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Goal Derailment and Goal Persistence in Response to Honor Threats

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Abstract

In honor cultures, maintaining a positive moral reputation (e.g., being known as an honest person) is highly important, whereas in dignity cultures self-respect (e.g., competence and success) is strongly emphasized. Depending on their cultural background, people respond differently to threats to these two dimensions of honor. In two studies, we examined the effects of morality-focused and competence-focused threats on people's goal pursuit in two honor cultures (Turkey, Southern U.S., & Latinx) and in a dignity culture (Northern U.S.). In Study 1, Turkish participants were more likely to reject a highly qualified person as a partner in a future task if that person threatened their morality (vs. no-threat), even though this meant letting go of the goal of winning an award. Participants from the U.S. honor and dignity groups, however, were equally likely to choose the people who gave them threatening and neutral feedback. In Study 2, Turkish and U.S. honor participants were more likely to persist in a subsequent goal after receiving a morality threat (vs. no-threat), whereas U.S. dignity participants were more likely to persist in a subsequent goal after receiving a competence threat (vs. no-threat). These results show that people's responses to honor threats are influenced by the dominant values of their culture and by the tools that are available to them to potentially restore their reputation (e.g., punishing the offender vs. working hard on a different task). This research can have implications for multicultural contexts in which people can have conflicting goals, such as diverse work environments.

Keywords: cultures of honor; goal conflict; goal persistence; reputation; morality

Goal Derailment and Goal Persistence in Response to Honor Threats

John and Caleb are in a class together, and both are bright and eager to perform well. Caleb accuses John of cheating on an exam, which John vigorously (and honestly) denies. Soon after this incident, class members are asked to work in pairs on a project. Caleb is the smartest, most capable member of the class, and John knows he is likely to get a better grade if he works with him. Should John swallow his pride and work with Caleb who falsely accused him of cheating, or should he risk a lower grade by choosing to work with someone else? After class, when John is working on his homework, is he still thinking about the insult and how to get back at Caleb, or does he double down on his homework to prove his worth? People's cultural background can influence their decisions and motivation in these situations, especially if the threat they receive is in a culturally important domain.

In so-called honor cultures (e.g., Southern and Mountain West regions of the U.S.; Middle Eastern, Mediterranean, South-Asian, and Latin American societies), maintaining a *positive reputation* or social respect is highly important (Cross et al., 2014; Pitt-Rivers, 1965); it is one of the two dimensions of honor along with self-respect (e.g., Pitt-Rivers, 1965). People from these cultures are more sensitive to threats to their reputation relative to people from dignity cultures (e.g., Northern states of the U.S., Western European societies), who tend to perceive honor as a private matter and emphasize *self-respect*, the second dimension of honor (Leung & Cohen, 2011; Pitt-Rivers, 1965). In cultures of honor, one's reputation and social value can be easily lost (by one's own dishonorable behavior or by others' accusations of dishonorable behavior), and it is difficult to regain (Stewart, 1994). Consequently, people in these cultural contexts tend to be alert to challenges to their reputation and quick to defend or maintain it. To restore their damaged reputation and demonstrate that they should not be messed

with, people from honor cultures (vs. dignity cultures) are more likely to express anger and to retaliate when they experience a threat to their reputation or social image, such as an insult (e.g., Cohen et al., 1996; Uskul et al., 2015; for reviews, see Cross & Uskul, in press; Uskul et al. 2019). Members of dignity cultures, in contrast, perceive their worth as internal and inviolable; others' accusations are often dismissed or discounted. Compared to members of honor cultures, members of dignity cultures are less likely to respond to insults or challenges to their reputation with aggression or retaliation (e.g., Uskul et al., 2015). Social respect and reputation are valued in dignity cultures, but they are not as salient or as powerful motives for behavior as in honor cultures. There is, of course, considerable variation in both cultural groups; people from honor cultures do not always respond to all kinds of threats aggressively and people from dignity cultures can certainly retaliate or respond with aggression when they are socially threatened.

In honor cultures, threats to one's social respect (e.g., being called a liar) generate stronger responses than threats to one's self-respect (e.g., being called incompetent; e.g., Günsoy et al., 2019; Günsoy et al., 2020). Social respect is a more central aspect of honor than self-respect in these cultures (e.g., Rodriguez Mosquera et al., 2002b) and moral qualities, such as honesty, tend to influence other people's opinions about the person more strongly than other qualities, such as competence (Wojciszke, 2005). People from dignity cultures, however, respond similarly to these two types of threats (Günsoy et al., 2019; Günsoy et al., 2020, Study 2) or respond more strongly to self-respect threats than to social respect threats (Günsoy et al., 2020, Study 1). This is consistent with the emphasis on self-esteem and personal achievements in dignity cultures, in which failure (e.g., lack of accomplishments or being outperformed by others) is one of the most common examples of shameful and threatening situations (Cohen et al., 2018; Rodriguez Mosquera et al., 2000; Uskul et al., 2012).

The Goal of Seeking and Keeping Honor

To better understand the processes that lead to these divergent responses to threats to one's moral reputation and competence among members of honor and dignity cultures, we have begun to examine honor threats in terms of goal conflict. When people have conflicting goals, one of their goals may become superordinate and derail their attention and resources from other goals (e.g., Brunstein & Gollwitzer, 1996; Kehr, 2003; Simon, 1967). For members of honor cultures, the goal of defending or maintaining one's honor may override other goals, especially when a culturally important dimension of honor - reputation/social respect - is threatened, for instance, via threats to morality or honesty. In support of this prediction, Turkish and Southern U.S. participants with European American backgrounds (both considered honor cultures) who received morality-threatening feedback were more likely than those who received non-threatening feedback to report that they would delay their subsequent goals, whereas Northern U.S. participants with European American backgrounds (a dignity culture) in these two conditions did not differ in their goal-related planning (Günsoy et al., 2020, Study 1). When there is a threat to their reputation, people from honor cultures may also respond in ways that may seem irrational to people unfamiliar with honor cultures, especially when their efforts to protect or restore their honor are also costly to themselves. In line with this, Turkish participants tended to turn down the opportunity to work with a partner who was most likely to help them win a prize, if that person had previously called them a liar; members of a dignity culture were less likely to reject this offender (Günsoy et al., 2020, Study 2). In other words, among the Turkish participants, the goal of potentially winning a prize was derailed by the threat to their honor; they chose to retaliate against the offender, even though that choice was costly to themselves. These prior studies focused on the *preactional phase* of goal pursuit, in which

people make decisions about their future goals (Gollwitzer, 1996). The first objective of the present research is to continue to investigate the ways members of honor and dignity cultures manage conflicting goals in this preactional phase and extend the findings using a different design (Study 1).

Would threats to honor influence goal pursuit the same way when the threatened person is in the *actional phase*, already working towards another goal? Put differently, how would people from honor and dignity cultures act after receiving an honor threat, if they were given the opportunity to work on a subsequent, unrelated goal? There is evidence suggesting two possible reactions: Similar to the goal conflict idea explained earlier (e.g., Kehr, 2003), our *distraction hypothesis* suggests that after receiving threatening feedback, people may be distracted by negative thoughts or by the goal of reciprocating the threat, leading to less persistence on a subsequent task. For example, people who are targets of stereotype threat experience impairments to their working memory and engage in mind-wandering, which reduce their task performance (e.g., Schmader & Johns, 2003; Mrazek et al., 2011). Alternatively, the *compensation hypothesis* suggests that people who receive negative feedback or threats to their self-esteem may work harder and show increased motivation and persistence in subsequent tasks (e.g., van Dellen et al., 2011). For example, research has shown that when people receive contemptuous performance feedback, they work harder and improve their performance in subsequent tasks (Melwani & Barsade, 2011) to recover their damaged self-esteem (e.g., Gollwitzer, 1990). Thus, the second objective of the present research is to examine whether after an honor threat, participant performance on a subsequent task is best explained by the distraction hypothesis or the compensation hypothesis (Study 2). If participants are distracted by the threat, then they should show lower rates of persistence in a subsequent task, compared to a no-threat

condition. If they are seeking to compensate for the threat, they should increase their efforts and persist longer than those in a no-threat condition. To our knowledge, there is no previous work on people's responses to honor threats across cultures in the actional phase of goal pursuit; therefore, we tested these two competing hypotheses.

Moreover, we expected that the level of impact the two types of threats (morality threat or competence threat) have on participants' persistence will depend on their cultural background. For members of honor cultures, we expect a threat to their morality (being called a liar) to have the greatest impact on subsequent persistence (compared to a competence threat; e.g., Günsoy et al., 2019; Günsoy et al., 2020). For members of a dignity culture, we predict two possible outcomes: a) morality and competence threat can generate responses that are similar in impact (e.g., Günsoy et al., 2019; Günsoy et al., 2020, Study 2); or b) competence (vs. morality) threat can have greater impact on persistence because this threat targets an important domain in dignity cultures – personal achievements and self-esteem (e.g., Cohen et al., 2018; Günsoy et al., 2020, Study 1; Rodriguez Mosquera et al., 2000; Uskul, et al., 2012).

