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**Anti-gay ‘honor’ abuse: A multinational attitudinal study of collectivist vs individualist orientated populations in Asia and England.**

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### Abstract

**Objective:** Cultural collectivism, a core feature of honor cultures, is associated with the acceptance of aggression if it is used in the name of so called ‘honor’. Currently overlooked in the research literature, this study explored perceptions of anti-gay ‘honor’ abuse in collectivist orientated honor cultures, where homosexuality, in particular, is considered to be dishonorable.

**Method:** To conduct exploratory and comparative analysis, this study recruited 922 students in four Asian countries (India, Iran, Malaysia and Pakistan), as well as Asian British and White British students in England. All participants read a brief vignette depicting a man whose relatives verbally abuse him and threaten him with life-threatening violence, after suspecting that he is gay and has joined an online dating website to meet men. Participants then completed a short questionnaire that assessed the extent to which they thought the man’s actions had damaged his family’s honor and their approval of the anti-gay ‘honor’ abuse depicted in the scenario. **Results:** Broadly in line with predictions, data analyses revealed attitudes more supportive of anti-gay ‘honor’ abuse in all five collectivist-orientated populations than the sample of individualistic-orientated counterparts in England. Notably, however, a series of one-way ANOVAs demonstrated that these results varied depending on country of residence, gender, religious denomination, educational status and age. **Conclusions:** The findings show that individual and demographic differences influence perceptions towards homophobic ‘honor’ abuse in collectivist cultures. These differences are a useful indices of the psychosocial factors that underpin hostile attitudes towards gay males in cultures where homosexuality is denounced.

*Keywords:* family violence; honor-based violence; honor killings; LGBT; religion; victims

**Anti-gay ‘honor’ abuse: A multinational attitudinal study of collectivist vs individualist orientated populations in Asia and England.**

To understand how homosexuality is perceived in collectivist honor cultures is to accept some uneasy truths. At one extreme, for instance, European news agencies have reported on the alleged rounding up, torture, and detainment of homosexual men in Chechnya, victimized by the authorities for being gay in addition to being threatened with ‘honor’ killings by their families (Knight, 2017). Myriad forms of anti-gay ‘honor’ abuse are also reported in other countries where Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) sexualities are denounced, including Asian nations such as India, Iran, Malaysia, and Pakistan where same-sex sexual activity is a criminal offence carrying a maximum penalty of life imprisonment (Carroll & Mendos, 2017). Recent studies have reported a range of factors associated with public support for ‘honor’ based violence and killings in collectivist-orientated Middle Eastern, North African, and South Asian (MENASA) nations (e.g., Eisner & Ghuneim, 2013; Gengler, Alkazemi, & Alsharekh, 2018; Khan, 2018; Lowe, Khan, Thanzami, Barzy, & Karmaliani, 2018). As girls and women are the main targets for this abuse, it is unsurprising that this emerging literature has focused on attitudes towards female victims. Yet efforts to quantifiably examine homonegative ‘honor’ based victimization have lagged behind. This study, therefore, explores factors that underpin people’s attitudes towards anti-gay ‘honor’ abuse in four collectivist populations in Asia. To explore nuanced variations within and across populations, the extent to which similar attitudes are found in a comparable British Asian diasporic population and an individualistic-orientated British White sample, both in England, are also examined. To date, a multinational analysis of public attitudes towards anti-gay ‘honor’ abuse in these populations has not been explored in a single study, indicating a need for this investigation.

**The role of honor in collectivist vs individualist orientated cultures**

As social constructs, honor, collectivism and individualism are pervasive and powerful (Rodriguez Mosquera, 1999; 2013). These interlinking constructs can be defined as a cultural syndrome, that is, an ideology made up of shared attitudes, beliefs, norms, values and roles, organized around a theme (Triandis, 1993; 1996). These syndromes underpin the way people in a shared culture understand and perceive their world, as well as their interactions with others around them. Explained as a cultural syndrome, it is easier to understand how honor may be conceptualized differently in collectivist and individualistic cultures (Oyserman, 2017; Triandis 1993; 1996).

