abstract

The present paper reports results of empirical investigation for a model that posits a complementary relationship between self-blaming and other-blaming emotions and suggests that distinctive relationships between them depend on the relational context and associated moral codes. Relevant findings of two studies in Turkish culture that examined different aspects of the model are presented. The first study provided partial support for the relationship between shame- and guilt-proneness and relational model preferences. The findings of the second study revealed strong support for the complementary relationship (1) between shame related to rejection or exclusion and disgust in contexts that represented the communal sharing relational model / divinity moral code; (2) between shame related to status loss and contempt in contexts that represented the authority ranking relational model / community moral code and (3) between guilt and anger in contexts representing equality matching or market pricing relational model / autonomy moral codes. Overall, these findings in Turkish culture provided initial empirical evidence for the connections between moral emotions, moral codes and relational models.

Introduction

Relational models theory (Fiske, 1992; 2004) posits four basic models for human relationships (communal sharing - CS, authority ranking - AR, equality matching - EM and market pricing - MP) and further argues that morality consists of relationship regulation (Rai & Fiske, 2011). Accordingly, in each of these models, moral action serves to establish or restore unity, hierarchy, equality, or proportionality, respectively. From this point of view, each relational model makes its own unique moral demands, such that an action which might be seen as morally appropriate in one model may be perceived as entirely inappropriate in another. For example, favoring kin may be seen as morally correct in communal sharing relations, while the same behavior may be seen as morally-condemned corruption in market pricing relations. In line with Fiske's (2002) general assertion that each relational model entails distinctive emotions, each model may also be seen as eliciting specific moral emotions.

Shweder and colleagues (Shweder, Much, Mahapatra, & Park, 1997) similarly argue that morality is not unitary but rather consists of three "ethics" or codes: (1) Com-

munity, or rights and responsibilities with regard to the group and authority, including loyalty, conformity to norms, obedience and protection; (2) Autonomy, including rights and responsibilities of the individual with regard to harm and fairness; and (3) Divinity, including considerations of wholeness, purity, sanctity and defilement. This approach further posits that each of these codes entails a different emotion when violations are observed – contempt, anger and disgust, respectively. The three moral codes and their accompanying other-blaming emotions are labeled the "CAD triad" (Rozin, Lowery, Imada, & Haidt, 1999).

The moral concerns of the four relational models can be seen to parallel (or possibly give rise to) those of the CAD triad (Sunar, 2009). Briefly, Community concerns are similar to those of AR; Autonomy concerns are parallel to those of EM and MP; and Divinity concerns are parallel to those of CS.

These relatively recent approaches that see morality and moral emotions as having their origin in social relations stand in contrast to the more individual-based approach, which focuses on "self-conscious" or self-blaming emotions, namely shame and guilt (*e.g.*, Tangney & Dearing, 2002).

The present paper proposes that these two sets of emotions, the self-blaming and other-blaming moral emotions, are in complementary relationship with one another, and that each pair of them tends to be experienced in specifiable relational contexts, one member of the pair being felt by the moral transgressor and the other by the blaming observer (real or imagined). (See also Rudolph, & Tscharaktschiew, 2014, for a discussion of targets of moral emotions.)

Violations and emotional responses

What counts as a moral infraction in the different relational models (and moral codes) varies from one model to the other (Rai & Fiske, 2011; Rozin et al. 1999; Sunar, 2009). Accordingly, we expect emotional responses to vary along with the nature of the infraction (Laham, Chopra, Lalljee & Parkinson, 2010; Sunar 2009).

In a communal sharing relation, governed by the code of divinity, moral violations include ignoring the needs of members of the communal group or dyad or violating boundaries, taboos or rules. The person who violates the code is expected to fear or experience rejection or exclusion – feeling shame as impurity and unworthiness – and victims or observers are expected to feel disgust, which in its physical form motivates extrusion of an offending substance and in its metaphorical social extension motivates exclusion of the human offender.

