



Honor to the core: Measuring implicit honor ideology endorsement



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ABSTRACT

People from honor-oriented societies emphasize the maintenance and defense of reputation. Prior research has used geographical distinctions or self-report scales to identify honor-oriented regions and people. The current study examined if honor orientations can be assessed at an *implicit* level through the use of the Affect Misattribution Procedure (Payne, Cheng, Govorun, & Stewart, 2005). People high in explicit honor ideology scored significantly higher on a newly developed implicit honor ideology measure than people low in explicit honor. In addition, people high in implicit honor ideology demonstrated a better memory for honor- and dishonor-related words on a surprise memory test. These results support the possibility that honor ideology can be measured implicitly and open up a new realm for research on honor cultures.

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1. Introduction

When Sam Houston enlisted in the army in 1812, his mother reportedly gave him a ring with the word “honor” inscribed in it, a musket, and a set of instructions that were as follows: “Take this musket and never disgrace it: for remember, I had rather all my sons should fill one honorable grave, than that one of them should turn his back to save his life” (Hayley, 2002, p.12). As this example vividly demonstrates, some people place a greater emphasis on honor than others, even prioritizing it above life itself. This variability in an emphasis on honor is captured by the concept of “culture of honor” (Nisbett & Cohen, 1996). A “man of honor” in such societies is respected by others, but he also *demands* respect from others, in part by indicating his intolerance of any threat to his reputation, such as an insult (Cohen, Nisbett, Bowdle, & Schwarz, 1996). Perhaps because of this hypersensitivity to reputational threats, physical aggression following a perceived insult tends to be both accepted and encouraged in an honor culture. Likewise, a “woman of honor” is loyal and chaste, putting her family and mate above all else. Failing to live up to these cultural mandates can lead to irreparable damage to one’s reputation (Nisbett & Cohen, 1996; Pitt-Rivers, 1966).

1.1. Measuring culture of honor

A wealth of research has linked honor ideology to a number of important outcomes, including violence, excessive risk-taking, and

self-harm (Barnes, Brown, & Tamborski, 2012; Cohen, 1998; Osterman & Brown, 2011). Such research operationalizes honor ideology in two ways. First, honor ideology is often assessed using regional distinctions. The Southern US has long been associated with greater violence than the North, and often this violence is enacted in response to honor threats. Regional differences in violence and honor ideology are thought to result from a historical pattern of White Scotch-Irish immigration to the Southern and Western portions of the country. Based on this geographical pattern, archival studies on regional patterns of violence often dichotomize states in the Southern and Western US as honor states (with the exception of Alaska and Hawaii) and the rest as non-honor states (e.g., Cohen, 1998). This classification system has also been used in lab studies in which White participants from honor states (and Latino participants from any state) composed the “honor group” and White, non-Latino participants from non-honor states composed the non-honor group (e.g. Cohen et al., 1996; Ijzerman & Cohen, 2011; Leung & Cohen, 2011). These studies consistently find that men from honor states are more likely to respond to threats and insults with aggression than are men from non-honor states.

More recent research has turned from regional distinctions toward individual differences in honor ideology assessment. Self-report questionnaires that directly assess participants’ endorsement of honor-related beliefs and values with respect to family dynamics, anger and retaliation, and feminine loyalty and chastity have become increasingly popular (Barnes, Brown, & Osterman, 2012; Ijzerman, Van Dijk, & Gallucci, 2007; Rodriguez-Mosquera, Manstead, & Fischer, 2002). Adapting this individualized approach to honor ideology measurement has a number of benefits. First, it enables researchers to investigate honor dynamics outside of the US

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(e.g., Rodriguez-Mosquera et al., 2002). Second, an individualized approach is less inferential than a geographical or demographic approach and thereby provides investigators with greater measurement precision. As a result, researchers are able to measure individual variability in honor ideology endorsement within a single culture or region.

For these reasons, several self-report measures have been designed to capture individuals' attitudes, beliefs, and values related to honor ideologies; but just as regional distinctions have their limitations, so do these explicit measures. In general, explicit attitude measures are susceptible to social desirability biases and to responders' levels of self-awareness (Kihlstrom, 2004). Partly because of such limitations, researchers developed implicit measures designed to assess attitudes and beliefs that people are unaware of or unwilling to reveal. Such measures have been shown to be quite useful in studying socially sensitive or undesirable attitudes and orientations like prejudice (e.g., Fazio, Jackson, Dunton, & Williams, 1995), as well as less controversial topics like self-esteem (e.g., Back et al., 2009). To date, though, this implicit measurement approach has not been applied to the study of honor ideology. Just as people are not fully aware of their non-conscious prejudices or self-evaluations, people might not be aware of their implicit endorsement of honor ideologies. The purpose of the present study was to develop and validate an implicit measure of honor ideology.