While individualist cultures are characterized as being ‘loose’, with permissive attitudes towards behaviors deviating from the social norm, collectivist cultures are described as ‘tight’ for being formal and disciplined with a general intolerance for deviation from strict social norms (Triandis, 2004). Collectivist orientated nations that score high on psychometric measures for cultural tightness include India, Malaysia, and Pakistan (Gelfand et al, 2011). Collectivist ideologies are associated with a wide range of emotions, behaviors and cultural practices that emphasize interconnectedness between individuals, in particular, immediate and extended family, and what the loss of honor represents for this connection (Gelfand et al, 2011; Rodriguez Mosquera, 2016; Triandis, 2004). As a loss of honor might weaken the tight interconnectedness, it seen as a valuable asset, the loss of which would be detrimental , not only for the individual involved but also the interconnected family structure and all others closely connected to the individual (Vandello, 2016). Therefore, in collectivist cultures, there is a heavy sense of duty for all individuals to maintain family honor and to conform to culturally-defined and collectively-prescribed honor values, despite personal beliefs. At the same time, there is expectation for

members within that culture to monitor their own family and wider community to ensure that honor norms are being observed and respected (Doğan, 2016; Vandello & Cohen, 2003).

As the loss of honor, or the failure to restore honor, brings shame to the individual as well as the family (Bagli & Sev'er, 2003), people from honor cultures are much more likely to experience negative emotions to threats to honor (Ijzerman et al, 2007; Rodriguez Mosquera et al, 2002, 2008). It is unsurprising then that individuals from collectivist honor cultures would be more likely to respond with aggression against threats to honor (Brown et al, 2009; Cohen et al, 1996; Nisbet & Cohen, 1996; Rodriguez Mosquera et al, 2014; Vandello & Cohen, 2003). While prior research has found that honor cultures approve the use of violence when used to defend ones' honor and for self-protection (Cohen et al, 1996; Dietrich & Schuett, 2013; Nisbet & Cohen, 1996; Vandello & Cohen, 2003), these studies have typically explored populations in North America, Latin America, and Mediterranean countries. Other collectivist honor cultures in populations from Middle Eastern and Asian subcontinent and diasporic communities have only recently begun to be explored (e.g., Eisner & Ghuneim, 2013; Gengler et al, 2018; Khan, 2018; Lowe et al, 2018). This is surprising because even without reliable figures, it is noted that a majority of all 'honor' killings worldwide are reported to occur in these regions (Nasrullah et al, 2009).

### **'Honor' violence to protect gender roles**

Another defining feature of collectivist honor cultures is that they are patriarchal, thus rigid gendered norms are used to guide social behavior, in terms of what is appropriate behavior for males and females. Males, for example are expected to demonstrate toughness, strength, and sexual potency while females are expected to act with modesty, respectability, and sexual propriety (Rodriguez Mosquera, 2016; Vandello, 2016). Therefore, traditional male gender role beliefs involving the endorsement of traditionally masculine values (e.g., avoidance of femininity,

toughness, and gaining status and respect from others; Thompson & Pleck, 1986) are likely to underpin aggression towards anyone who does not conform to these beliefs. Thus, in collectivist-orientated cultures, any violation in these gendered roles will be viewed as highly undesirable, and failure to act accordingly is likely to be seen as a threat or damage to family honor. Supporting evidence comes from studies that report a high level of endorsement for ‘honor’ based violence, even killing, females in collectivist cultures who have violated these codes, for example, for behaving in a way that is deemed to be sexualized (Eisner & Ghuneim, 2013; Gengler et al, 2018; Lowe et al, 2018; Shaikh, Kamal, & Naqvi, 2015; Shaikh, Shaikh, Kamal, & Mashood, 2010).