In an authority ranking relation, governed by the community ethic, infractions include actions such as disobedience or disloyalty by subordinates, failure by superiors to protect subordinates, overstepping boundaries of rank, or flouting authority and tradition. The person who violates the code is expected to fear or experience loss of status or reputation – feeling shame – and victims or observers are expected to feel contempt,

"looking down" on the one who has fallen.

In an equality matching relation, governed by the autonomy ethic, violations include undeserved harm, failure of reciprocity, and other types of cheating. In a market pricing relation, also governed by the autonomy ethic, infractions consist mainly of violations of equity (proportionality of outcomes to inputs). In both of these relational models and the ethic of autonomy, the violator is expected to feel guilt and a desire to make up for the misdeed and the harm caused to the other, while victims or observers are expected to feel anger and a desire to punish or exact revenge.

To sum up, the proposed reciprocal or complementary self-blaming and other-blaming emotion pairs are as follows: (1) shame of exclusion – disgust; (2) shame of status loss – contempt; (3) guilt – anger. These relationships are illustrated in Table 1 (see also Sunar, 2009).

Table 1
Complementary moral emotions

Relational Model/ Moral Code	Other-blaming Emotion	Self-blaming Emotion
CS[1] / Divinity	Disgust	Shame (of exclusion)
AR[2] / Community	Contempt	Shame (of status loss)
EM[3] + MP[4] / Autonomy	Anger	Guilt

[1] Communal Sharing; [2] Authority Ranking; [3] Equality Matching; [4] Market Pricing

While some aspects of the CAD triad hypothesis have received a great deal of attention, notably the association of the emotion of disgust with the moral code of divinity (for a partial review see Russell, & Giner-Sorolla, 2013), the full model has been little investigated. And, although the original study carried out by Rozin et al. (1999) was based on cross-cultural data, few studies have followed their example, with the exception of some of those focusing on disgust. One important exception to these generalizations, and one which lends support to the model suggested here, is the study by Giner-Sorolla and Espinosa (2011) carried out with samples from both UK and Spain, which found that exposure to angry faces was more likely to elicit guilt rather than shame, while disgusted expressions were more likely to elicit shame rather than guilt. It was also found in this study that angry expressions were more likely to be expected in situations involving harm-doing or rights violations than in violations involving body-related norms.

In a first attempt to bring the CAD triad hypothesis into juxtaposition with relational models theory, two studies were carried out in Turkey to investigate different aspects of the proposed relations. Although there are rather clear definitions of the emotion terms in English, there are some difficulties in achieving the same clarity in Turkish. Although there are specific Turkish terms that correspond with each of the English terms de-

fined above, in common usage little distinction is made between shame (*utanç*) and guilt (*suçluluk*), with considerably more frequent use of shame-related words than guilt-related words. Being carried out with Turkish-speaking respondents, the studies reported here placed somewhat more emphasis on shame.

The first study investigated the relationship between shame and guilt as self-blaming emotions and their relationship with relational models and attachment style (Tokuş, 2014). From this study, only the data regarding the relationship between self-blaming emotions and relational models are presented here. The second study focused more directly on shame, as well as investigating other accompanying emotions, and the emotions expected of others in specific shame-arousing social situations (Çağın, 2014).

Study 1

Hypothesis: Frequency of reported experience of both shame and guilt will vary according to the individual's preference of relational model.

Method

Participants. 386 respondents (79 male), age 18-30, completed the measures.

Instruments. Preference for relational models was measured by the Modes of Relationship Questionnaire (MORQ; Haslam & Fiske, 1999). Frequency of experiencing feelings of shame and guilt was assessed using the Personal Feeling Questionnaire-2 (PFQ-2; Harder & Zalma, 1990). Both the PFQ-2 and the MORQ were translated into Turkish using standard translation-back translation procedures and corrected in the light of feedback in a pilot application.

Procedure. The instruments were administered either in printed form or as an online survey and typically took less than 30 minutes to complete. For further details see Tokuş (2014).