Current Studies

In the current studies, we examined the effects of threats to people's morality and competence on their goal pursuit in two honor cultures (Turkey and the U.S. honor group, which consisted of European Americans from Southern and Mountain states and Latinx Americans) and in a dignity culture (the U.S. dignity group, which consisted of European Americans from Midwestern and Northeastern states). In Study 1, we focused on the preactional phase of goal pursuit. We created a situation in which participants from honor and dignity cultures received morality-threatening or competence-threatening feedback from one potential partner (between-subjects) and neutral feedback from a second potential partner; they then chose one of these two

feedback providers to work with on a subsequent task. The person who gave threatening feedback was always presented as the most capable partner for the task. In honor cultures (vs. dignity cultures), being known as a moral person is more central to assessments of honor than being competent, and a threat to one's moral reputation is more likely to interfere with the planning of other goals for members of honor cultures (Günsoy et al., 2020). Therefore, we hypothesized that participants from honor cultures who received morality-threatening feedback would be more likely to reject the person who threatened them (and instead choose to work with the partner who gave neutral feedback) than would participants who received the competence threat, even though the rejected person could best help them achieve their goal. The goal of reputation management is not as salient in dignity cultures as it is in honor cultures, and payback for an insult to one's morality is not as likely to derail individuals from their goals in dignity cultures (e.g., Leung & Cohen, 2011; Uskul et al., 2019). Instead, failure or lack of achievements is more likely to be perceived as an attack to one's honor in dignity cultures (vs. in honor cultures; e.g., Uskul et al., 2012). Thus, the existing evidence indicates that one of two patterns could occur: a) participants from the dignity culture who received a threat to their competence and those who received a threat to their morality would reject the insulting teammate at similar rates (e.g., Günsoy et al., 2019; Günsoy et al., 2020, Study 2); or b) participants whose competence was threatened would reject the threatening partner more frequently than would those whose morality was threatened (e.g., Günsoy et al., 2020, Study 1).

In Study 2, we focused on the actional phase of goal pursuit and asked participants to individually work towards a goal after receiving threatening (morality vs. competence-focused) or non-threatening feedback. As described above, we examined two competing hypotheses. According to the *distraction hypothesis*, participants would be distracted by threatening

feedback, which would lead to less persistence on the subsequent goal than after receiving non-threatening feedback. According to the *compensation hypothesis*, participants would work harder on the subsequent task after threatening (vs. non-threatening) feedback as a way to affirm themselves. In the honor cultural group, we expected morality-threatening feedback to have the largest influence on persistence, as this threat targets a culturally relevant domain. In the dignity cultural group, however, we expected competence (vs. morality) threat to have equal if not greater influence on persistence. We report all measures, manipulations, and exclusions below in the main text or in the Supplementary Materials document.

Study 1

In this study, we examined the effects of honor threats on goal pursuit in the preactional phase and aimed to replicate Günsoy et al.'s (2020, Study 2) findings by adopting a different design and method. Participants received feedback from two people about their writing as part of a mock job application process. The first person provided neutral feedback (Recruiter 1), whereas the second (more qualified) person provided morality-threatening or competence-threatening feedback (Recruiter 2; between-subjects). Subsequently, participants were asked to choose one of the two feedback providers as their partner in a future task, in which the top performing teams would win a gift card. Different from Günsoy et al.'s (2020) study, participants in this study ostensibly interacted with two feedback providers rather than one; this way, we ensured that participants had a baseline (i.e., the person who provided neutral feedback) to compare the threatening feedback they received. In addition, the previous study used an online platform to create the study and collect the data, whereas this study brought participants into the laboratory for a study purportedly conducted to train business students as employment recruiters.

Given the goal of winning a prize for good performance on the upcoming task, participants would be expected to select the most qualified recruiter to work with (Recruiter 2), if everything else were equal. Indeed, previous work has shown that approximately 88% of participants chose the most competent partner on a task in the absence of a threat (Günsoy et al, 2020, Study 2). The current study examines the extent to which that expectation is violated when Recruiter 2, the most capable recruiter, has insulted the participants by way of providing morality-threatening or competence-threatening feedback. We hypothesized that participants from the Turkish and the U.S. honor group (i.e., European Americans from the U.S. South and Mountain states, and Latinx Americans) would be less likely to choose the person who threatened them than the person who provided them neutral feedback. More importantly, we expected this difference to be greater for participants who received morality-threatening feedback than for those who received competence-threatening feedback from the highly qualified partner. Participants from the U.S. dignity group (European Americans from Midwestern and Northeastern states) were also expected to be less likely to choose to work with the person who provided threatening feedback compared with the person who provided neutral feedback. Relative to participants from the honor group, however, we expected that they would be less likely to differentiate between the two types of threat. To the extent that differences might emerge between the threat conditions among the U.S. dignity culture participants, we expected those in the competence-threatening condition to reject the insulting recruiter to a greater extent than would participants who received morality-threatening feedback.

Method

Participants. Institutional review board approval was obtained in all locations prior to data collection. Three hundred and twenty European American (206 women, 114 men) and 61

Latinx American undergraduates (29 women, 32 men) at a Midwestern and a Southern US university, and 193 undergraduates in Turkey (101 women, 89 men, 3 non-binary) participated in this study. They received course credit (in the U.S.) or monetary compensation (40 Turkish Liras in Turkey) for their participation. Data collection stopped once there were no more student sign-ups in the research participation system. Data analysis did not start until data collection was complete, and the sample size was not increased after data analysis.

We asked European American participants in which state they spent most of their life and coded their cultural background accordingly; those who lived in Southern (e.g., Texas) and Mountain states (e.g., Montana) were coded as honor culture members, whereas those who lived in Northeastern and Midwestern states were coded as dignity culture members (e.g., Cohen et al., 1996). Thirty-eight European American participants who did not respond to this question or who did not spend most of their lives in any of these states were excluded from the analyses. Latinx American participants were included in the honor group regardless of which state they spent most of their lives (Johnson & Lipsett-Rivera, 1998). Moreover, 32 European American, six Latinx American, and 22 Turkish participants were excluded from the analyses because they saw through the cover story (e.g., correctly guessed in the debriefing session that there was no recruiter in the lab). The final sample consisted of 171 U.S. honor culture participants (107 women, 64 men; $M_{Age} = 19.26$, $SD = 1.26$), and 134 U.S. dignity culture participants (90 women, 44 men; $M_{Age} = 19.53$, $SD = 2.26$), in addition to 171 Turkish honor culture participants (91 women, 78 men, 2 non-binary; $M_{Age} = 21.18$, $SD = 1.89$).

Materials and procedure. The experimenter introduced the study as a project that examined the effectiveness of a training program for future recruiters at large companies (adapted from Günsoy et al., 2020). Participants' role was to complete a mock job application

and to be (ostensibly) evaluated by two recruiters-in-training who were down the hall or in the room next door, depending on the study location. First, participants created a username and a short bio that would go on all their documents for the study. Next, they read the recruiters' bios so that they could get to know them. The recruiter bios were the same for each participant.

Recruiter 1: *I am a senior in business. I like watching movies and doing yoga.* Recruiter 2: *I am a senior in business and getting a minor in math. I like hiking, reading, and solving puzzles.*¹ All materials were translated and back-translated from English to Turkish by research assistants fluent in both languages.

Essay writing task. Following the introductions, participants were told that they were randomly assigned to an essay writing task as part of their job application. They were asked to write about an incident in which they behaved in an honest and trustworthy way despite the potential costs of this behavior (Uskul et al., 2015). The participant had 10 minutes to write their essay. Once they were done, they clicked the "continue" button, which ostensibly sent the essay to both recruiters for evaluation through the lab computer network. The experimenter then gave the participant a short article to read while they waited for the recruiters' evaluation (see Supplementary Materials for details).

Threat manipulation. After five minutes, the experimenter came back to the participant's cubicle, opened up the evaluations on the computer, and left the participant alone to read their evaluations. Experimenters were kept blind to the experimental conditions. The evaluation forms completed by recruiters contained ratings of the essay on several dimensions (e.g., organization, clarity) and open-ended comments. All participants first saw Recruiter 1's evaluation, which had

¹ In Turkey, the recruiters were described as M.B.A. students instead of business majors. The rest of the descriptions were identical in Turkey and the U.S.

above average numeric ratings and a neutral comment: *It is a difficult task to remember and write about a specific event in one's life. Every day we face situations in which we have to make decisions that might or might not benefit us. I think there is a 50-50 chance this person would be called for an interview.* This was followed by Recruiter 2's evaluation, which either targeted the participant's morality or competence (randomly determined). The evaluation forms in these two threat conditions contained the same numeric ratings, which were lower than Recruiter 1's ratings. In the morality threat condition, Recruiter 2 questioned the participant's honesty: *It is difficult to evaluate this applicant because their point is not clear. Also, it's hard to believe that someone would really be like this. Something like this is so easy to fake there is no way it can be trusted. I think they just made it up because this is a job application. There is no way this person would be hired.* In the competence threat condition, Recruiter 2 questioned the quality of writing: *It is difficult to evaluate this applicant because their point is not clear. The person doesn't express things clearly. This statement is not original at all, so I can't really tell what this person is like. This person's application may not stand out.* After reading each recruiter's evaluation, participants answered a short questionnaire, which contained filler items as well as the manipulation check questions (see Supplementary Materials for details). As a manipulation check for threat, participants indicated to what extent most job applicants would feel offended, humiliated, and put down in response to the feedback they received, using a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*). These three items were averaged for the analyses, $\alpha_{Turkey} = .49$,² $\alpha_{USHonor} = .76$, $\alpha_{USDignity} = .80$.

² This low reliability score in Turkey was caused by the humiliation item (alpha increased to .70 without this item). Excluding this item from analyses did not change the results substantially, hence we used the scale as is for comparability.