### **Anti-gay ‘honor’ abuse and violence**

As homosexuality, from a traditional gender role view, is seen to violate the gender norm, it is unsurprising that the traditional, socially-constructed gender role beliefs are found to explain anti-gay attitudes (Costa & Davies, 2012; Kite & Whitley, 1996; Vincent et al, 2011; Steffens et al, 2014). Gender role enforcement theory has been used to explain aggression towards people who do not adhere to gender appropriate roles (e.g., Parrott, 2009). For example, as homosexual individuals are perceived as not adhering to the code of honor outlined by the gendered honor code, it would be deemed acceptable to act with hostility or use aggression against them for this reason. It is clear therefore, that a deep-seated acceptance of traditional masculine and feminine gender roles strongly influences a disapproval of any deviations from this gendered honor code. Moreover, in collectivist-orientated cultures and honor cultures globally, rigid gender scripts exist that are endorsed by both males and females (Eisner & Ghuneim, 2013; Gengler et al, 2018; Khan, 2018; Lowe et al, 2018; Shaikh et al, 2010; Shaikh et al, 2015) thereby justifying ‘honor’-based abuse in support of gendered honor codes.

**Attitudes towards homosexuality**

As this is a vastly under researched area, variances that might explain demographic differences in homonegative attitudes have to be drawn from studies conducted in Western nations. This literature is important as it suggests that anti-gay attitudes vary in relation to individual social and demographic characteristics, such as gender, age, educational level and relationship status. For example, Davies (2004) found that British men were more likely to express negative responses than were British women when responding to a scale measuring negative affect towards gay men. This finding was explained in terms of traditional, societal gender belief systems that socialize men to be anti-gay (see Kite & Whitley, 1996 for detailed discussion and meta-analysis). Studies conducted in the United States also show that older individuals with lower education attainment tend to be more homonegative than younger people or those with higher education qualifications (e.g. Herek & Gonzalez-Rivera, 2006), and that married individuals are more negative towards homosexuality than those who are unmarried (e.g. Herek & Capitanio, 1995).

Another explanation may be identification with monotheistic religions, such as Christianity, Islam, and Judaism which propagate a traditional view in their religious teachings that homosexuality is sinful (Whitley, 2009). Studies have shown that Muslims endorse more anti-gay beliefs than do Christians in Germany (Reese, Steffans & Jones, 2013) and Turkey (Sakalli, 2002), and more anti-gay beliefs than do Turkish atheists (Anderson & Koc, 2015). A large, multi-level analysis of 79 nations used data from the World Values Survey to analyze the effects of demographics and religiosity on attitudes towards homosexuality (Jackle & Wenzelburger, 2015). Across nations, results confirmed previous research findings on individual and social demographics, such that men, older people, those less educated, and married people were more homonegative than women, younger people, better educated and those unmarried respectively.



Regarding differences across religions, it was found that religious people were generally more homonegative than the non-religious, with attitudes held by Muslims and Buddhists, on the extreme negative and the positive end of the scale respectively (Jackle & Wenzelburger, 2015).

This research indicates a need to explore individual demographic differences in attitudes towards anti-gay ‘honor’ abuse, in the context of cultural collectivism, and specifically, the extent to which homosexuality is perceived to damage family honor and the approval of anti-gay ‘honor’ abuse in response to this. It is important that work in this area is conducted given the likelihood of non-heterosexual people being abused, and their victimization being legitimized in the name of so called ‘honor’.

#### *Aim of this Study*

Accounting for gaps in the literature, this study examined the extent to which collectivist culture orientation is associated with perceptions of anti-gay ‘honor’ abuse, by exploring and comparing the judgements of participants from collectivist and individualist cultures. As ‘honor’ abuse has been reported in collectivist orientated South Asian and Middle Eastern populations, both domestically and internationally, including diasporic communities in England (e.g., Eisner & Ghuneim, 2013; Khan et al, 2018), participants were recruited in four collectivist orientated nations in Asia<sup>1</sup> (i.e., India, Iran, Malaysia and Pakistan), in addition to British Asian nationals in England. Comparisons were made with a sample of individualistic orientated British White participants in England. All participants read a hypothetical scenario depicting a man whose relatives verbally abuse and threaten him with extreme violence when they suspect that he might

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<sup>1</sup>In this study we refer to Iran as an Asian, rather than Middle Eastern, nation due to its geographical location as well as its similarities with the other Asian countries under investigation in the key concepts addressed.

be gay. The extent to which participants believed the man damaged his family's honor in this situation, and their approval of anti-gay 'honor' abuse against him was examined.