Results

Two analyses were carried out to test the prediction that different relational models would be associated with different tendencies to shame and guilt. First, Pearson correlations between MORQ scores and PFQ-2 scores were calculated. The results can be seen in Table 2. Degree of preference for AR, EM, and MP is significantly positively correlated with shame-proneness, and degree of preference for AR and MP is also significantly positively related to guilt-proneness. However, degree of preference for CS was not related to either shame or guilt proneness.

Multiple regression analyses were also carried out, with the four relational models as predictors of (1) the PFQ-2 shame score, and (2) the PFQ-2 guilt score. Shame scores were significantly and positively predicted by EM (*beta* = .09, *t* = 2.02, *p* = .04) and MP (*beta* = .15, *t* = 2.96, *p* = .003) scores, but negatively predicted by CS scores (*beta* =.11, *t* = 2.16, *p* = .03). Guilt scores were significantly predicted only by MP scores (*beta* = .13, *t* = 2.46, *p* = .01). Although both regressions were significant, very little of the vari-

ance was explained (shame $R^2 = .06$; guilt $R^2 = .02$).

Table 2
Correlations between relational model preference and frequency of shame and guilt feelings

	Communal Sharing	Authority Ranking	Equality Matching	Market Pricing
Shame	-.07	.16**	.15**	.25**
Guilt	.03	.12*	.07	.18**

** p<.01; * p<.05

Discussion

These results partially support the hypothesis that particular relational models will be conducive to experiencing particular moral emotions. However, the associations are weak and the instruments used only allow inferences about overall frequencies of individuals' use of the different relational models and their experiences of shame and guilt, rather than the tendency of a particular emotion to be evoked in a particular relational model. Therefore a more specific approach is indicated.

Study 2

Hypotheses for Study 2 were the following:

1. In situations involving rejection anxiety (categorized as CS/divinity), shame will be the predominant self-blaming emotion, while expected emotions of others will include disgust or "shame for me," but not anger.

2. In situations that involve loss of status (categorized as AR/community), shame will be the predominant self-blaming emotion, while expected emotions of others will include contempt or "shame for me," but not anger.

3. In situations that involve harm to others or failure to meet responsibilities (categorized as EM + MP/autonomy), guilt will be the predominant self-blaming emotion, while expected emotions of others will include anger, but not disgust or contempt.

It should be noted that most infractions can be expected to arouse several emotions in both the perpetrator and the victim or observer, but the hypotheses are concerned only with the moral emotions.

Method

Participants. 489 respondents (313 females, 176 males), from three Turkish universities, with a mean age of 21.59 years, completed the questionnaires.

Instruments. A Shame Measure was constructed, consisting of questions regarding 8 vignettes depicting situations that had been determined in pretesting to reliably arouse shame. These situations included (1) Academic failure, (2) Neglecting a responsibility, (3) Revelation of lying, (4) Interpersonal harm, (5) Embarrassing public situations ("Trip and fall"), (6) Embarrassing public situations ("Insufficient funds"), (7) Sexuality ("Exposed body") and (8) Sexuality ("Being exposed to sexual stimuli in the presence of others"). Respondents rated the amount of shame they would expect to feel in each of

these situations and they also rated 12 other self-related emotions and 12 emotions that might be felt by an observing other, all on a scale from 0 to 4. The observer was specified by the respondent. For more details see Çağın (2014).

Each of the situations was assumed to fit into a particular relational model and moral code. CS/Divinity was represented by the sexuality items (7 and 8); AR/Community by the academic failure and embarrassing public situation items (1, 5 and 6); and EM+MP/ Autonomy by the items covering neglect of responsibility, lying, and harm (2, 3, 4).

Procedure. The Shame Measure and the other instruments used in the larger study were administered in random order in two sessions separated by a one-week interval; sessions were conducted in groups of 15 or fewer respondents and lasted for about 30 minutes.