Goal derailment: Partner selection. The experimenter returned to the participant's cubicle after five minutes and explained the next task. The participant was going to work on several statistics problems as a team with one of the recruiters. Each person in the top two teams that completed the most statistics problems would win a \$30 gift card. Participants were led to believe that the computer randomly selected them as the person to choose a partner. In reality, all participants were asked to select a partner. After choosing a recruiter to partner with for the statistics task, the computer started the statistics task and crashed (i.e., participants did not actually complete the statistics task because the key factor for our experiment was participants' partner choice). Participants were then probed for suspicion and thoroughly debriefed.³

Results

Manipulation check. We first conducted a mixed measures ANOVA to examine participants' perception of most job applicants' response to the feedback (i.e., feeling offended, put down, and humiliated), in which the Recruiter variable (Recruiter 1 or 2) was entered as a within-subjects variable, and culture (Turkey, U.S. Honor, or U.S. Dignity) and type of threat from Recruiter 2 (morality- or competence-focused) were entered as between-subjects variables. There were significant two-way interactions and a marginally significant three-way interaction of the variables (see Table 1 for descriptives and Table 2 for ANOVA results). To unfold these effects, we conducted repeated measures ANOVAs within each cultural group to examine whether participants perceived that most other applicants would feel more threatened after receiving feedback from Recruiter 2 (morality- or competence-threatening feedback) than Recruiter 1 (neutral feedback). As intended, participants in all cultural groups perceived that

³ Participants were asked to complete an additional task before selecting a partner for exploratory purposes. Details can be found in the Supplementary Materials document.

most applicants would feel more threatened by Recruiter 2's feedback than Recruiter 1's feedback, $F_{Turkey}(1, 170) = 153.96, p < .001, d = 1.14, F_{US Honor}(1, 170) = 658.13, p < .001, d = 2.28, F_{US Dignity}(1, 133) = 509.75, p < .001, d = 2.08$ (Table 1).⁴

Goal derailment: Partner selection. We first conducted a binary logistic regression to examine partner choice (1 = Recruiter 2/Threatening Recruiter, 0 = Recruiter 1/Neutral Recruiter), in which the dummy variable of cultural group (1 = Turkey & U.S. Honor, 0 = U.S. Dignity), threat type (1 = Morality, 0 = Competence), and their interaction were entered as predictors. Results revealed a marginally significant main effect of cultural group, suggesting that participants from the honor group were somewhat less likely than participants from the dignity group to choose the threatening (vs. neutral) recruiter as their future partner, even though this person was described as the most qualified partner for the subsequent task. No other effects were significant (see Table 3).⁵

To test our specific hypotheses about each cultural group, we then conducted chi square analyses within cultural groups and threat conditions (see Figure 1 for percentages). Consistent

⁴ Participants in all cultural groups who received morality-focused feedback from Recruiter 2 were more likely to indicate that most job applicants would feel threatened by the feedback than those who received competence-focused feedback from Recruiter 2, $F_{US Honor}(1, 169) = 22.55, p < .001, d = 0.71, F_{US Dignity}(1, 132) = 18.30, p < .001, d = 0.73$, but this difference was marginally significant in Turkey, $F_{Turkey}(1, 169) = 3.26, p = .07, d = 0.28$. There was no association between the manipulation check variable and partner choice (the dependent variable) for any cultural group or threat condition, $ps > .19$, except for a marginally significant association for the U.S. dignity culture participants who received competence threat from Recruiter 2, $r = -.23, p = .08$. The more they thought most job applicants would feel threatened by this feedback, the less likely they were to choose this recruiter as a partner.

⁵ The inclusion of gender and its interaction with the other variables did not change these results; however, gender had a marginally significant effect on partner choice, $B = -1.13, SE = .61, Wald = 3.45, p = .06$. Women were more likely to choose Recruiter 1 (58.74%) who provided neutral feedback (vs. Recruiter 2, 41.26%) as their future partner, $\chi^2(1) = 8.74, p = .003$, whereas men were equally likely to choose both recruiters (49.73% and 51.27%), $\chi^2(1) = .005, p = .94$. The interaction of gender with culture or threat type was not significant, $ps > .13$. Details of these analyses can be provided upon request.

with our expectations, participants from the honor group (Turkey & U.S. Honor) were significantly less likely to choose Recruiter 2 than Recruiter 1 (neutral feedback), when Recruiter 2 provided morality-threatening feedback, $\chi^2(1) = 6.52, p = .01$.⁶ When Recruiter 2 provided competence-threatening feedback, this difference was marginally significant, $\chi^2(1) = 3.31, p = .07$. Further analyses revealed that these differences were primarily driven by Turkish participants, $\chi^2_{\text{MoralityThreat}}(1) = 6.54, p = .01, \chi^2_{\text{CompetenceThreat}}(1) = 3.72, p = .054$, rather than U.S. honor group participants, $\chi^2_{\text{MoralityThreat}}(1) = 1.30, p = .25, \chi^2_{\text{CompetenceThreat}}(1) = .33, p = .57$. Participants in the U.S. dignity group did not differ in their likelihood to choose Recruiter 1 and Recruiter 2 for any threat type, $\chi^2_{\text{MoralityThreat}}(1) = .01, p = .91, \chi^2_{\text{USCompetenceThreat}}(1) = .80, p = .37$.

We also examined whether participants from the honor and dignity groups differed in their likelihood to choose Recruiter 2. Participants in the Turkish honor group were somewhat less likely than U.S. dignity participants to choose Recruiter 2 (Figure 1), $\chi^2_{\text{MoralityThreat}}(1) = 3.60, p = .06, \chi^2_{\text{CompetenceThreat}}(1) = 3.63, p = .06$. Participants in the U.S. honor group were equally likely to choose Recruiter 2 as those in the U.S. dignity group, $\chi^2_{\text{MoralityThreat}}(1) = 0.71, p = .40, \chi^2_{\text{CompetenceThreat}}(1) = 1.08, p = .30$, and in the Turkish honor group, $\chi^2_{\text{MoralityThreat}}(1) = 1.39, p = .24, \chi^2_{\text{CompetenceThreat}}(1) = .76, p = .38$.

Discussion

Consistent with our predictions and previous research, Turkish participants, who are members of an honor culture, were most likely to derail from the goal of performing well on a task and winning a prize when their honor was threatened: They were less likely than the U.S.

⁶ For the morality threat condition, the sensitivity power analysis for sign test (binomial test) for an alpha of .05, power of .80, and sample size of 74 revealed a minimum effect size g of 14.79% for a significant difference between those who chose Recruiter 1 (neutral feedback) and Recruiter 2 (threatening feedback). Our results revealed an effect size g of 14.86%, which is greater than the required effect size (Faul et al., 2013).

participants (especially the U.S. dignity participants) to choose the qualified recruiter as their partner for the statistics task (vs. the less qualified recruiter who provided neutral feedback), especially when this person challenged their moral reputation. Participants from the U.S. honor group (e.g., European Americans from Southern U.S. or Latinx background) and the U.S. dignity group (e.g., European Americans from Northern U.S.), however, were equally likely to choose recruiters that gave threatening or neutral feedback as future partners, and the type of threat did not make a difference.

We expected the U.S. honor participants to be similar to Turkish participants, but their responses were intermediate to Turkish and U.S. dignity participants: There was no difference between Turkish and U.S. honor participants in their likelihood of choosing the threatening recruiter as their future partner. Similar to U.S. dignity participants, however, U.S. honor participants were equally likely to choose the non-threatening and threatening recruiters, regardless of threat type. This finding is partially in line with Günsoy et al.'s (2020) study, in which the U.S. honor and dignity participants did not differentiate between a morality threat and a competence threat. The current study and Günsoy et al.'s (2020) study used an achievement-focused task to examine the influence of honor threats on goal pursuit. Perhaps, when the goal is to perform well on an academic task and win a prize, people from individualistic cultures such as the U.S. prioritize this achievement-related goal and do not get distracted by a threat to their honor, regardless of their regional background. Moreover, Study 1 and previous work on the relation between honor threats and goal pursuit focused on the preactional stage of goal pursuit, in which the target of the threat was planning a future goal (e.g., when to start working towards the goal or selecting a partner for an upcoming team task; Günsoy et al., 2020). There can be differences between what people plan to do to achieve a future goal and how hard they actually

work towards a goal. In Study 2, therefore, we examined the *actional phase* of goal pursuit, in which participants worked on a goal after receiving honor-threatening or neutral feedback.

Study 2

In this study, we investigated the role of cultural background and the type of honor threat in participants' persistence on a subsequent, unrelated goal. We hypothesized that among participants from honor cultural contexts (Turkish people, European Americans from the U.S. South and Mountain states, and Latinx Americans), a morality threat will have the greatest impact on a future task, either in the form of causing *distraction* resulting in reduced persistence or causing *compensation* resulting in increased persistence relative to the no-threat condition. We predicted that, in the dignity culture (European Americans from Midwestern and Northeastern U.S. states), competence threat will have the greatest impact or the same impact as morality threat on task persistence relative to the no-threat condition (again, either in the form of distraction or compensation).

Method

Participants. Institutional review board approval was obtained in all locations prior to data collection. Four hundred and forty European American (256 women, 184 men) and 88 Latinx American undergraduates (62 women, 26 men) at a Midwestern and a Southern U.S. university, and 229 undergraduates at a Turkish university (101 women, 128 men) participated in this study. They received course credit for their participation. Data collection stopped once there were no more student sign-ups in the research participation system. Data analysis did not start until data collection was complete, and the sample size was not increased after data analysis.

We asked European American participants in which state they spent most of their life and followed the same coding frame employed in Study 1. Eleven European American participants who did not respond to this question or who did not spend most of their lives in any of these states were excluded from the analyses. Latinx American participants were included in the honor group regardless of their state. Finally, 40 participants in the U.S. and 23 participants in Turkey, who saw through the cover story were excluded (e.g., who correctly guessed there was no recruiter in the lab). The final sample consisted of 206 Turkish honor culture participants (95 women, 111 men; $M_{Age} = 22.32$, $SD = 1.50$), 194 U.S. honor culture participants (141 women, 53 men; $M_{Age} = 19.08$, $SD = 1.07$), and 197 U.S. dignity culture participants (91 women, 106 men; $M_{Age} = 19.74$, $SD = 1.55$).