Guided by past research (e.g., Davies, 2004; Khan, 2018; Kite & Whitley, 1996), gender differences in participants' attitudes were examined to test the prediction that males would be more endorsing of anti-gay 'honor' abuse than would females. Also in line with previous studies (e.g., Jackle & Wenzelburger, 2015), other demographic factors found to influence generic attitudes towards homosexuality were also examined here; it was thus predicted that older, religious, less educated, and married individuals would endorse anti-gay 'honor' abuse more so than younger, non-religious, more educated, and unmarried people. Finally, as no previous studies have investigated attitudes towards anti-gay 'honor' abuse in the nations examined here, no predictions were made as to whether some countries would be more endorsing of anti-gay 'honor' abuse than others. However, it was predicted that participants from all four Asian nations and British Asians, due to their collectivist cultural orientation would be more endorsing of the damage to honor and more accepting of anti-gay 'honor' abuse than would individualistic orientated British White participants.

## **Method**

### *Participants*

Participants were 922 (410 male; 511 female; 1 missing gender data) students of Asian or British ethnic origin across five countries of residence: Britain (n=343); India (n=140), Iran (n=122), Malaysia (n=161) and Pakistan (n=137). The British data was collected from one university in the north west of England, and comprised 255 White British, and 88 Asian British individuals. Indian data was collected from two universities in Aizawl, the state capital of

Mizoram, situated in the north-eastern region of India. Iranian data were collected from a university in the capital city, Tehran. Malaysian data was collected from a university in the suburbs of Kuala Lumpur, and Pakistani data from a university in Karachi, the capital of the Pakistani province of Sindh.

Ages ranged from 16-61 years ( $M=23.01$ ;  $SD=5.76$ ). Five participants did not state their age. In total, 600 participants acknowledged a religious denomination; 318 noted they were non-religious. The remainder did not answer this question. Of those with a religious denomination, 276 (30%)<sup>2</sup> were Muslim, 244 (27%) were Christian, 63 (7%) were Buddhist, 42 (5%) were Hindu, and two (<1%) participants noted they were Sikh. The majority of participants had been educated past 16 years, with 406 (44%) having university-level education, 470 (51%) further (post-16) education, and the remainder, 42 (5%) having been educated to school-level (16 years or younger). Four participants did not state their educational level. The majority of participants were either single (59%), dating (18%), with the remainder being married (10%), cohabiting (5%), divorced (1%) or widowed (0.5%). The remainder did not reveal their relationship status.

### *Materials*

A questionnaire booklet was designed for the purpose of this study. Participants were asked to provide demographic details including gender, age, religious denomination (if any), educational level, and relationship status and to complete a set of measures to examine attitudes towards anti-gay ‘honor’-based abuse. The scenario and measures were adapted from a study on perceptions of damage to honor in Latino populations (see Dietrich & Schuett, 2013). Similar items to those used in the current study have been used previously to explore attitudes towards ‘honor’ abuse in the

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<sup>2</sup> All percentages are rounded up.

four Asian nations in this study (see Lowe et al, 2018). The scenario text utilized in this study was as follows:

*“Jack/Rindika/Hessam/Jamshed<sup>3</sup> has joined a popular online dating website. He does not use his real name or upload a photo to his profile because he is not openly gay and he thinks his sexuality is his private business. A few weeks later, he is surprised to find he is inundated with messages from his nephews - when he reads them, it is clear they think the online profile is his. The messages have become increasingly menacing; they threaten to publically ‘out’ him because they think he should be ashamed of his sexuality. They bombard him with messages on the website, on his work email and phone voice mail. In the latest message, they threaten to kill him.”*

Participants then completed two items to examine the extent to which they perceived the protagonist’s behavior had damaged his family’s honor and their approval of anti-gay ‘honor’ abuse by his relatives. Each response was rated along a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree. The wording of each dependent variable was as follows:

- a. Damage to honor: *Jack/Rindika/Hessam/Jamshed damaged his family’s honor by setting up a dating profile incognito to meet a man.*
- b. Approval of anti-gay ‘honor’ abuse: *It is reasonable to threaten someone in this circumstance.*

In addition to the vignette, the Cultural Orientation Scale (COS: Bierbrauer, Meyer & Wolfrandt, 1994) was administered to the British Asian sample to determine the strength of their collectivist cultural orientation. The COS consists of 26 items divided into two 13-item scales that

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<sup>3</sup> The protagonist’s name in the scenario was altered to reflect the country in which questionnaires were distributed.

measure normative and evaluative cultural orientation. The normative items reflect the perceived degree to which certain behaviors or practices are common in a given culture, while the evaluative items reflect personal evaluations of behavior, and the degree to which they are acceptable or not. Both scales are rated along a 7-point Likert type scale ranging from 'not at all' (1) to 'always' (7). Bierbrauer et al. (1994) report an overall Cronbach's alpha of .86 and the scale has been used in a series of studies in Poland and the US by Cialdini, Wosinska, Barrett, Butner and Gornik-Durose (1999), in the UK and Spain by Goodwin and Plaza (2000), and in the UK by Thanzami and Archer (2005)<sup>4</sup>.

### *Procedure*

A similar procedure was used across all samples for consistency. In each country, the research team collected data from students at a number of colleges and universities campuses, using opportunity sampling. Adverts were placed around campuses with a website address so participants could complete the questionnaire online. Students, when approached on campus with paper copies, were verbally briefed about the study, and asked if they wished to participate. Those who agreed were provided with the questionnaire booklet to complete these in their own time, and to return to a secure drop-in box. A detailed briefing and debriefing sheet, attached to the questionnaire, detailed the full research aims, and informed that participation was voluntary, responses were anonymous and that any information provided would be used for research purposes only. The study was approved by participating institutions' ethics committee.

## **Results**

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<sup>4</sup> The British Asian sample endorsed high collectivist cultural orientation as assessed by the COS (Normative scale:  $M = 63.55$ ;  $SD = 9.36$  and Evaluative Scale:  $M = 61.71$ ;  $SD = 8.80$ ).

Analyses were conducted to address each research question in turn. In short, it was predicted that males would be more endorsing of anti-gay ‘honor’ abuse than would females. It was also predicted that older, religious, less educated, and married individuals would endorse anti-gay ‘honor’ abuse than younger, non-religious, more educated, and unmarried people. Finally, it was predicted that participants from all four Asian nations and British Asians (i.e., collectively- orientated) would be more endorsing of the damage to honor and more accepting of anti-gay ‘honor’ abuse than would individualistic-orientated British White participants.

### *Gender*

Across the entire sample, independent samples t-tests revealed support for the predictions, with significant effects for damage to honor,  $t(917)=4.90$ ,  $p<.001$  and approval of anti-gay ‘honor’ abuse,  $t(917)=5.08$ ,  $p<.001$ , with males endorsing greater damage to honor ( $M=3.74$ ;  $SD=1.82$ ) and more approving of this abuse ( $M=3.16$ ;  $SD=1.77$ ) than were females ( $M=3.21$ ;  $SD=1.83$  and  $M=2.66$ ;  $SD=1.48$  respectively).

### *Age*

Supportive of predictions, a Pearson’s correlation showed that participant age was significantly correlated with approval of anti-gay ‘honor’ abuse ( $r=.20$ ,  $p<.001$ ), indicating that older participants were more endorsing of this abuse than their younger counterparts.

### *Religion*

Independent Samples t-tests were conducted to examine whether participants that expressed a religious denomination differed in their opinion from those that did not. As predicted across the entire sample, significant differences were revealed on damage to honor,  $t(914)=-9.87$ ,

$p < .001$ , and approval of anti-gay ‘honor’ abuse,  $t(912) = -7.13$ ,  $p < .001$ , such that religious people were more endorsing of damage to honor ( $M = 3.82$ ;  $SD = 1.92$ ) and approving of this abuse ( $M = 3.19$ ;  $SD = 1.85$ ) than non-religious people ( $M = 2.63$ ;  $SD = 1.27$  and  $M = 2.38$ ;  $SD = 1.08$  respectively).

