Defending honour, keeping face: Interpersonal affordances of anger and shame in Turkey and Japan

Michael Boiger¹, Derya Güngör¹, Mayumi Karasawa², and Batja Mesquita¹

¹Center for Social and Cultural Psychology, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, University of Leuven, Leuven, Belgium
²Department of Communication, Tokyo Woman’s Christian University, Tokyo, Japan

In the present study, we tested the idea that emotions are afforded to the extent that they benefit central cultural concerns. We predicted that emotions that are beneficial for the Turkish concern for defending honour (both anger and shame) are afforded frequently in Turkey, whereas emotions that are beneficial for the Japanese concern for keeping face (shame but not anger) are afforded frequently in Japan. N = 563 students from Turkey and Japan indicated how frequently people in their culture experience a range of interpersonal anger and shame situations, and how intense their emotions would be. As predicted, participants perceived emotional interactions to occur frequently to the extent that they elicited culturally beneficial emotions. Moreover, the affordance of culturally beneficial emotions differed in predictable ways not only between cultures but also within cultures between situations with close vs. distant others and male vs. female protagonists.

Keywords: Culture; Affordances; Anger; Shame; Honour; Face.

Patterns of emotional experience differ across cultures. These cultural differences are meaningful in that they seem to be consistent with the concerns that are central in the respective cultures (Mesquita, 2003). Indeed, one overarching finding across studies is that emotions that are in line with cultural concerns appear to be culturally “up-regulated” and thus occur frequently; emotions that are in opposition to cultural concerns appear to be culturally “down-regulated” and thus occur rarely (e.g., De Leersnyder, Boiger, & Mesquita, 2013). The concerns that are central in a cultural context, therefore, seem to shape the emotional lives of the people who engage in this context.

Much of the cross-cultural research on emotional patterns has contrasted North American and Japanese contexts because the central concerns in these cultural contexts are maximally different:

Correspondence should be addressed to: Michael Boiger, Center for Social and Cultural Psychology, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, University of Leuven, Tiensestraat 102 – box 3727, 3000 Leuven, Belgium. E-mail: michael.boiger@ppw.kuleuven.be

We thank Philippe Verdúyn for his help in programming the preliminary daily diary study and three anonymous reviewers for their thoughtful and encouraging remarks.

This research was supported by a grant from the Research Council of the University of Leuven.

© 2014 Taylor & Francis
North America is a prototypical independent culture, with an emphasis on autonomy and individual achievement, whereas Japan is an interdependent culture, with an emphasis on connectedness and social harmony (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Rothbaum, Pott, Azuma, Miyake, & Weisz, 2000). Several studies have confirmed that patterns of emotional experience differ between North America and Japan in ways that fit these different concerns (Boiger, Mesquita, Uchida, & Barrett, 2013; Kitayama, Mesquita, & Karasawa, 2006).

In one previous study, we found that the recurrent daily interactions in the USA and Japan “afford” different emotions (Boiger et al., 2013). Affordances, in this context, can be understood as opportunities for people to experience certain emotions in interactions with others. For example, if highly angering situations occur frequently in a culture, anger would be “afforded” in this culture. We distinguished two directions that affordances may take: We referred to “promotion” of emotions when situations that elicit powerful experiences of these emotions occurred frequently in a culture, and we referred to “avoidance” of emotions when situations that elicit powerful experience of these emotions occurred rarely.1 We found that anger, an emotion emphasising individuality and entitlement, was culturally promoted in the USA and avoided in Japan; conversely, shame, an emotion that underlines the importance of connectedness between people, was culturally promoted in Japan, and avoided in the USA. There is thus evidence that, in each culture, everyday interactions afford emotions to the extent that these emotions fit the central cultural concerns.

The present research aimed to replicate this culture-specific affordance of emotion by focusing on two interdependent cultural contexts, Turkey and Japan. We reasoned that even though Turkey and Japan both value interdependence (Kagitcibasi, 2007; Lebra, 1976), the prevalent emotions should differ because they will be regulated to support different concerns of interdependence: The concern for defending honour in Turkey and the concern for keeping face in Japan. Consistently, we hypothesised that emotions that are beneficial for defending honour (both anger and shame) are promoted in Turkey, whereas emotions that are beneficial for keeping face (shame but not anger) are promoted in Japan.

