

## *Extended Summary*

# Examining the Social Representations of “Honorable Woman” and “Honorable Man”

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### Examining the Social Representations of “Honorable Woman” and “Honorable Man”

The concept of “honor” plays an essential role in the social life in various regions of the world, and its meaning may vary depending on whether the honor of a woman or a man is in question. In Turkey and other honor cultures, “honor” is considered an innate characteristic that people are expected to protect during their lives actively (Sever & Yurdakul, 2001). The discourse studies carried out in Turkey have indicated that the perceived characteristics that constitute a woman’s honor versus a man’s honor are different (Başoğlu 2014; Doğan, 2014; Gunindi-Ersöz 2016; Kalav, 2015). Those studies involved interviewing about the perceived meaning of honor and it was seen that people make gender-based distinctions in describing honor. The common characteristics of women perceived as honorable were being chaste, moral, traditional, shy, fragile, ladylike, innocent, not being open (in terms of clothing), and abstaining from sexual relationships outside marriage.

However, in those studies, the perceived characteristics of honorable men differed from those of honorable women and were mainly independent of sexuality. The characteristics attributed to honorable men were honesty and rectitudinous. In some studies, which examined the contents of gender stereotypes in Turkey, it was displayed that the adjectives associated with sexual purity -pure, shy, virgin- were stereotypically used only for describing women (Sakallı-Uğurlu, Türkoğlu, & Kuzlak, 2018; Sakallı-Uğurlu, Türkoğlu, Kuzlak, & Gupta, 2021).

The studies’ findings above provided valuable insights concerning gender differences about the meaning of honor. On the other hand, no empirical studies systematically compare the contents of stereotypes for “honor-

able woman” versus “honorable man.”

This study aimed to provide the overlapping and differentiating stereotype contents of an honorable woman versus an honorable man by using the social representation approach. In this approach, people are asked to write down evocations of the target concept, and based on the frequency and perceived importance of each evocation, “the central core” is found. Through a prototype analysis, the structural organization of the content of the target concept finds out. In this analysis, evocations distributed into four zones:

The most frequently mentioned and most important features regarding the concept place in the central core zone; the frequently mentioned but relatively less important features place in the first periphery zone, and the features with low frequency and low significance place in the second periphery zone; those with low frequency but high importance place in the contrasting elements zone (Dany, Urdapilleta, & Monaco, 2015).

Another analytical method used in social representation studies is cluster analysis (Chaves, dos Santos, dos Santosa, & Larocca, 2017). The main expectation in cluster analysis is to obtain heterogeneous clusters in which their express meanings differ. Therefore, it is expected that the contents in a cluster show semantic homogeneity and not include the same contents in different clusters (Doise, Clemence, & Lorenzi-Cioldi, 1993).

The present study aims to answer the following research questions:

R.Q.1: What elements are at the central core of the social representation of only “honorable woman” but not the “honorable man”?

R.Q.2: What elements are at the central core of the social representation of only the “honorable man” but not the “honorable woman”?

R.Q.3: What elements are at the central core of the social representations of both “honorable woman” and “honorable man”?

R.Q.4: What are the thematic clusters of the “honorable woman” social representation?

R.Q.5: What are the thematic clusters of the “honorable man” social representation?

R.Q.6: To what extent the thematic clusters of the social representations of “honorable woman” and “honorable man” similar and different?

## Method

### Participants

Data were collected from 157 participants (76 (48%) men, 81 (52%) women). 77 participants (49%) were university students, 80 participants (51%) were adults. 103 participants (66%) reside in Erzurum, and 53 (44%) reside in other cities in Turkey. Participants ages varied between 18 and 68; the mean age was 31.33 ( $SD = 14.18$ ).

### Measurements

Participants were given a Demographic Information Form and a single question for the evaluation of social representations of “honorable woman” and “honorable man” (see Appendix 1).

### Procedure

Following the IRB approval, the data was collected in the university campuses and public areas by asking volunteer participants to complete a paper-and-pencil measurement tool.

### Data Analysis

Two types of analysis were conducted: prototype analysis and cluster analysis. These analyzes were applied separately to the social representations of an honorable woman and man. IRAMUTEQ software was used for all analyses.

## Results

### Findings of the Prototype Analysis

Prototype analyses were conducted in order to answer R.Q.1 and R.Q.2. According to the results, the elements that were at the central core of the social representation of honorable women were the words honest, loyal to the partner, moral, chaste, reliable, well-mannered, decent, and domestic. The elements at the central core of the honorable man’s social representation were those words: honest, loyal to the partner, reliable, mor-

al, hardworking, domestic, well-mannered, never cheats his partner, and fair. “Chaste” and “decent” were the two words at the central core of the social representation of only “honorable woman” and not of “honorable man.” “Never cheats his partner,” “hardworking,” and “fair” were three words that were at the central core of the social representation of only the “honorable man,” but not of the “honorable woman. The elements which were common to both were “honest,” “loyal to the partner,” “reliable,” “moral,” “domestic,” and “well-mannered.”

### Findings of the Cluster Analysis

Descending Hierarchical Classification Analysis was conducted to examine the structure of the honorable woman and man representations (R.Q.2, R.Q.3, and R.Q.4). The words provided by the participants were grouped by the IRAMUTEQ program using a complex algorithm that calculates the semantic similarities of words with each other, the frequency of each word, and the statistically significant contribution of words to clusters (Chaves et al., 2017).