As having a religious affiliation determined greater endorsement of anti-gay ‘honor’ abuse, further examination of the effects of religion on honor values were conducted, to investigate whether religious affiliation per se or whether specific religious denominations determined ‘honor’-abuse endorsement. Two one-way Analyses of Variance (ANOVAs) were conducted on religious denomination at four levels: Buddhist, Christian, Hindu and Muslim. These four religious denominations were chosen due to sufficient sample sizes for meaningful analysis. All other data was removed before this analysis, reducing the overall sample to  $n = 625$ .

Findings showed significant effects for damage to family honor,  $F(3, 621) = 11.96$ ,  $p < .001$  and approval of anti-gay ‘honor’ abuse,  $F(3, 619) = 13.28$ ,  $p < .001$ . Means and standard deviations can be found in Table 1.

#### TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Post hoc Tukey tests revealed, consistent with previous research, that Buddhists were less likely to judge that the victim caused damage to his family’s honor and were less approving of the anti-gay ‘honor’ abuse than were those of the Christian, Hindu, or Islamic faiths. Muslims and Hindus equally judged the victim to have damaged family honor and equally approving of anti-gay ‘honor’ abuse, significantly more so than either Christians or Buddhists. ( $p$ ’s  $< .05$ ).

#### *Educational Status*

One-way ANOVAs with Tukey post hoc tests were conducted on educational status across the complete sample at three levels: higher education, further education and education up to age 16 as the highest educational attainment. Contrary to predictions, those with higher educational attainment were more endorsing of damage to family honor,  $F(2, 913)=5.47, p=.004$ , and more approving of anti-gay ‘honor’ abuse,  $F(2, 911)=10.41, p<.001$ , than those with further education level or school-level educational attainment. Means and standard deviations can be found in Table 2.

#### TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

##### *Relationship Status*

One-way ANOVAs were conducted on relationship status across the complete sample at six levels: single, dating, co-habiting, married, separated/divorced and widowed. Contrary to predictions, no significant differences were revealed on damage to family honor,  $F(2, 911)=1.47, ns$ , or more approving of anti-gay ‘honor’ abuse,  $F(2, 911)=2.01, ns$ .

##### *Country of Residence*

One-way ANOVAs were conducted on country of residence at six levels: British Asian, British White, India, Iran, Malaysia and Pakistan on the two dependent measures. Results showed significant effects on damage to family honor,  $F(5, 914)=72.37, p<.001$ , and approval of anti-gay ‘honor’ abuse,  $F(5, 912)=98.92, p<.001$ . Means and standard deviations can be found in Table 3.

#### TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE



Post hoc Tukey tests revealed that participants in Pakistan were more endorsing in their beliefs that the victim had damaged family honor than any other group. This was followed by participants in India, British Asian participants in England, then participants in Malaysia and Iran. Lastly, British White participants were significantly less likely to endorse honor-based values than any other group. Approval of anti-gay ‘honor’ abuse revealed a slightly different pattern of results. Participants in Pakistan and India were the most approving of this ‘honor’ abuse, followed by the judgments of British Asians in England, and participants in Iran. British Whites in England and participants in Malaysia were the least approving of anti-gay ‘honor’ abuse ( $p$ 's  $< .05$ ).

## Discussion

This study is novel in its examination of participants’ perceptions of anti-gay ‘honor’ abuse in collectivist honor cultures in India, Iran, Malaysia, Pakistan and England. Comparisons made with an individualistic orientated British White sample provides further insight into honor values in Asian and Western populations. Results broadly conformed to the predictions and offer a valuable extension to the existing literature on attitudes towards, and approval of, anti-gay ‘honor’ abuse.