Materials and procedure. We used the same procedure and materials as in Study 1 with a few exceptions. Participants were again led to believe that they were part of a recruiter training program, but different from Study 1, they were also told that there will be a mock job interview with the recruiter at the end of the session. First, participants completed a background questionnaire, which included demographic questions as well as other exploratory variables (see Supplementary Materials). Subsequently, participants engaged in a mock job application task in which they were asked to write a short essay. They were randomly assigned to morality-threatening (i.e., accusation of dishonesty), competence-threatening (i.e., criticism of writing style), or neutral feedback conditions (i.e., acknowledgment of task difficulty). The same evaluation forms were used as in Study 1, but participants received feedback from one recruiter instead of two. After reading their essay feedback, participants completed the Pre-interview Questionnaire, which included the manipulation check questions among other exploratory and filler variables (see Supplementary Materials). As a manipulation check for threat, participants

indicated to what extent most job applicants would feel offended, humiliated, and put down in response to the feedback they received, using a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*). These three items were averaged for the analyses, $\alpha_{Turkey} = .85$, $\alpha_{USHonor} = .89$, $\alpha_{USDignity} = .87$.

The experimenter then said that the recruiter was not ready yet for the interview and asked the participant whether they could complete a short task for another study. The participant was informed that there will not be any extra credits, but their name will be put in a drawing for \$20 and that the best three performers in this task would receive \$25. The purpose of this part was to make sure that participants paid attention to and put effort in the task. If the participant accepted to complete this task, the experimenter escorted them to another cubicle.

Goal persistence task. The task was presented as part of a consumer behavior study conducted by another professor. The study ostensibly investigated how people viewed and remembered information presented digitally. We adapted the n-back task for this study, which has been widely used to measure working memory capacity (e.g., Gray, 2001; Jonides et al., 1997;). In this task, participants decided whether the currently presented stimulus material is the same as the one presented “n” trials ago. We used this measure to examine participants’ *goal persistence*, by counting the number of trials they completed. We chose this task because it consisted of two-difficulty levels (2-back vs. 3-back); this could prevent potential ceiling and floor effects. Moreover, it was not similar to any other task participants completed in the study, which helped us disguise the study’s actual purpose.

After signing the bogus consent form for this task, the experimenter walked the participant through the instructions. Subsequently, participants completed five practice trials and asked the experimenter if they had any questions. The experimenter indicated that they could stop the study at any time by pressing the escape key; there was also a sheet next to the computer

reminding them of this option. When the participant was ready, the experimenter started the actual task and left the cubicle. The task included 100 trials of a 2-back and 100 trials of a 3-back memory test. A number from one to nine was located at the center of the screen and was presented for 500 milliseconds. The screen with the number was followed by a blank screen during which the participant indicated their decision about the number being the same as the one presented two numbers ago (or three numbers ago in the 3-back test). If the participant thought that the number was the same, they pressed the “Y” button on the keyboard. If the participant thought that the number was different, they pressed the space bar. After the 2-back test, the participant completed five practice trials for the 3-back test and moved on to the actual 3-back test. Participants were encouraged to respond as fast as possible. Upon completion of the task, the experimenter probed for suspicion and debriefed the participant.

Results

Manipulation check. We first conducted a univariate ANOVA to examine participants’ perception of how most job applicants would respond to the threat (i.e., feeling offended, put down, and humiliated), in which culture (Turkey, U.S. Honor, or U.S. Dignity) and type of threat (morality, competence, or no threat) were entered as between-subjects variables. There was a significant interaction of culture and threat type (see Table 4 for descriptives and Table 5 for ANOVA results). The univariate ANOVAs within each cultural group revealed that participants in all cultural groups who received morality-threatening or competence-threatening feedback were more likely to indicate that most job applicant would feel threatened than those who received neutral feedback (Morality Threat vs. Neutral: $F_{Turkey}(1, 133) = 57.82, p < .001, d = 1.30$, $F_{US\ Honor}(1, 125) = 140.43, p < .001, d = 2.20$, $F_{US\ Dignity}(1, 130) = 214.33, p < .001, d =$

2.55; Competence Threat vs. Neutral: $F_{Turkey} (1, 137) = 69.47, p < .001, d = 1.41, F_{US Honor} (1, 137) = 92.21, p < .001, d = 1.64, F_{US Dignity} (1, 117) = 184.90, p < .001, d = 2.52$).⁷

Goal persistence: The number of n-back trials participants completed. Forty-one Turkish, 32 U.S. honor, and 20 U.S. dignity participant declined to complete the n-back task;⁸ thus, the total sample size for the goal persistence analyses was 504. We conducted a Poisson regression analysis to test our hypotheses because goal persistence was a count variable (i.e., the number of trials participants completed on the n-back task) and the distribution was skewed (66 % of participants completed all 200 trials, Cameron & Trivedi, 1998). This analysis revealed

⁷ Participants from the U.S. honor group indicated that most job applicants would perceive the morality-focused feedback as more threatening than the competence-focused feedback, $F (1, 108) = 5.17, p = .03, d = .44$, whereas there was no difference between these threat conditions in the U.S. dignity group, $F (1, 123) = .68, p = .41, d = .10$, or in Turkey, $F (1, 128) = .03, p = .86, d = -.03$ (see Table 2). These results are slightly different from Study 1 results, in which participants from all three cultural groups reported that most job applicants would feel somewhat more threatened by morality-focused feedback than by competence-focused feedback. The difference could be due to the mixed design of Study 1 and the between-subjects design of Study 2. In Study 1, participants received feedback from two recruiters, one of which gave them neutral feedback and the other gave them morality-threatening or competence-threatening feedback. This allowed participants to evaluate the threat and their opinions about what most job applicants would feel in comparison to the same baseline (i.e., neutral feedback from Recruiter 1). In Study 2, however, participants received feedback from one recruiter who provided neutral, morality-threatening, or competence-threatening feedback; thus, the baseline participants in the threat conditions used to evaluate most job applicants' feelings is unknown. There was no significant correlation of this variable and goal persistence (the dependent variable) in any cultural group or threat condition, $ps > .11$.

⁸ In all cultural groups, participants who declined the n-back task were equally distributed across threat conditions, $\chi^2_{Turkey} (2) = 1.04, p = .60, \chi^2_{USHonor} (2) = .17, p = .92, \chi^2_{USDignity} (2) = .21, p = .90$. To examine whether these participants differed in their perceptions of how most job applicants would evaluate the feedback, compared to those who completed the n-back task, we conducted a univariate ANOVA for the threat perception variable (the degree to which most job applicants would feel put down, humiliated, and offended), in which we entered n-back decision (completed or declined the task), culture, and threat condition as between-subjects factors. N-back decision did not have a main effect on threat perception, $F(1, 560) = 1.40, p = .24$, nor did it interact with culture, $F(2, 560) = .30, p = .74$, or threat condition, $F(2, 560) = .42, p = .66$. The three-way interaction of these variables was not significant either, $F(4, 560) = .79, p = .53$. These results suggest that participants' decision to decline the n-back task was not influenced by their perception of the feedback they received earlier.

significant culture and threat type interaction effects (see Table 4 for the means and Table 6 for the regression results).

To answer our compensation versus distraction question, we first examined whether the threat conditions tended to result in enhanced or reduced persistence on the task, relative to performance in the neutral condition. We found that participants in Turkey and the U.S. honor group were more likely to persist after receiving morality-threatening than non-threatening feedback (Figure 2), $Wald_{\text{Turkey}} = 26.08, p < .001, d = .19, 95\% \text{ CI [Wald]} = [.05, .11], Wald_{\text{US Honor}} = 15.21, p < .001, d = .23, 95\% \text{ CI [Wald]} = [.03, .09]$. In the U.S. dignity group, in contrast, the morality threat had no effect on persistence relative to the no-threat condition, $Wald_{\text{US Dignity}} = .89, p = .35, d = -.04, 95\% \text{ CI [Wald]} = [-.04, .01]$. These findings support the compensation hypothesis for honor culture participants (but not for dignity culture participants), who were exposed to a morality threat.

Regarding the effects of the competence threat, Turkish participants were less persistent after receiving competence-threatening feedback than non-threatening feedback, $Wald_{\text{Turkey}} = 3.99, p = .046, d = -.07, 95\% \text{ CI [Wald]} = [-.06, -.001]$, whereas participants in the U.S. honor group were more persistent after receiving competence-threatening than non-threatening feedback, $Wald_{\text{US Honor}} = 24.72, p < .001, d = .30, 95\% \text{ CI [Wald]} = [.04, .09]$. Participants from the U.S. dignity culture group were also more persistent after receiving competence-threatening feedback (compared to the no-threat condition), $Wald_{\text{US Dignity}} = 9.83, p = .002, d = .18, 95\% \text{ CI [Wald]} = [.02, .07]$. Thus, these findings support the distraction hypothesis for Turkish participants, but the compensation hypothesis for the U.S. honor and dignity participants who were exposed to a competence threat.

Finally, we examined whether the two threat conditions had different degrees of impact on persistence. Turkish participants were more persistent after receiving morality-threatening than competence-threatening feedback, $Wald = 49.70, p < .001, d = .27, 95\% \text{ CI [Wald]} = [.08, .14]$. Participants from the U.S. honor group, however, were equally persistent after receiving the two types of honor threat, $Wald = .41, p = .52, d = -.05, 95\% \text{ CI [Wald]} = [-.04, .02]$. Finally, participants in the U.S. dignity group were more persistent after the competence threat than the morality threat, $Wald = 16.69, p < .001, d = .23, 95\% \text{ CI [Wald]} = [.03, .08]$.^{9, 10}

Discussion

In general, these findings provide stronger support for the compensation hypothesis than for the distraction hypothesis; participants in the threat conditions were more likely to persist longer (vs. shorter) than those in the neutral condition. This effect, however, varied as a function of participants' cultural background and the type of threat. As expected, among Turkish participants, the effect of the morality threat on task persistence was greater than that of the competence threat; more importantly, the effects were in the opposite direction. Turkish

⁹ In *Turkey*, the sensitivity power analyses revealed a minimum of 146.72 trials for the comparison between morality threat and neutral feedback conditions and 142.22 trials for the comparison between morality threat and competence threat conditions. In the *U.S. honor group*, the sensitivity power analyses revealed a minimum of 178.53 trials for the comparison between morality threat and neutral feedback conditions and 178.09 trials for the comparison between competence threat and neutral feedback conditions. In the *U.S. dignity group*, the sensitivity power analyses revealed a minimum of 182.02 trials for the comparison between competence threat and neutral feedback conditions and 180.39 trials for the comparison between competence threat and morality threat conditions. In all of the comparisons, the obtained values are greater than the required values, suggesting adequate power in the analyses. For the sake of brevity, details on calculation parameters are reported in the Supplementary Materials document.