Furthermore, the current study aimed to go beyond studying culture-specific affordances of emotions. We reasoned that concerns such as honour and face may not merely differ by culture, but that their centrality is also situated. In particular, both honour and face appear to be more at stake during interactions with distant than with close others; moreover, honour but not face concerns appear to be gendered. Extending our argument that emotions are afforded in line with the relevant concerns, we therefore also predicted situation-specific affordances of anger and shame. Consistent with situated differences in honour and face relevance, we expected that the affordance of anger and shame would also differ within cultures between situations with close vs. distant others and between situations with male vs. female protagonists.

HONOUR AND FACE

Honour and face provide answers to the question of how individual worth is determined and how social order is established and maintained (Leung & Cohen, 2011). These concepts share both commonalities and differences (see Table 1). Honour and face have in common that both concepts emphasise the external determination of individual worth—that is, that a person’s worth is determined by the judgement of others (Leung &

---

1 We conceive of emotion promotion and avoidance as culture-level rather than individual-level processes. For example, when speaking of an emotion as being “promoted” in a culture, we propose that people in this culture encounter many opportunities to experience this emotion during interactions with others; this form of cultural “up-regulation” involves the concerted, culturally shaped interplay of multiple agents. Our use of these terms is thus not to be confused with individual tendencies to actively seek out or avoid certain emotions or emotional situations.
Cohen, 2011; Rodriguez Mosquera, Manstead, & Fischer, 2000). A person does not have more honour than granted by others and cannot claim more face than their social status allows (Ho, 1976; Kim, Cohen, & Au, 2010; Leung & Cohen, 2011).

The difference between honour and face is that honour emphasises internal determination of individual worth as well as external determination: Honour is not only socially conferred but also needs to be claimed by the individual (Cohen, Nisbett, Bowdle, & Schwarz, 1996; Leung & Cohen, 2011). Honour ideals tend to emerge in competitive environments in which the social hierarchy is in constant flux (but see Mandel & Litt, 2012). In these contexts, tit-for-tat rules regulate social relations and payback becomes a central organising theme. Because one’s honour is hard to earn and easy to lose, people in honour cultures tend to focus on potential threats to their honour, which need to be retaliated with vehemence (Cohen et al., 1996; Péristiany, 1974).

In contrast, face concerns occur in stable social hierarchies. Face is defined as “the respectability and/or deference which a person can claim … by virtue of [his or her] relative position” (Ho, 1976, p. 883; also Kim et al., 2010). According to the logic of face, individuals can neither demand more face than their status allows, nor “take” face from someone else (Kim et al., 2010). Instead, the focus is on avoiding the loss of face (Hamamura, Meijer, Heine, Kamaya, & Hori, 2009; Ho, 1976) and on cooperating with others to preserve each other’s face (Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003). Retaliation and aggression are not instrumental to maintaining face and are, to the contrary, strongly discouraged and avoided because they may upset cooperative efforts at face-keeping (Ho, 1976; Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003).

**Defending honour in Turkey: Relational and gender contexts**

Honour is a highly salient concept in Turkish culture, as in most countries of the circum-Mediterranean region (Péristiany, 1974; Rodriguez Mosquera et al., 2000; Uskul, Cross, Sunbay, Gercek-Swing, & Ataca, 2012). The concern for honour pervades all spheres of daily life to the extent that “people automatically respond to events and build reputations, personalities, or selves in its terms” (Gregg, 2007, p. 92) and Turkish language is rich with expressions referring to losing and assertively defending honour (Sev’er & Yurdakul, 2001). Honour ideals in Turkey emphasise that honour is collectively owned and achieved (Uskul et al., 2012). Consequently, honour in Turkey can be threatened and secured by actions of other members of one’s collective—especially one’s family. Family members are expected to work together in demonstrating “to a wide range of people (e.g., neighbours, teachers, acquaintances) that one has good character and belongs to an honorable family” (Uskul et al., 2012, p. 1135). This implies that family members claim and defend their collective honour from outsiders and that they do not primarily claim honour from each other (see Kardam, 2005).