In relation to demographic characteristics, as predicted, all variables except relationship status influenced at least one of the dependent measures. These findings are consistent with other studies (e.g. Davies, 2004; Khan, 2018; Kite & Whitely, 1996 for a meta-analysis) that indicate that males, more so than females, endorse anti-gay attitudes. Specifically, the current findings show that males were more likely than females to perceive a man whose relatives suspect he is gay, as having damaged his family’s honor, and were more approving of their aggression

towards him as a result of this. As these findings apply specifically to an honor based scenario, they extend on existing knowledge from past studies that posit traditional belief systems socialize men to be anti-gay and thus, that men in general are more approving of anti-gay aggression than are women (see e.g. Davies & Rogers, 2006 for a review).

Also in line with broader research in this area (e.g., Anderson & Koc, 2015; Jackle & Wenzelburger, 2015; Reese et al, 2013; Sakalli, 2002), this study found that participants' age, religiosity and specific religious denominations significantly influenced their perceptions of anti-gay 'honor' abuse. For example, younger and non-religious participants were less likely to endorse anti-gay 'honor' abuse than were older participants and those who expressed affiliation with a religious denomination. Again consistent with previous research on generic attitudes towards homosexuality (Jackle & Wenzelburger, 2015), participants of Buddhist faith were less endorsing that the victim had damaged his family's honor and were less approving of 'honor' abuse than were those of Christian, Hindu or Islamic faiths.

Participants' country of residence also revealed significant effects in support of this study's predictions. As no previous studies had investigated anti-gay 'honor' abuse in these five countries, no specific predictions were made regarding whether there would be differences across each country. However, as expected on the basis of either a collectivist or individualistic cultural orientation, participants in all four Asian nations and British Asians in England endorsed honor-based beliefs to some extent, more so than their British White counterparts. More specifically, participants in Pakistan were more endorsing in their beliefs, than any other group, that the gay male depicted in the scenario had damaged his family's honor, followed by participants in India, British Asians in England, participants in Malaysia, Iran, and least endorsing, as predicted, British Whites in England. A near identical pattern of results was found

for approval of anti-gay ‘honor’ abuse, that is, participants in Pakistan and India were the most approving, followed by British Asian participants in England and then participants in Iran. Yet both British White participants in England and participants in Malaysia were the least approving of the ‘honor’ based abuse in this instance. Although slight, this difference is worth exploring beyond the influence of cultural orientation. In a general public survey, for example, Gengler et al (2018) found that tribal identification and support for political Islam were robust predictors of attitudes in support of ‘honor’ violence in collectivist-orientated Kuwait, while political interest was not. Further investigations ought to consider powerful sociopolitical factors, such as these, in an effort to explain why ‘honor’ abuse may be broadly regarded as an acceptable mechanism to reinforce rigid cultural level narratives, at the expense of victims’ lived realities.

The value of evolving this work holds more gravity when considering the ways in which non-heterosexual people are abused and marginalized globally, solely on the basis of their sexual expression or orientation (Carroll & Mendos, 2017). In 21<sup>st</sup> century America, for example, gay rights appeared to be progressing on the same trajectory as women’s rights and race relations, yet many still fervently oppose equal policy and rights for LGBT people (Avery, Chase, Johansson, Litvak, Montero & Wydra, 2007). This has been prolifically demonstrated in the right-wing political rhetoric of the Trump era which, it is argued, is pushing to dismantle the civil rights of LGBT people (Carroll & Mendos, 2017; Hirsch et al, 2017). The treatment of LGBT people is starker still in collectivist honor cultures. For example, analysis of data from Turkey (a Eurasian collectivist orientated culture) from 2007 to 2009 showed that 22 ‘honor’ killings were related to the sexual identity of the victims (Democratic Turkey Forum, 2011). More pertinent to this study, the average number of ‘honor’ killings for Pakistan alone is estimated to be around 10,000 annually (Kirti, Kumar, & Yadav, 2011). Although sexual orientation was not reported for these

data, it is likely that a proportion of these victims were murdered because of their LGBT sexuality (Khan, Hall & Lowe, 2017). The seriousness of this is further magnified as same-sex relations are criminalized in some of the counties included in this study, and is punishable by law, with sentences of imprisonment or even death (Carroll & Mendos, 2017).