¹⁰ The inclusion of gender in the main analysis did not change the results substantially; however, gender interacted significantly with culture and threat type. We then conducted Poisson regression analyses within each culture and gender group to compare goal persistence across threat conditions; however, these findings should be interpreted with caution because the sample size in most cells was below 30. The results are available in the Supplemental Materials.

participants whose morality was threatened worked harder on the n-back task (compared to those in the neutral condition; supporting the compensation hypothesis), but those in the competence condition slacked off on the task (supporting the distraction hypothesis). This pattern supports our hypothesis that these two types of threats are perceived differently by Turkish participants (part of an honor culture). In contrast, members of the U.S. dignity group persisted longer after the competence threat than the morality threat (participants' persistence in the morality threat condition was no different than in the neutral condition). This supports the claim that threats to one's self-regard are perceived as more important than threats to one's moral reputation in the U.S. dignity culture. Finally, the U.S. members of the honor group appear to share responses with both of the other groups: U.S. honor participants in both the morality threat and the competence threat conditions persisted longer than their counterparts in the neutral condition. Members of this group may be thought of as bi-cultural, and the type of threat may switch on honor or dignity cultural perspectives and reactions. These results suggest that when people face honor threats to the domains that are culturally important, they try to compensate for the threat and emphasize their self-worth by working towards other goals more diligently, if they have the opportunity.

General Discussion

What is the best way to respond to an insult? Should one punish the insulter even though this may jeopardize other goals? Should one work harder towards other goals after being insulted to prove one's self-worth? Our research showed that the answer to these questions depends on people's cultural background and the stage of their goal pursuit.

These studies are among the first to attempt to compare the influence of honor threats on goal pursuit among members of honor and dignity cultures. We argued that members of honor

cultures will respond more strongly to threats to their morality (a key piece of honor in these contexts) than to threats to their competence (less strongly related to honor in these contexts; e.g., Rodriguez Mosquera et al., 2002b). In contrast, we expected members of dignity cultures to respond similarly to both types of threat or more strongly to competence (vs. morality) threats, consistent with the importance of personal achievements and success in these contexts (e.g., Rodriguez Mosquera et al., 2000; Uskul, et al., 2012). Furthermore, we examined these hypotheses in two different honor cultures, which have seldom been studied together: Turkey and the U.S. honor group (e.g., European Americans in the South and Latinx Americans). Although the current literature on cultures of honor suggests that members of these two groups should respond similarly to threats to their honor, there are differences in these two cultural contexts that may be reflected in their responses (Günsoy et al., 2020). For example, members of the U.S. honor culture may be more sensitive than Turkish people to threats that focus on one's competence, as the U.S. is more individualistic and achievement-oriented than Turkey (e.g., Hofstede, 1983). Finally, these studies used an involving experimental paradigm in the laboratory to create a situation in which participants perceived that they were actually interacting with someone who had evaluated them.

Study 1 examined the preactional stage of goal pursuit, with the hypothesis that members of honor cultures (e.g., Turkey, and the U.S. honor group) would be more likely than members of a dignity culture to derail from the goal of possibly winning a prize after a threat to their moral reputation (i.e., being called a liar) than after a threat to their self-respect (i.e., being called incompetent). Our hypothesis was supported among honor culture participants from Turkey; they were most likely to get back at the insulter despite the cost to themselves. In contrast, participants from the U.S. dignity culture were equally likely to reject the insulting and non-

insulting recruiters, suggesting they had a greater ability to focus on the future goal and not be derailed by the insult as much. The U.S. honor culture participants' responses were intermediate to these two groups, suggesting that both honor and dignity culture values affected their choices.

In Study 2, we examined the actional stage of goal pursuit and the cultural variation in persistence on a goal after a threat to one's morality or competence (vs. a no-threat condition). In this study, members of both honor cultures displayed compensation-like behavior once they had the chance to work on an unrelated goal after receiving a threat to their morality. They were more persistent in a subsequent task after being called a liar (vs. receiving neutral feedback), potentially as a way to emphasize their self-worth. In contrast, among the members of a dignity culture, the morality threat had no effect on persistence (compared to the no-threat condition). Instead, dignity culture participants persisted longer after a competence threat compared to the no-threat condition, potentially to make up for the threat that was in a culturally important domain. These results point to the value of creating fine-grained dimensions on which to distinguish cultural variation.

The performance of participants from the U.S. honor culture group mirrored aspects of both of the other groups, especially in Study 2: Like members of the Turkish honor culture group, the U.S. honor group persisted longer after the morality threat, and like the U.S. dignity group, they also persisted longer after the competence threat (relative to the neutral condition). This finding was slightly different from Study 1: Similar to U.S. dignity culture participants, U.S. honor culture participants were equally likely to choose the non-threatening and threatening recruiters and this choice was not influenced by the type of threat. There was, however, no difference between Turkish and U.S. honor participants in their likelihood of choosing the threatening recruiter as their future partner. One possible explanation for this finding may be that

U.S. honor participants were not affected by the honor threats so much that they would jeopardize a future goal (Study 1), but they were still highly motivated to restore their damaged honor by working harder in a subsequent task (Study 2). These results highlight the importance of examining multiple examples of cultural groups that are typically grouped together to have a complete picture of culture's influence on behavior.

Our findings suggest that members of honor cultures are strategic in their responses to honor threats and modify these responses utilizing the tools they have. If punishing the insulter means sacrificing another goal that is not imminent, Turkish people may choose to do so because reputation management is the most urgent goal in that situation (Günsoy et al., 2020). If punishing the insulter is not an option and they can work towards another goal after receiving an honor threat, then people from honor cultures may appraise the situation as a challenge and work especially hard towards that goal to compensate for the threat and to restore their damaged reputation (e.g., Melwani & Barsade, 2011; Marchiondo et al., 2018; van Dellen et al., 2011). In dignity cultures, competence may be equally important to or more important than morality in one's sense of being honorable (e.g., Günsoy et al., 2019; Rodriguez Mosquera et al., 2000; Rodriguez Mosquera et al., 2002b). After their competence is challenged, members of dignity cultures may want to compensate for this feedback and plan to start their goals sooner (Günsoy et al., 2020) or work harder on a subsequent goal (Study 2).

Limitations and future research

One limitation of this research was that the tasks and goals following the threats were all achievement-focused: Winning monetary award by successfully completing a statistics task (Study 1) or a working memory task (Study 2). Future research should examine whether these results hold for other types of goals, such as relational goals. Another limitation was that the task

and the possible response in Study 1 involved the insulter (i.e., the insulter was chosen or not chosen as a partner), whereas the task in Study 2 did not (i.e., the memory task). It would be useful to see how participants from honor and dignity cultures would respond if these two options were presented together (e.g., one could punish the insulter or choose to compensate by working hard on another task); theoretically, for members of an honor culture, the reputational gain from punishing the insulter could surpass that of performing well on a task. Furthermore, participants in both studies were initially asked to write about an incident showing their honesty, on which the threatening or neutral feedback was based. This task itself could have served as a morality prime, potentially making the effect of the morality threat stronger, especially in the honor group. Future studies can include tasks and measures that are more neutral and that examine the perception of threat more specifically. For example, participants can complete manipulation check items that assess to what extent they perceived the threat to be morality- or competence-focused (but see Hauser et al., 2018, for cautions about the use of manipulation checks). Moreover, 10.5% of participants in Study 1 and 8.3% in Study 2 saw through our cover story. In future studies, these suspicion rates could be reduced by constructing tasks that have fewer deceptive aspects. For example, the suspicion rate in Study 2 was smaller than in Study 1, perhaps because participants in Study 2 were told that there was only one recruiter in the lab, whereas those in Study 1 were told that there were two recruiters. Finally, future studies can directly examine cultural moderators (e.g., individualism) and include honor and dignity cultures from other regions of the world to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relation between honor threats and goal pursuit, and to shed light on the differences between cultures that have been typically grouped together.

Conclusion

In these studies, we extended the work on honor and dignity cultures by including different kinds of threats (morality and competence-focused), different examples of honor cultures (e.g., Turkey, European Americans from Southern U.S., and Latinx Americans), and different consequences of receiving honor threats (effects on goal derailment and goal persistence). We found that John's response to the incident in our opening example would depend on his cultural background. If he was from Turkey, he might jeopardize his future goal of getting a good grade in class for the sake of getting back at his classmate Caleb who called him a cheater. If he was from a Turkish or U.S. honor culture (e.g., a Southern U.S. state), he might work harder on his homework to prove his self-worth after Caleb's insult on his morality. If he was from the U.S. dignity culture (e.g., a northern U.S. state), however, he would work especially hard on his homework if Caleb challenged his competence rather than his morality. Our results suggest that people's responses to honor threats are shaped by the dominant values of their culture as well as the tools that their immediate situation provides them. This research can have important implications for any multicultural context that involves multiple and sometimes conflicting goals, such as diverse work environments, educational contexts, or intercultural relationships.