It is in this light of collective ownership that Turkish honour is also gendered: Certain kinds of honour are typically possessed by men (e.g., seref) and other kinds by women (e.g., namus) (Sev’er & Yurdakul, 2001). Namus, for example, is related to a woman’s sexual honour and the shame associated
with loosing namus does not only destroy the woman’s honour but also her husband’s, brothers’ and parents’ honour. Being aware of the shameful consequences of losing honour (e.g., through sexual impurity) is, therefore, paramount to girls. At the same time, the male members of the family are expected to assertively defend the family honour when it has been challenged; for women, violent behaviour would not be appropriate (see Gregg, 2007; Kardam, 2005).

Keeping face in Japan: Relational contexts

Face, and especially the importance of maintaining or keeping face, is a central concern in Japan (Cocroft & Ting-Toomey, 1994; Lebra, 1976). Although the concept of “face” is Chinese in origin (Ho, 1976), corresponding Japanese terms exist. Mentsu, for example, is closely related to the Chinese concept of face (mien-tzu, Ho, 1976) and numerous Japanese expressions capture the need to maintain face and the shame associated with losing it (Morisaki & Gudykunst, 1994). Face-keeping in Japan is closely tied to knowing one’s place in the settled hierarchy of society. People accept external judgements and adjust to others in order to maintain harmonious relationships (Morling, Kitayama, & Miyamoto, 2002).

Central to Japanese face is the outside perspective of seken—that is, society at large—on the person. While it is not necessary to keep face in front of one’s immediate kin (who will eventually understand and forgive), the reputation with neighbours, group members or acquaintances (sekentei) needs to be guarded at all times (Youichi, 2000). However, kin is involved in face-keeping: Family members work together to protect each other’s face (Cocroft & Ting-Toomey, 1994) and to avoid that shame is brought upon the family.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ANGER AND SHAME IN TURKEY AND JAPAN

Anger and shame are both about the stance an individual takes towards the environment: While anger highlights individual empowerment over others, shame highlights concern for external judgement. Anger and shame, therefore, appear to be ideal candidates to study the affordance of emotions in honour and face contexts. They may fulfil distinct functions in these contexts and differ in the extent to which they are beneficial for achieving the concern for defending honour and keeping face, respectively.

Anger in Turkey and Japan

Anger highlights the perception that others interfere with your goals, that you are entitled to more than you are getting and that you may get your way if taking action (Ellsworth & Scherer, 2003; Kuppens, Van Mechelen, Smits, & De Boeck, 2003). Anger is consistent with Turkish honour ideals that emphasise that an “honorable person must meet the challenge and not shrink from it” (Kim et al., 2010, p. 905); anger draws attention to events that challenge a person’s honour and it motivates the angry person to take the necessary steps towards retaliation and thus defence of their honour (Cohen et al., 1996).

In contrast, anger violates the Japanese concern for face that emphasises harmony and maintenance of the status quo. Instead of getting angry with others, and possibly challenging their face judgements, a person must “accept the truth in those judgments before redemption is possible” (Kim et al., 2010, p. 905). Those who assert their opinions, nonetheless, are perceived as immature (Azuma, 1984). The concern for keeping face is so pervasive that conflicts are generally avoided or, if avoidance is not possible, compromise is readily struck (Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003).

Shame in Turkey and Japan

Shame involves a negative evaluation of the self in the eyes of others (Tangney, 1991; Tracy & Robins, 2004) and as such is closely tied to the external evaluation of individual worth that is central to both honour and face concerns. Having a sense of shame is an integral part of the concern for honour (Sev’er & Yurdakul, 2001) and the
socialisation of shame ensures appropriate behaviour and protection of honour (Leung & Cohen, 2011). Shame highlights behaviours or events that might put a person’s honour at stake and is thus beneficial to the Turkish goal of defending honour.

Shame is also beneficial to the Japanese goal of keeping face. Shame flags behaviours that may lead to a loss of face and thereby helps avoiding these or, at the very least, motivates a quick restoration of face. Expressing shame itself may lead to redemption because it signals to others that the person is concerned about face. Consistently, Japanese use several expressions that tie shame and face together (e.g., kogan muchi, thick-faced and shameless; Ho, Fu, & Ng, 2004). Similarly, we found in previous research that loss of face is perceived as particularly shameful by Japanese students (Boiger et al., 2013).