In this social and political landscape, it is unsurprising that gay males are reported to be at elevated risk of victimization from their immediate and extended family members, tribal and community leaders and groups in Asian territories (Mahendru, 2017). Thus, attitudinal research that identifies elements underpinning homonegative beliefs, in both collectivistic and individualistic orientated cultures, may be a subtle but powerful means to influence both public opinion and social policy.

### **Limitations and Future Work**

This study is not without limitation. For example, these findings only relate to one hypothetical scenario, so it would be advantageous for future studies to confirm these findings using different depictions of anti-gay ‘honor’ abuse. Also, as participants’ attitudes were measured using two individual items only, future work might extend the scope or sensitivity of assessment measures to glean a more nuanced understanding of the levels of anti-gay endorsement. Future research might also explore whether similar results are found towards lesbians and other sexual or gender minorities, such as transgendered people. As this study collected only basic demographic and religious information from participants who were mainly educated, young adults, future studies might benefit from examining the influence of other relevant variables potentially associated with attitudes supportive of anti-gay ‘honor’ abuse for example, socioeconomic status (West, Kaufman Kantor, & Jasinski, 1998), and urban versus rural backgrounds (Moracco, Hilton, Hodges, & Frasier, 2005). Clearly under researched at

present, the exploration of individual differences within cultures may be a valuable avenue for future studies. Invariably, it would be useful to conduct in-depth comparative analysis to identify variances within and across collectivist and individualistic orientated cultures, by exploring a range of psychosocial factors more broadly associated with aggressive homonegative attitudes including, hypermasculinity (Parrott & Zeichner, 2008), right wing authoritarianism (Hunsberger, 1996), social dominance orientation and gendered belief systems (Whitley & Ægisdóttir, 2000).

Research in this area would make a useful addition to the currently limited but growing literature. While firm conclusions cannot yet be drawn from this body of work, a pattern is emerging that suggests despite the robust influence of cultural expectations on people's attitudes, individual differences play a key role in the endorsement of 'honor' abuse. For example, low level approval for overall 'honor' abuse was found in a mainly young, educated British South Asian population of Muslims in England, irrespective of their gender (Khan et al, 2018). Yet, this study did not assess the influence of any psychosocial variables that might have influenced their opinions. Thus, it is notable that other studies in England that focused on South Asian LGBT victimization reveal fraught experiences and reports of family members being extremely abusive, both threatening and inflicting physical harm (Khan et al, 2017; Razzall & Khan, 2017) and psychological coercion (Jaspal, 2014), either as punishment or to ensure compliance with expected heterosexual gender norms, and thus, restoring so called family 'honor'.

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*Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations across Religious Denomination*

<b>Dependent Variable</b>	<b>Religion</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
<hr/>			
Damage to Honor	Buddhist	2.84	1.75
	Christian	3.56	1.76
	Hindu	4.00	1.87
	Islam	4.24	1.99
	Total	3.82	1.92
Approval of Anti-gay Honor Abuse	Buddhist	2.21	1.68
	Christian	2.96	1.67
	Hindu	3.57	2.13
	Islam	3.62	1.90
	Total	3.22	1.86

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*Table 2: Means and Standard Deviations across Educational Status*

<b>Dependent Variable</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
<hr/>			
Damage to Honor			
	School 16	3.29	2.04
	FE	3.24	1.73
	HE	3.64	1.87
	Total	3.42	1.82
Approval of Anti-gay Honor Abuse			
	School 16	2.67	1.87
	FE	2.69	1.61
	HE	3.19	1.67
	Total	2.91	1.67
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*Table 3. Means and Standard Deviations across Country of Residence*

<b>Dependent Variable</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
<hr/>			
Damage to Honor	British Asian	3.92	1.78
	British White	2.36	0.90
	India	4.24	1.69
	Iran	2.89	1.44
	Malaysia	2.97	1.71
	Pakistan	5.03	1.95
	Total	3.41	1.81
Approval of Approval of Anti-gay Honor Abuse	British Asian	2.99	1.37
	British White	2.21	0.68
	India	3.54	1.61
	Iran	2.43	0.91
	Malaysia	2.00	1.53
	Pakistan	4.83	1.89
	Total	2.90	1.67
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