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Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for the Manipulation Check Variable Across Threat Conditions and Cultural Groups (Study 1)

Threat Type	Turkey (<i>n</i> = 171)		US Honor (<i>n</i> = 171)		US Dignity (<i>n</i> = 134)	
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Recruiter 1 - No Threat	1.93	0.58	2.06	0.69	2.29	0.77
Recruiter 2 - Morality Threat	2.87	0.81	4.16	0.77	4.29	0.75
Recruiter 2 - Competence Threat	2.64	0.81	3.55	0.93	3.68	0.91
Recruiter 2 - Combined	2.74	0.82	3.89	0.90	4.01	0.88

Note. SD = Standard deviation. This variable reflects the average of items assessing to what extent participants thought most job applicants would feel offended, put down, and humiliated.

Participants used a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*).

Table 2

Mixed Measures ANOVA Results for the Manipulation Check Variable (Study 1)

Variable	$F(1, 470)$	p	η_p^2
Culture (Turkey vs. U.S. Honor vs. U.S. Dignity)	69.93	<.001	.23
Threat Condition (morality vs. competence)	24.45	<.001	.05
Recruiter (Recruiter 1 vs. 2)	1280.92	<.001	.73
Culture x Threat Condition	1.52	.21	.01
Culture x Recruiter	62.23	<.001	.21
Threat Condition x Recruiter	24.91	<.001	.05
Culture x Threat Condition x Recruiter	2.35	.096	.01

Table 3

Logistic Regression Results for Partner Choice (Study 1)

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Wald</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Odds Ratio</i>
Culture	-.51	.30	2.87	1	.09	.60
Threat Condition	-.20	.35	.33	1	.56	.82
Culture x Threat Condition	.08	.41	.04	1	.85	1.01

Note. Partner Choice (1 = Recruiter 2/Threatening Recruiter, 0 = Recruiter 1/Neutral Recruiter); Culture (1 = Honor, 0 = Dignity); Threat Condition (1 = Morality, 0 = Competence).

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for the Manipulation Check and Outcome Variable Across Threat Conditions and Cultural Groups (Study 2)

Variables	Turkey						US Honor Group						US Dignity Group					
	Morality		Competence		No Threat		Morality		Competence		No Threat		Morality		Competence		No Threat	
	Threat (<i>n</i> = 63/51)		Threat (<i>n</i> = 67/57)		Threat (<i>n</i> = 72/57)		Threat (<i>n</i> = 49/40)		Threat (<i>n</i> = 61/53)		Threat (<i>n</i> = 78/69)		Threat (<i>n</i> = 69/62)		Threat (<i>n</i> = 56/55)		Threat (<i>n</i> = 63/60)	
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Threatened	3.42	1.06	3.45	0.95	2.09	0.98	3.92	0.79	3.54	0.92	2.03	0.92	4.16	0.80	4.08	0.76	2.24	0.70
Persistence	154.80	60.93	138.37	62.08	142.81	65.04	183.80	39.44	185.62	31.95	173.48	48.09	175.19	52.07	185.35	32.98	177.47	52.17

Note. Participants used a 5-point scale for the manipulation check measure “threatened,” which is the average of items assessing to what extent participants thought most job applicants would feel offended, put down, and humiliated. Persistence reflects the total number of n-back trials participants completed in each threat condition. Sample sizes on the left side of the slash sign belong to the manipulation check analyses, whereas those on the right side belong to the goal persistence analyses. Not all participants agreed to complete the n-back task; therefore, samples sizes are different.

Table 5

Univariate ANOVA Results for the Manipulation Check Variable (Study 2)

Variable	$F(1, 569)$	p	η_p^2
Culture	16.13	<.001	.05
Threat Condition	228.09	<.001	.45
Culture x Threat Condition	2.80	.03	.02

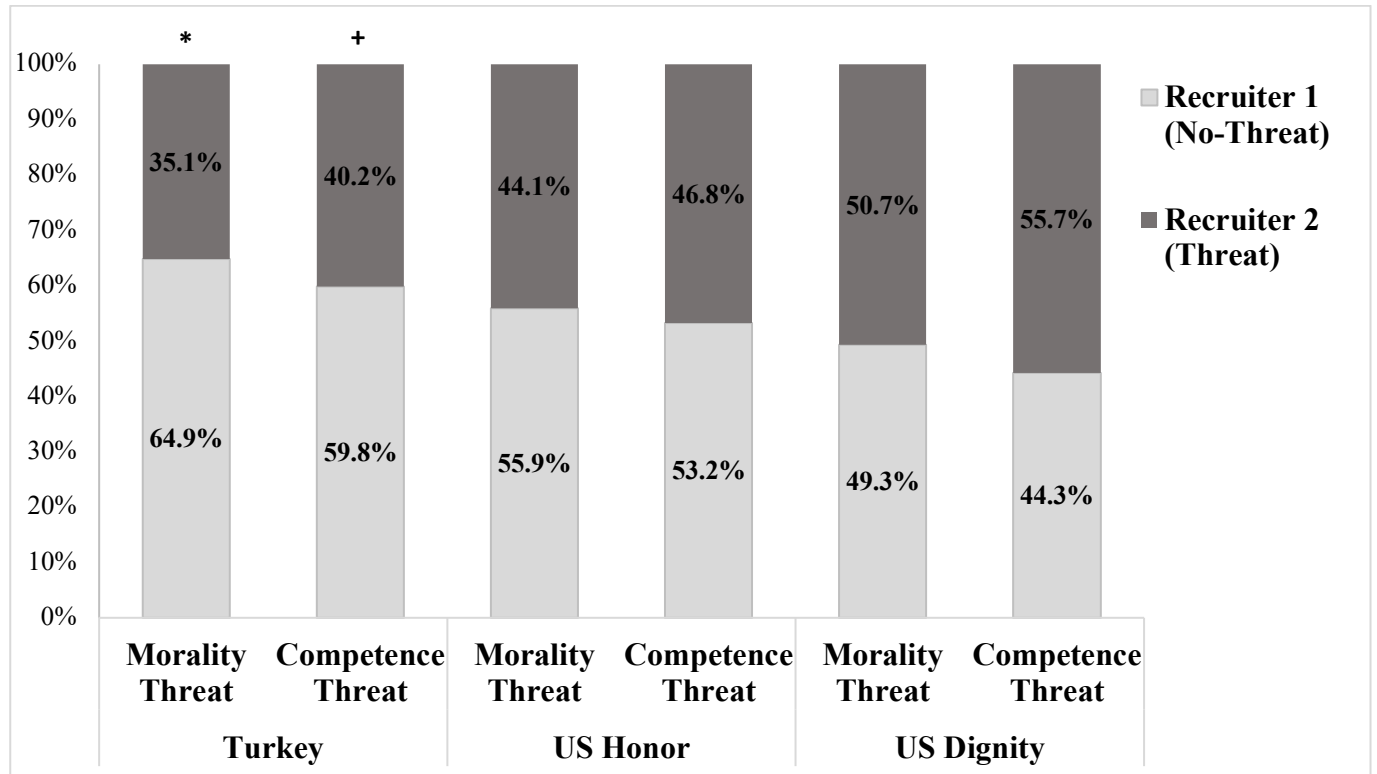
Table 6

Predictors of Goal Persistence (Number of Completed n-back Trials; Study 2)

Poisson Regression	<i>b</i>	<i>SE b</i>	<i>Wald</i>	95% CI [<i>Wald</i>]
DV: Goal Persistence (Number of n-back Trials)				
Culture Comparison 1 (Turkey vs US Dignity)	-.22	.01	217.81***	[-.25, -.19]
Culture Comparison 2 (US Honor vs US Dignity)	-.02	.01	2.91 ⁺	[-.05, .003]
Threat Comparison 1 (Morality Threat vs. No-Threat)	-.01	.01	.89	[-.04, .01]
Threat Comparison 2 (Competence Threat vs. No-Threat)	.04	.01	9.83**	[.02, .07]
Culture 1 x Threat 1	.09	.02	20.10***	[.05, .13]
Culture 1 x Threat 2	-.08	.02	12.74***	[-.12, -.03]
Culture 2 x Threat 1	.07	.02	12.32**	[.03, .11]
Culture 2 x Threat 2	.02	.02	1.56	[-.01, .06]

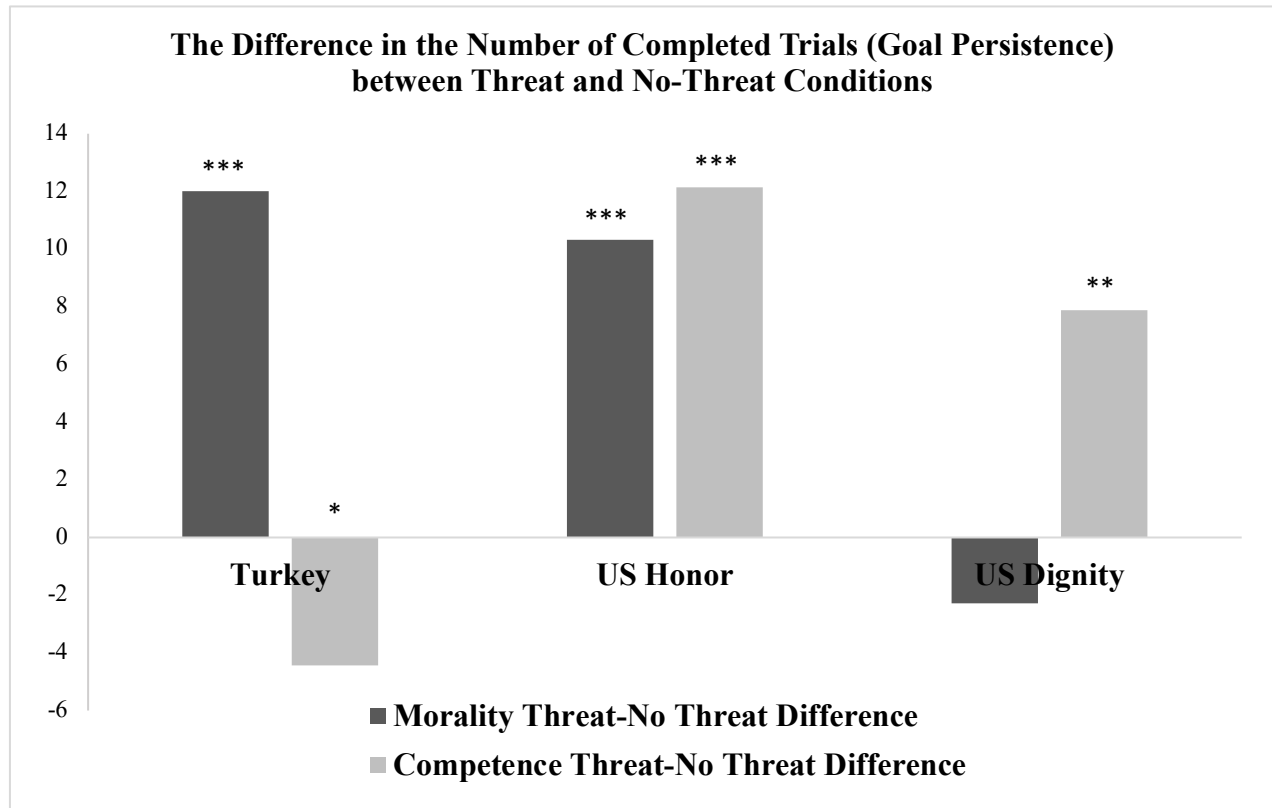
⁺*p* < .10, ***p* < .01, ****p* < .001.