1.2. The Affect Misattribution Procedure

One approach to assessing implicit attitudes is the Affect Misattribution Procedure (AMP; Payne et al., 2005). The AMP presents respondents with a series of picture or word primes followed by an ambiguous target (Chinese pictograph). Respondents are instructed to rate the pleasantness of the ambiguous target and are warned not to let their rating be influenced by the prime. Despite this warning, people's ratings of the ambiguous target are unintentionally influenced by their non-conscious attitudes toward the prime. Thus, a Chinese pictograph presented after a picture of a cuddly puppy is more likely to be perceived as pleasant than a pictograph presented after a picture of a snarling bear. The AMP procedure has been used successfully in a number of recent studies to examine a wide range of non-conscious attitudes (e.g., Imhoff & Banse, 2011; Payne, Burkley, & Stokes, 2008; Payne, Govorun, & Arbuckle, 2008).

In support of the procedure's predictive validity, a "George Bush" vs. "John Kerry" AMP correlated at $r = .58$ with people's voting intentions in the 2004 Presidential race (Payne et al., 2005). Similar results were obtained for racial attitudes (Payne

et al., 2005) and intentions to drink alcohol (Payne, Govorun, et al., 2008). Importantly, the moderate correlations obtained between the AMP and explicit attitude measures suggest that the AMP taps into a related but distinct attitude as the explicit measure (Payne, Burkley, et al., 2008). Furthermore, the AMP has also demonstrated good internal consistency ($.69 < \alpha < .90$; Payne et al., 2005; Payne, Burkley, et al., 2008). Although some researchers have questioned the AMP's implicit nature (e.g., Bar-Anan & Nosek, 2013), later research has supported its validity as an implicit measure (Payne et al., 2013). For these reasons, we chose to create an implicit honor ideology measure using the AMP procedure, which would complement the national, regional, and explicit self-report approaches that have been used to date.

1.3. Present research

To assess implicit honor ideology, we used honor, dishonor, and neutral word primes within the AMP (Fig. 1). We predicted a moderate, positive correlation between the honor AMP and an explicit honor ideology measure, such that people high in explicit honor would find the Chinese pictographs following honor words more pleasant and the pictographs following dishonor words less pleasant, compared to people low in explicit honor. This expected pattern is consistent with prior demonstrations of a modest correlation between other explicit attitudes and the AMP (Payne et al., 2005; Payne, Burkley, et al., 2008). We also sought to exam-

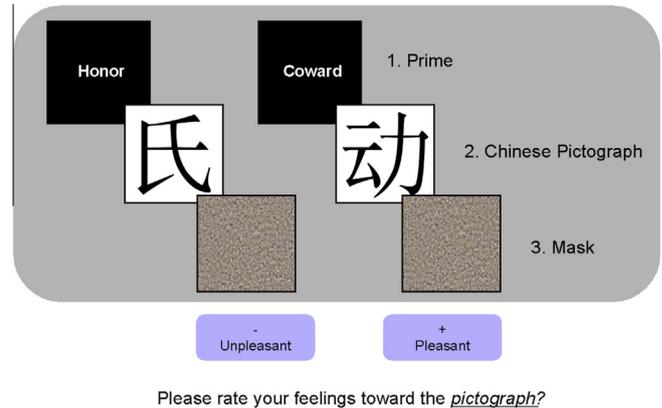


Fig. 1. Honor AMP procedure.

Table 1
Intercorrelations and descriptive statistics for all variables.

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	HIM	–						
2	Honor AMP score	.23**	–					
3	AMP honor-pleasant	.20**	.71**	–				
4	AMP neutral-pleasant	.03	.24**	.42**	–			
5	AMP dishonor-pleasant	–.17*	–.86**	–.25**	–.02	–		
6	Honor/dishonor word recall	.16*	.19	.16*	–.02	–.15*	–	
7	Neutral word recall	–.14*	.10	.04	.08	–.11	.15*	–
M		4.89	4.13	10.09	8.88	5.96	2.88	0.70
SD		1.56	4.59	2.44	2.52	3.32	1.66	0.84

Note: HIM = Honor Ideology for Manhood Scale; honor AMP score = the difference between the number of pleasant responses after the honor primes and the number of pleasant responses after the dishonor primes; AMP honor/neutral/dishonor-pleasant = the number of pleasant responses after the honor/neutral/dishonor primes; honor/dishonor word recall = the number of recalled honor words and dishonor words combined; neutral word recall = the number of recalled neutral words.