Results

Hierarchical cluster analysis revealed that the 8 vignettes could be grouped into 5 clusters: (1) "moral transgressions" (lying, harm-doing, irresponsible behavior); (2) embarrassing public situations (falling down, insufficient funds); (3) academic failure; (4) exposed body (for females; for males this was included in the embarrassing public situations cluster); and (5) exposure to sexual stimuli in the presence of others (see Çağın, 2014 for details).

Multiple regression analysis was conducted on shame scores for each of these clusters to determine the predictor variables among both the self-oriented and the other-oriented reactions. Table 3 shows the significant predictors for each of the clusters that can be considered as moral emotions. Some other emotions, such as affectionate, anxious, disappointed, sad, or tense also emerged as predictors in some of the situations, but only the moral emotion terms or their synonyms are shown in the table. However, "not affectionate" is shown, as it supports the idea that rejection anxiety is involved in some of the vignettes.

Table 3

Emotions reported for 5 types of shame-inducing situation

Situation	Predicted Reactions to SELF	Expected Reactions from OTHERS
"Moral" transgressions (EM / Autonomy)	Ashamed *Guilty* *Regretful*	*Accusing*
Embarrassing public situations (AR / Community)	*Ashamed* Angry	*Ashamed for me* *Pitying*
Academic failure (AR / Community)	*Ashamed*	*Ashamed for me* *Contempt*
Exposed body (CS / Divinity)	*Ashamed*	*Ashamed for me* *Not affectionate*
Sexual Stimuli (CS / Divinity)	*Ashamed*	*Disgusted* *Not affectionate (females)* *Ashamed for me (both males and females)*

Note. Items that fit hypotheses are in italics.

Discussion

Hypothesis 1 was fully supported. Respondents chose "ashamed" as the only moral emotion that they thought they would feel in the two vignettes involving sexuality (unintentional exposure of body and exposure to sexual stimuli in the company of others), and in both vignettes female respondents chose "not affectionate" as one of the feelings of the other, showing that fear of rejection was aroused. Both males and females expected the other to be "ashamed for me", and females also expected the other to feel "disgusted" in the sexual stimuli vignette. Anger was not included in the predictors.

In the three situations involving loss of status (academic failure and public embarrassments), respondents predicted they would feel "ashamed", and expected others to feel "ashamed for me", "pitying" (in embarrassing situations) or "contemptuous" (in the case of academic failure). Anger was chosen only in reference to the self, not the observers. Thus the second hypothesis was also well supported.

Hypothesis 3 was also supported. The only vignettes in which respondents predicted they would feel "guilty" were those involving harm to others (lying, property damage, irresponsibility). In those situations they also expected the other to be "accusing" but not contemptuous or disgusted. In line with the more common use of shame-related words in Turkish, respondents expected to feel "ashamed" in these situations as well as guilty.

Respondents generally indicated close others such as parents or romantic partners as the observers. As a consequence the expected reactions of others tended to be milder or more forgiving than predicted by the theory. For example, rather than outright contempt, the other was expected to feel "ashamed for me" or "pity" in the embarrassing situations. However, these substitutions were in the predicted direction.

The studies reported here were carried out with samples drawn from members of a single culture – urban Turkish university students. The results are, however, congruent with the explicit claim of cross-cultural validity of relational models theory (Fiske, 1992) and the implicit claim of cross-cultural validity of the CAD triad model (Rozin et al. 1999). They are also congruent with the analysis of shame and guilt in three cultures by Fontaine, Luyten, De Boeck, *et al.* (2006), which showed that both the personal and the interpersonal structures of shame and guilt are similar across diverse cultures, despite variation in specific triggers of different emotions, as predicted by, *e.g.*, Markus & Kitayama (1991).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the two studies provided strong support for (1) the relation of both self-blaming emotions and other-blaming emotions to relational models; and (2) the predicted complementary relation of self-blaming and other-blaming emotions, such that guilt and anger, shame of status loss and contempt, and shame of exclusion and disgust were seen as arising together in specific relational contexts. They also provided indirect evidence for the connections between relational models theory and the moral codes at the basis of the CAD triad hypothesis.

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