Figure 1. Percentages of participants who chose Recruiter 1 (neutral feedback) or Recruiter 2 (threatening feedback) as their future partner for the statistics task (Study 1)



Note. The significance information refers to the comparison of participants who chose Recruiter 1 (neutral feedback) versus Recruiter 2 (threatening feedback) as their future partner. $^+p < .10$, $^*p < .05$.

Figure 2. The Difference in the Number of Completed Trials (Goal Persistence) between Threat and No-Threat Conditions (Study 2)



Note. The difference score was calculated by subtracting the number of completed trials in the no-threat condition from the number of trials in the threat conditions. The significance information refers to the comparison of the threat conditions (morality and competence) with the no-threat condition. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Supplementary Materials

Study 1

Essay Task

Intro (In this part of the job application task you will write an essay to be evaluated by the recruiters-in-training.)

ID (Participant ID number)

Please enter your birthdate

(Employers are very concerned about employee integrity and honesty. Integrity in the work place is imperative for a healthy working environment. As a potential job applicant, please explain what integrity means to you. Specifically, please think about an incident in which you behaved in an honest, trustworthy, and fair way even when doing so could hurt you. For example, you didn't deceive a person, behave unfairly, violate someone's trust, or engage in a dishonest act that could benefit you greatly, even though the opportunity presented itself with minimal costs, if any. Why and how did you choose to do the right thing? What did you gain psychologically? Please write two-three paragraphs (200-300 words) about this incident in the space provided below. You have 10 minutes to complete this writing task. This may seem like a short time to write, but do your best. The job application process often requires working under time constraints. When you are finished, be sure to click "Continue" to send your file to the recruiter.)

End (Your essay has been submitted to the recruiters-in-training. Please call the experimenter for further instructions.)

Applicant Response Form

Intro1 (In order to better train corporate recruiters, please provide your reactions to the recruiter's feedback. These responses are COMPLETELY CONFIDENTIAL and the recruiter will not see them. The instructors will summarize all responses and provide feedback to the student recruiter without revealing the source of the comments.)

ID (Participant ID number)

Read (have you finished reading the recruiter evaluation form?)

1=yes

2=no

IF_No (Please read the entire Recruiter Evaluation Form in order to complete the following questions.)

Recruiter (Which Recruiter gave you feedback on your essay?)

1=CyFan4u = (recruiter 1) I am a senior in business. I like watching movies and doing yoga.

2=ISU2018= (recruiter 2) I am a senior in business and getting a minor in math. I like hiking, reading, and solving puzzles.

Note: Participants used a 5-point scale to respond to the questions below.

- PosNeg (How positive or negative was the recruiter's feedback?)
- Helpful (How helpful was the feedback?)
- Specific (How specific or vague was the feedback?)
- Professional (How professional was the feedback?)
- Intro2 (Now, please rate how most job applicants would feel if they received this feedback.)
- Interested (Rate the extent to which most job applicants would feel INTERESTED.)
- Hopeful (Rate the extent to which most job applicants would feel HOPEFUL.)
- Put down (Rate the extent to which most job applicants would feel PUT DOWN.)
- Angry (Rate the extent to which most job applicants would feel ANGRY.)
- Annoyed (Rate the extent to which most job applicants would feel ANNOYED.)
- Hostile (Rate the extent to which most job applicants would feel HOSTILE.)
- Furious (Rate the extent to which most job applicants would feel FURIOUS.)
- Enthusiastic (Rate the extent to which most job applicants would feel ENTHUSIASTIC.)
- Humiliated (Rate the extent to which most job applicants would feel HUMILIATED.)
- Inspired (Rate the extent to which most job applicants would feel INSPIRED.)
- Strong (Rate the extent to which most job applicants would feel STRONG.)
- Proud (Rate the extent to which most job applicants would feel PROUD.)
- Offended (Rate the extent to which most job applicants would feel OFFENDED.)
- ExcitedToWork (Rate the extent to which most job applicants would feel EXCITED TO WORK FOR THIS COMPANY.)
- ReluctantToWork (Rate the extent to which most job applicants would feel RELUCTANT TO WORK FOR THIS COMPANY.)

Please inform the experimenter that you have completed this part of the study.

Statistics Decision Task

Intro (In this last decision task you will be solving a set of statistic problems with a recruiter. This task involves calculating risk probabilities in work situations. Click the arrow below to have the computer randomly decide whether you will be able to choose which recruiter you'd like to work with or if a recruiter will be assigned to work with you.)

Rand (You are assigned to the condition in which you can choose a recruiter to solve the math problems with you.)

1. Which recruiter would you like to work with? (PRec)
 - CyFan4u - I am a senior in business. I like watching movies and doing yoga.
 - ISU2018 - I am a senior in business and getting a minor in math. I like hiking, reading, and solving puzzles.
2. Briefly explain your rationale for choosing this recruiter (Explain)
3. How competent do you think this recruiter is? 1 (not competent at all) – 7(very competent) (Compt)
4. How much do you trust this recruiter? 1 (not at all) – 7(very much) (trust)
5. How positive or negative was this recruiter to you? 1 (very negative) – 7 (very positive) (Pos)
6. How much do you think you will like working with this recruiter? 1 (not at all) – 7(very much) (like)
7. How likely do you think you'd be friends with this recruiter if you had the chance outside of the lab? 1 (not at all) – 7(very much) (friend)
8. Why did you not choose the other recruiter? (why)

Connection Screen (Attempting connection with recruiter.....)

Failure screen (Failure to connect. Please try again)

Debriefing Questionnaire

Purp (what was the purpose of this study?)

Suggestion (feedback or suggestions)

Suspicion (suspicion check)

1 = no suspicion;

2 = just a little, may have been trying to make themselves look smart;

3 = suspicion unrelated to purpose of study;

4 = were suspicious, but did not explain why;

5 = connected the feedback to the decision tasks and knew that there were no recruiters;

6 = clearly saw through the cover story because he/she has participated in other deception studies before.

7 = connected the feedback to the decision tasks but they still thought there was a recruiter.

8 = suspicious – other (please describe):

The following variable was included in the lab study for exploratory purposes; the analyses were not included in the manuscript.

Ultimatum Game

Practice Trials

(In this part, you will engage in a decision-making interaction with the two recruiters in the lab. Across several rounds, the recruiters will have differing amounts of money and will offer you a part of it. You may accept or reject the offer. If you accept the offer, you and the recruiter will receive the allocated amount. If you reject the offer, neither you nor the recruiter will receive money. The recruiters will not see your decisions until the end of the interaction. At the end of the interaction, the computer will randomly select two of your decisions and calculate their average to determine the amount of money you will gain. The recruiters are also compensated for their time spent in this study based on the outcome of this Analytical Decision Task. We will randomly select two of their trials, and each recruiter will be paid the average of those two trials. Therefore, if you reject many of a recruiter's offers than that recruiter will be paid very little. You will complete two practice trials before starting the actual interaction with the recruiters.)

Click "continue" at the bottom of the screen when you have read and understood these directions.

DM_Trial1 (The recruiter has \$10 in total and is offering you \$8. What is your decision?)

1=ACCEPT the offer

2=REJECT the offer

DM_Feedback1 (If you chose ACCEPT you would have earned \$8 and the recruiter would have earned \$2. If you choose REJECT neither you nor the recruiter would have earned any money.)

DM_Trial2 (The recruiter has \$20 in total and is offering you \$2. What is your decision?)

1=ACCEPT the offer

2=REJECT the offer

DM_Feedback2 (If you choose ACCEPT you would have earned \$2 and the recruiter would have earned \$18. If you chose REJECT neither you nor the recruiter would have earned any money.)

Randomization (Let's assume that you accepted the first offer and rejected the second offer, and the computer randomly chose those two decisions. Then your gain will be the average of those two decisions: $(\$8 + \$0) / 2 = \$4$ and the recruiter's gain would be $(\$2 + \$0) / 2 = \$1$.)

Remember, the recruiters will not see your responses until the end of the task.

EndScreen (End of practice. Please let the experimenter know if you have any questions.)- password protected screen so participants can't move on without experimenter's password

Transition (The decision-making interaction will start shortly. Please wait.)

Actual Trials (Randomized Order)

Intro1 (The experimenter has set up the connection between you and the two recruiters. Please keep in mind that you will be interacting with both recruiters in this task. To remember which recruiter is which we will provide you with their unique ID code and mini bio. The recruiters will also be able to see your unique ID and mini bio that you provided earlier. When you are ready click "continue" to start the interaction and to see the first offer.)