* $p \leq .05$.
** $p \leq .01$.

ine the predictive validity of the honor AMP by assessing whether people high in implicit honor ideology are more likely to attend to and therefore recall honor relevant information. The design of the AMP provided a novel way to test this possibility because within the context of this procedure, respondents were presented with honor relevant words but were instructed to ignore them. Thus, although not typical of AMP studies, we asked participants to recall as many prime words as they could at the end of the study. The number and type of words recalled served as a subtle indicator of the importance of the honor construct to respondents. We predicted that people high in implicit honor ideology would be more likely to recall the honor and dishonor words than would people low in implicit honor ideology, despite the instructions to ignore them. Thus, in line with prior work on the IAT (Frieze, Smith, Plischke, Bluemke, & Nosek, 2012; Greenwald, Poehlman, Uhlmann, & Banaji, 2009) and the AMP (Payne, Govorun, et al., 2008; Payne et al., 2010), we sought to establish the incremental validity of our honor AMP by assessing its predictive power above and beyond that of an established, explicit honor measure.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

Two hundred thirteen students from a large, public university in the south-central US participated in the study. Six participants were able to read the Chinese pictographs, and 4 failed to follow instructions. After eliminating these participants, the remaining 203 participants (126 females and 77 males) were 79.3% White, 3.9% Black, 2.5% Hispanic, 7.9% Asian or Pacific Islander, 3.9% Native American, and 2.5% “other.”

2.2. Procedure and materials

2.2.1. HIM

The honor ideology for manhood scale (or HIM) is an explicit, self-report honor ideology measure that focuses exclusively on the masculine dimension of honor, in part because this dimension plays such a dominant and consistent role in honor cultures around the world, compared to the feminine and family dimensions (Barnes, Brown, & Osterman, 2012). The validity of the HIM has been established in several recent studies (e.g., Barnes, Brown, & Osterman, 2012; Osterman & Brown, 2011). Importantly, because the statements on the HIM are *ideological* rather than self-descriptive, both men and women can endorse (or reject) the items. In fact, men and women showed similar associations between the HIM and honor-related outcomes in past studies (Barnes, Brown, & Osterman, 2012).

During a mass-testing session several weeks prior to the lab session, participants completed the 16-item HIM scale ($\alpha = .92$). Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements about the masculine dimension of honor ideology (e.g., “A real man doesn’t accept ‘hand outs’ from others,” “A man has the right to act with physical aggression toward another man who calls him a coward”) using a 9-point response scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 9 = *strongly agree*).

2.2.2. Honor AMP

In the lab session, participants completed the honor AMP at individual computer terminals. For the honor AMP, three types of stimulus words were used: honor words (*honor, strength, tough, hero, brave, admiration, respected*), dishonor words (*shame, insulted, weakness, dishonor, humiliated, coward, disrespect*), and neutral words (e.g., *quarter, liquid, ladder*). Selection of honor and dishonor words was based upon previous theory and research on honor-

related beliefs and values (e.g., Ijzerman et al., 2011; Leung & Cohen, 2011; Rodríguez-Mosquera et al., 2002). Participants were presented with a total of 7 honor, 7 dishonor, and 14 neutral words in a random order, and each honor and dishonor word was repeated twice, resulting in 42 trials. This number of trials is consistent with prior AMP research (Payne et al., 2010, 2013).

All participants were told the prime words served as a warning signal for the Chinese pictograph and that they should not allow these words to influence their ratings of the pictographs (Payne et al., 2005). During each trial, the prime word appeared at the center of the screen for 150 ms, followed by a blank screen for 100 ms, then a pictograph for 150 ms, and finally a black and white pattern mask with a rating scale below it (Fig. 1). Participants were instructed to judge whether they thought each pictograph was pleasant or unpleasant by pressing the + or – key. Once participants rated a pictograph, the next trial started with a new, randomly ordered stimulus word and pictograph.

2.2.3. Word recall task

After completing the honor AMP and a brief set of filler questionnaires unrelated to the present study, participants were asked to list as many prime words as they could recall on a blank sheet of paper. For this surprise memory test, participants were given as much time as they needed to recall the words. Once participants completed this task, they were debriefed and dismissed.

3. Results

Although it would not be surprising if males exhibited a stronger implicit sensitivity to the honor and dishonor words of the honor AMP, gender was not a significant covariate in any of our analyses. We therefore did not include gender in our analyses below (doing so did not change any of our conclusions). See Table 1 for correlations and descriptive statistics for the variables used in the analyses.