According to the analysis results, the social representations of honorable women and honorable men were divided into five thematic clusters. The researchers named each of these clusters. In naming the clusters, the meanings of all the adjectives in the cluster were taken into account, but the first adjective in the set was given priority. The words that contribute to a cluster significantly (at the  $p < .0001$  level) were considered to be an element of that cluster (Chaves et al., 2017). The thematic clusters of the “honorable woman” social representation were femininity roles, reputability, respectful behavior towards others, taking care of the other, and partner role. The thematic clusters of the “honorable man” social representation were masculinity roles, taking care of and respecting others, reputability, value given to the partner, and partner role.

The thematic clusters of the social representations of “honorable woman” and “honorable man” were compared. It was seen that the social representation of “honorable woman” has thematic clusters named “taking care of others” and “respect for others.” On the other hand, the social representation of “honorable man” has a cluster named “taking care and respect for others,” in which the two themes are joined. Those clusters involved some shared words such as “compassionate,” “respectful,” and “fair.”

Another common thematic cluster for the social representations of “honorable man” and “honorable woman” was “dignity.” The most representative elements of this thematic cluster were found to be “well-mannered,” “dignified,” and “religious” for the honorable man, “well-mannered,” and “reliable” for the honorable wom-

an. The “partner role” was another common thematic cluster. However, it was remarkable that the contents of this cluster were quite different for an honorable woman and man. For an honorable woman, this cluster included the words “domestic,” “adhering to customs and traditions,” “good mother,” and “faithful.” For an honorable man, however, this cluster included “reliable” and “loyal to the partner.” Also, the social representations of “an honorable woman” had a thematic cluster named “femininity roles,” while the social representations of “an honorable man” had a thematic theme of “masculinity roles,” and those two themes have content quite different from each other. “Skillful,” “decent,” “cultivated,” “altruistic,” and “chaste” were the words in the “femininity roles” cluster whereas “hardworking,” “domestic,” “patriotic,” “breadwinner,” “never annoy women with his behavior” and “never lie” were the words in the “masculinity roles” cluster. Another thematic cluster specific to the “honorable man” was “value given to the partner.” This cluster includes the words “never cheats his partner,” “empathetic,” and “rectitudinous.”

### Discussion

The findings in the present study indicate that some characteristics defining a person as honorable is gender-based. The expectation of gender-specific roles is more pronounced in honor cultures than in other cultures (Bosson & Vandello, 2011; Rodriguez Mosquera, 2011). Therefore, it is unsurprising to see in Turkey, a culture of honor, that the social representations for an honorable woman versus an honorable man differ. The ones for an honorable woman include words highlighting sexual purity -chaste, decency-. According to Augoustinos and Walker (1998), the words in the central core of a social representation can be considered widely shared stereotype contents in a given society. In the current study, based on the findings of prototype analysis, it has been concluded that the adjectives “chaste” and “decent” were the primary contents of stereotypes specific to an honorable woman.

On the other hand, “hardworking,” “fair,” and “never cheats his partner” were the primary contents of stereotypes specific to an honorable man. These results are congruent with the results of past studies. Several discursive studies in Turkey showed that while being an honorable man is associated with traits such as honesty and truthfulness, being an honorable woman is associated with traits such as sexual purity, loyalty to man, and chastity (Başoğlu, 2014; Doğan, 2014; Günindi-Ersöz, 2016; Kalav, 2015). On the other hand, in the present study, the adjective “honest” was obtained as content that describes both an honorable woman and man.

These findings are compatible with the past findings that showed that honor has a dual meaning for Turkish participants: its primary meaning is honesty and its secondary meaning is “namus” (Uskul and Cross, 2019). In this study, the concepts of an honorable woman and honorable man are examined within the framework of the Social Representation Theory. The representations of these two concepts are evaluated by the empirical approach followed in the tradition of social representation studies. One limitation of the present study is that data mainly collected from participants in a single city (Erzurum).

The study may contribute to the related field in two ways. This study examined the concepts of honorable man and honorable woman. Previously, there have been studies in which stereotypes for a woman and a man (Sakallı-Uğurlu et al., 2018), or for a married and single woman and a man (Sakallı-Uğurlu et al., 2021), or for a moral woman and a man (Cross et al., 2014), and also characteristics of an honorable person were examined (Başoğlu, 2014; Doğan, 2014; Günindi-Ersöz, 2016; Kalav, 2015). However, there has been no study in which the differences in what characteristics are attributed to an honorable woman and an honorable man are asked from the participants. Although morality and honor are closely related concepts, some researchers note that the social function of these two concepts is not the same (Handfield & Thrasher, 2019). Similar to the concept of morality, which has both gender-specific and gender-neutral aspects (Handfield & Thrasher, 2019), honor has both gender-specific and gender-neutral aspects (Rodriguez Mosquera, 2011). In the present study, besides the evidence that there are gender-specific characteristics of honor, there are also findings that there are overlapping characteristics between the genders (e.g., “honest,” “reliable,” “moral”). Therefore, the present study in which the honorable woman and the honorable man are handled as two independent social objects with some overlapping aspects contributes to understanding the concept of honor by showing in which aspects of honor are gender-specific and which are valid for both genders.

In the future, a social representation study can be made on the concepts of moral women and moral men; the concepts of moral woman/man and honorable woman/man can be examined comparatively so that it will be possible to understand better both the honor/morality distinction and the gender-specific aspects of morality and honor.