Note: All of the offers in the following table were made by Recruiter 1 and Recruiter 2 (randomized order):

		Fair Offer	Unfair Offer	Highly Unfair Offer
	Total \$	45%	30%	20%
High Stake	10	4.5	3.0	2.0
High Stake	15	6.8	4.5	3.0
High Stake	20	9.0	6.0	4.0
Low Stake	2.25	1.0	0.7	0.5
Low Stake	3	1.4	0.9	0.6
Low Stake	5	2.3	1.5	1.0

Examples:

DM1_HighFair1 (Recruiter 1 has \$10 in total and is offering you \$4.50. What is your decision?)

Recruiter 1: CyFan4u

I am a senior in business. I like watching movies and doing yoga.

1=ACCEPT the offer

2=REJECT the offer

DM1_HighFair2 (Recruiter 2 has \$10 in total and is offering you \$4.50. What is your decision?)

Recruiter 2: ISU2018

I am a senior in business and getting a minor in math. I like hiking, reading, and solving puzzles.

1=ACCEPT the offer

2=REJECT the offer

Instructions (You have now completed the analytical decision task. Please notify the experimenter.)

The following materials were included in an online preliminary study that was conducted at least 24 hours before the lab study.

- Importance of Social Image (Rodriguez Mosquera & Imada, 2013)
- Dimensions of Honor Scale (Cross et al., 2014)
- Inalienable Worth Scale (Leung & Cohen, 2011)
- Honor Ideology for Manhood Scale (Barnes et al., 2012)
- Prevention Promotion Scale (Lockwood et al., 2002)
- Multidimensional Self Scale (Vignoles et al., 2016)
- Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985)
- Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965)
- Trait Forgiveness Scale (Berry et al., 2005)
- Trust Scale (Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994)
- Rumination scale (Sukhodolsky et al., 2001)
- Two social behavior scenarios created by the authors

Study 2

The same essay task and post-feedback questions as in Study 1 were used in this study, before the n-back task (Jonides et al., 1997). In addition, the following exploratory variables were included at the beginning of the study:

- Importance of Social Image (Rodriguez Mosquera & Imada, 2013)
- Dimensions of Honor Scale (Cross et al., 2014)
- Inalienable Worth Scale (Leung & Cohen, 2011)
- Prevention Promotion Scale (Lockwood et al., 2002)
- Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965)

Sensitivity power analysis details:

In *Turkey*, the sensitivity power analyses for the comparison between morality threat and neutral feedback conditions revealed a minimum of 146.72 trials ($\text{Exp } \beta_1 = 1.0274$) in the morality threat condition for the following parameters (see Table 2 for sample sizes and means): one-tail, $\beta_1 > 0$, $\alpha = .05$, power = .80, total sample size = 108 (the number of participants in the morality threat and neutral feedback conditions), base rate $\text{exp } (\beta_0) = 71.41\%$ (the average number of trials completed in the neutral feedback condition divided by the total number of trials), mean exposure = 200, R^2 other $X = 0$, X distribution = Poisson, and X parm $\pi = .53$ (the ratio of the number of participants in the morality threat condition). The sensitivity power analysis for the comparison between morality threat and competence threat conditions revealed a minimum of 142.22 trials ($\text{Exp } \beta_1 = 1.0278$) in the morality threat condition for the following parameters: one-tail, $\beta_1 > 0$, $\alpha = .05$, power = .80, total sample size = 108, base rate $\text{exp } (\beta_0) = 69.19\%$, mean exposure = 200, R^2 other $X = 0$, X distribution = Poisson, and X parm $\pi = .53$.

In the *US honor group*, the sensitivity power analyses for the comparison between morality threat and neutral feedback conditions revealed a minimum of 178.53 trials (Exp $\beta_1 = 1.0291$) in the morality threat condition for the following parameters: one-tail, $\beta_1 > 0$, $\alpha = .05$, power = .80, total sample size = 109, base rate exp (β_0) = 86.74%, mean exposure = 200, R^2 other X = 0, X distribution = Poisson, and X parm $\pi = .37$. The sensitivity power analysis for the comparison between competence threat and neutral feedback conditions revealed a minimum of 178.09 trials (Exp $\beta_1 = 1.0266$) in the competence threat condition for the following parameters: one-tail, $\beta_1 > 0$, $\alpha = .05$, power = .80, total sample size = 122, base rate exp (β_0) = 86.74%, mean exposure = 200, R^2 other X = 0, X distribution = Poisson, and X parm $\pi = .43$.

In the *US dignity group*, the sensitivity power analyses for the comparison between competence threat and neutral feedback conditions revealed a minimum of 182.02 trials (Exp $\beta_1 = 1.0256$) in the competence threat condition for the following parameters: one-tail, $\beta_1 > 0$, $\alpha = .05$, power = .80, total sample size = 115, base rate exp (β_0) = 88.74%, mean exposure = 200, R^2 other X = 0, X distribution = Poisson, and X parm $\pi = .48$. The sensitivity power analysis for the comparison between competence threat and morality threat conditions revealed a minimum of 180.39 trials (Exp $\beta_1 = 1.0261$) in the competence threat condition for the following parameters: one-tail, $\beta_1 > 0$, $\alpha = .05$, power = .80, total sample size = 117, base rate exp (β_0) = 87.90%, mean exposure = 200, R^2 other X = 0, X distribution = Poisson, and X parm $\pi = .47$ (Faul et al., 2013). In all of the comparisons, the obtained values are greater than the required values, suggesting adequate power in the analyses.

Exploratory Analyses

We conducted the main analyses by including gender and reported the results in Supplementary Table 1, 2, and 3.

Supplementary Table 1

Predictors of Goal Persistence (Number of Completed n-back Trials; Study 2)

Poisson Regression	<i>b</i>	<i>SE b</i>	<i>Wald</i>	95% CI [<i>Wald</i>]
DV: Goal Persistence (Number of n-back Trials)				
Culture Comparison 1 (Turkey vs US Dignity)	-.11	.02	25.87***	[-.15, -.07]
Culture Comparison 2 (US Honor vs US Dignity)	-.06	.02	12.24***	[-.10, -.03]
Threat Comparison 1 (Morality vs. No-Threat)	-.12	.02	30.75***	[-.16, -.08]
Threat Comparison 2 (Competence vs. No-Threat)	.05	.02	7.52**	[.02, .09]
Gender (Male vs. Female)	-.03	.02	1.66	[-.06, .01]
Culture 1 x Threat 1	.04	.03	1.70	[-.02, .10]
Culture 1 x Threat 2	-.16	.03	29.81***	[-.22, -.10]
Culture 2 x Threat 1	.20	.03	54.83***	[.15, .25]
Culture 2 x Threat 2	.05	.03	3.62 ⁺	[-.001, .10]
Culture 1 x Gender	-.18	.03	35.93***	[-.24, -.12]
Culture 2 x Gender	.13	.03	19.43***	[.07, .18]
Threat 1 x Gender	.18	.03	39.80***	[.12, .23]
Threat 2 x Gender	-.03	.03	.81	[-.08, .03]
Culture 1 x Threat 1 x Gender	.10	.04	5.62*	[.02, .18]
Culture 1 x Threat 2 x Gender	.14	.04	10.61**	[.06, .22]
Culture 2 x Threat 1 x Gender	-.27	.05	33.59***	[-.36, -.18]
Culture 2 x Threat 2 x Gender	-.10	.05	5.42*	[-.18, -.02]

⁺*p* < .10, ***p* < .01, ****p* < .001.

Supplementary Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for the Outcome Variable (Goal Persistence) Across Threat Conditions, Cultural Groups, and Genders (Study 2)

	Turkey						US Honor Group						US Dignity Group					
	Morality		Competence		No Threat		Morality		Competence		No Threat		Morality		Competence		No Threat	
	Threat		Threat		(n = 35/22)		Threat		Threat		(n = 17/52)		Threat		Threat		(n = 31/29)	
	(n = 25/26)		(n = 27/30)				(n = 7/33)		(n = 17/36)				(n = 36/26)		(n = 24/31)			
Gender	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Men	160.48	56.47	131.85	60.57	131.43	66.94	184.86	40.06	183.06	35.59	186.88	25.75	186.03	42.75	180.13	41.93	175.32	53.46
Women	149.35	65.58	144.23	63.85	160.91	58.88	183.58	39.93	186.83	30.54	169.10	52.88	160.19	60.43	189.39	23.90	179.76	51.60

Note. Goal persistence reflects the total number of n-back trials participants completed in each threat condition. Sample sizes on the left side of the slash sign belong to male participants, whereas those on the right side belong to female participants.

Supplementary Table 3

Comparison of Goal Persistence (Number of Completed n-back Trials) across Threat Conditions by Culture and Gender (Study 2)

Poisson Regression	Morality Threat vs. Neutral		Competence Threat vs. Neutral		Morality vs. Competence	
	<i>Wald</i>	95% CI	<i>Wald</i>	95% CI	<i>Wald</i>	95% CI
Turkey						
Male	85.47***	[.16, .24]	.02	[-.04, .05]	72.83***	[.15, .24]
Female	10.30***	[-.12, -.03]	23.31***	[-.15, -.07]	2.48	[-.01, .08]
U.S. Honor						
Male	.11	[-.08, .05]	.67	[-.07, .03]	.09	[-.06, .08]
Female	24.21***	[.05, .12]	37.92***	[.07, .13]	.99	[-.05, .02]
U.S. Dignity						
Male	10.54**	[.02, .10]	1.76	[-.01, .07]	2.73 ⁺	[-.01, .07]
Female	30.75***	[-.16, -.08]	7.52**	[.02, .09]	68.29***	[-.21, -.13]

⁺ $p < .10$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.