3.1. AMP priming effects

We first obtained the proportions of “pleasant” responses to the pictographs for the honor, dishonor, and neutral primes. We analyzed these proportions using a repeated-measures analysis of variance. Results showed that participants responded to the primes with different degrees of positivity, $F(1.54, 311.47) = 119.16$, $p < .001$ (using the Greenhouse–Geisser correction for sphericity violations). Participants rated the pictographs presented after honor words as most pleasant ($M = 0.72$, $SD = 0.012$), followed by the pictographs presented after neutral words ($M = 0.63$, $SD = 0.013$), and the pictographs presented after dishonor words ($M = 0.43$, $SD = 0.017$). Post hoc pair-wise comparisons indicated that all three prime conditions were significantly different from each other (all $ps < .01$). Thus, participants were effectively primed by the stimulus words and judged the pleasantness of the pictographs accordingly.

3.2. Associations between Implicit and explicit honor ideology

To examine the relationship between explicit and implicit honor ideology, we created an honor AMP score by computing the difference between the number of pleasant responses after the honor primes and the number of pleasant responses after dishonor primes. We then regressed explicit honor ideology endorsement (HIM) onto the honor AMP, as well as onto the proportion of pleasant responses following the neutral primes (to control for potential individual differences in the tendency to find the Chinese pictographs generally pleasant). As expected, the honor AMP was a sig-

nificant predictor of scores on the HIM, $\beta = .24$, $t(200) = 3.31$, $p = .001$, whereas the neutral prime score was not, $\beta = -.03$, $t(200) = -0.39$, $p = .70$.¹ The semi-partial correlation between the honor AMP and HIM while partialing out the effect of the neutral prime was $pr = .23$ ($p = .001$). This modest association is consistent with past research that has found the correlation between self-reported attitudes and the AMP ranges from .21 to .25 (Payne, Burkley, et al., 2008).

Because of our computation of a difference score with honor and dishonor primes, there is a possibility that participants with high scores on the HIM found the pictograph presented after the honor primes especially pleasant but were not influenced by the dishonor primes at all, or vice versa. To examine these possibilities, we regressed the HIM onto honor-only prime scores while controlling for neutral prime scores, and repeated this analysis separately with dishonor-only prime scores. The results indicated the honor prime was a significant *positive* predictor of the HIM, $\beta = .23$, $t(200) = 3.01$, $p = .003$, and the dishonor prime was a significant *negative* predictor of the HIM, $\beta = -.17$, $t(200) = -2.39$, $p = .02$. The neutral prime was not a significant predictor in either model ($\beta = -.07$ and $.02$, respectively). Thus, people with high scores on the HIM were almost equally responsive to both honor and dishonor word primes, albeit in opposite directions.

3.3. Word recall

If strong honor endorsers were particularly sensitive to the honor and dishonor primes despite the warning to avoid being influenced by these words, they might remember those words better than weak honor endorsers would. Eleven participants were eliminated from the following analyses because they did not complete the word-recall task. On average, participants recalled 3.76 prime words ($SD = 2.00$) out of possible 21. Participants recalled honor words the most ($M = 1.70$, $SD = 0.08$), followed by dishonor words ($M = 1.17$, $SD = 0.07$), with neutral words being recalled the least ($M = 0.70$, $SD = 0.06$), $F(2, 382) = 59.79$, $p < .001$. All post hoc pairwise comparisons across word type were significant (all $ps < .01$).

In the analyses of the word recall, nearly identical results were obtained for honor and dishonor words, so we combined them into a single index of honor/dishonor recall. We also controlled for the number of neutral words recalled so as not to conflate sensitivity to honor/dishonor words with simple memory ability. We aimed to test (1) if the HIM predicted words recalled, (2) if the honor AMP predicted words recalled, and (3) whether the honor AMP can predict recall above and beyond the influence of the HIM. To answer these questions, we regressed the number of honor/dishonor words recalled onto the HIM and honor AMP with the total pleasant responses following the AMP neutral primes and the number of neutral words recalled as covariates.

The HIM was a significant predictor of honor/dishonor words recalled, $\beta = .15$, $t(187) = 2.02$, $p = .05$, and so was the honor AMP, $\beta = .16$, $t(187) = 2.15$, $p = .03$. The number of neutral words recalled was also a significant covariate, $\beta = .16$, $t(187) = 2.20$, $p = .03$; however, the neutral prime was not, $\beta = -.08$, $t(187) = -1.04$, $p = .30$. Thus, both the HIM and the honor AMP were simultaneously significant predictors, accounting for unique variance in the number of honor/dishonor words recalled above and beyond the influence of simple memory ability (as measured

by the number of neutral words recalled). This suggests that the explicit and implicit measures tap into somewhat different aspects of the honor ideology construct.

4. Discussion

The present study explored the development of an implicit measure of honor ideology. The results indicated that people who explicitly endorse honor ideology also evidenced implicit honor ideology endorsement, as measured by the honor AMP. Furthermore, we found that both implicit and explicit honor ideology independently predicted how many honor/dishonor words participants later recalled in a surprise memory test, suggesting that people who endorse honor ideology are more sensitive to honor-relevant stimuli. Importantly, though, our newly developed implicit measure predicted word recall above and beyond the influence of an established explicit measure, thereby demonstrating incremental validity. Together, these findings provide initial evidence that the honor AMP is a reliable and valid measure of implicit honor ideology.

Our implicit honor measure has the possibility of opening up a new realm of research on culture of honor. For instance, what does it really mean to endorse honor implicitly? As has been debated for other implicit attitudes (e.g., Dijksterhuis, Albers, & Bongers, 2009), do implicit and explicit honor endorsement tap generally independent systems, or might implicit endorsement reflect the “core” attitude upon which explicit endorsement is based? Although the HIM and the honor AMP each accounted for a significant portion of variance in word recall, the modest but significant correlation found between the HIM and the honor AMP does not support the total independence view (see also Payne, Burkley, et al., 2008). Our results also complement the meta-analysis by Hofmann, Gawronski, Gschwendner, Le, and Schmitt (2005), which found a modest correlation between explicit and implicit measures across 126 studies. In the same vein, is implicit honor endorsement a manifestation of *attitudes* or merely learned *associations*? As Kar-pinski and Hilton (2001) noted, implicit attitudes might reflect the associations people have been exposed to and not necessarily their beliefs. It is plausible that well-socialized members of honor cultures are exposed to more “honor = pleasant” and “dishonor = unpleasant” associations, which might produce corresponding responses on the honor AMP regardless of participants’ explicit embrace (or rejection) of honor values.

A related question concerns how to construe a *discrepancy* between implicit and explicit honor endorsement. For instance, what does it mean for people to exhibit a high implicit but low explicit level of honor endorsement? Do such individuals have honor values deeply ingrained in their psyches but nonetheless reject such values consciously? Do these individuals behave differently in the face of an honor threat compared to those who do not endorse honor either implicitly or explicitly? Cohen and Vandello (2001) proposed that there might be an increasing number of individuals “faking” their honorability in American honor subcultures today. Such individuals might not value honor unless others are judging them, and they might only engage in aggressive behavior as an attempt to live up to what they believe is expected of them. This pattern seems fundamentally different from that of “true honor endorsers,” who pride themselves on being honorable and value the concept of honor for its own sake. Such a distinction between explicit and implicit honor ideology might prove to be a meaningful addition to the honor literature in the same way that a distinction between implicit and explicit self-esteem has informed and enhanced the self literature (e.g., Bosson, Brown, Zeigler-Hill, & Swann, 2003). A similar discussion of implicit-explicit discrepancies also appears in other self-concept domains (Briñol, Petty, & Wheeler, 2006; Dislich et al., 2012).

¹ Three participants responded to all stimuli following honor primes pleasantly and all stimuli following dishonor primes unpleasantly. Following an anonymous reviewer’s advice, we reanalyzed the data excluding these participants, due to the possibility that these participants might have responded strategically to the word primes rather than intuitively judging the Chinese pictographs. After omitting these participants, the results remained largely the same. Thus, we report the results including all participants in the text.

Future research might benefit from the development of different types of implicit honor measures. For instance, Back and colleagues (2009) found the IAT and an affective priming task were uniquely associated with participants' self-esteem, suggesting that perhaps implicit self-esteem itself is a multifaceted construct. Likewise, the development of different implicit honor measures that rely on different measurement techniques could not only validate our honor AMP, but might also extend our understanding of the nature of honor endorsement.

Some limitations of the current study are worth mentioning. First, although participants' AMP scores accounted for unique variance in their recollection of honor and dishonor words, it remains to be seen whether implicit honor ideology can predict other honor-related outcomes above and beyond what can be predicted by explicit honor ideology scales. Second, the HIM focuses on only a single dimension of honor ideology—masculine strength, self-reliance, and retaliatory aggression. Examining the associations between the honor AMP and other aspects of explicit honor ideology endorsement (e.g., family honor, feminine honor) remains an important task for future research. Despite these limitations, we believe the present research adds to the growing literature on individual differences in explicit honor ideology and also advances research on cultures of honor by introducing the possibility of implicitly measuring honor endorsement.

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