Anger and shame across relationship and gender contexts

There is reason to assume that the significance of anger and shame varies not only between Turkey and Japan at large, but also between different contexts within each of these cultures; most notably, the significance of these emotions may vary across contexts of relational closeness (close and distant others) and gender (female and male protagonists) in line with the situated relevance of honour and face concerns. First, anger and shame may be particularly functional in both Turkey and Japan during interactions with strangers or distant others (as opposed to close others) because both honour and face appear to be primarily at stake during these kinds of interactions (see Kardam, 2005; Youiichi, 2000). Second, the significance of anger and shame is expected to differ between gender contexts in Turkey, but not in Japan. In Turkey, women’s honour-related actions appear to be connected to shame, whereas men’s honour-related actions tend to be connected to anger (Cihangir, 2012; Sev’er & Yurdakul, 2001). In Japan, no such gender differences are evident. In Japan, keeping face appears to be similarly important for both genders (Shimanoff, 1994), and therefore, both men and women need to be aware of shame and avoid anger.

THE CURRENT STUDY

The current study is a systematic cross-cultural investigation of the interpersonal affordances of anger and shame in two interdependent cultures. Using a questionnaire study, we tested the prediction that emotions that are beneficial to the cultural goals of honour and face (anger and shame in Turkey; shame in Japan) are promoted, such that interpersonal situations that elicit powerful experiences of these emotions are perceived to occur frequently; in comparison, we expected that emotions that are harmful to these cultural goals (anger in Japan) are avoided, such that interpersonal situations that elicit powerful experience these emotions are perceived to occur rarely (Hypothesis 1). Moreover, we investigated if the affordance of anger and shame is situation-specific within cultures, such that different kinds of interactions afford anger and shame. Because a person’s honour and face are primarily at stake during interactions with distant others, we expected that, for both Turkish and Japanese, the promotion and avoidance of anger and shame should be particularly pronounced in situations with distant compared to close others (Hypothesis 2). Finally, because honour, but not face, is gendered in terms of the emphasis for Turkish females to know their shame and for Turkish males to assertively defend their honour, we expected that, for Turkish, shame would be particularly promoted in situations involving female protagonists and anger would be particularly promoted in situations with male protagonists; we expected no such gender differences in Japan (Hypothesis 3).

This study extends previous research in a number of ways. First, by investigating the interpersonal situations that afford and foster the experience of anger and shame, we highlight a potential underlying mechanism in creating cultural differences in emotion. Second, by investigating the Turkish (honour) and the Japanese (face) context, we tackle two cultural concerns of interdependence that have rarely been subject to direct empirical comparison (for an exception, see Leung & Cohen, 2011). Finally, by systematically exploring the emotional
ramifications of situations that differ by relational closeness and gender, we supplement the typical focus on between-culture variation with a perspective of within-culture variation.

METHOD

Participants

After excluding 14 participants who were not born in their respective country of residence, participants were 244 Japanese (46% female) and 319 Turkish (51% female) students. The mean age was 20 years ($SD_{Japan} = 1.11$, $SD_{Turkey} = 1.78$) in both cultures. All participants were born in their respective countries and none had immigrant backgrounds. Japanese students were from Keio University, and Turkish students were from Nigde University. Japanese participants received 500 Yen for their participation, and Turkish students participated as part of a course requirement.

Materials

To test our hypotheses about the affordance of anger and shame in everyday interactions in Turkey and Japan, we needed representative samples of anger and shame antecedents from Turkey and Japan. These samples were obtained by reanalysing previous interview and experience sampling research from Japan and by collecting comparable antecedent situations in Turkey. Japanese anger and shame situations

The pool of Japanese situations used in this study was derived from an interview and an experience sampling study as described in Boiger et al. (2013). In the interview study, 19 Japanese students (58% female) reported on salient memories of interpersonal anger and shame events. In the experience sampling study, 50 Japanese students (58% female) reported four times a day for seven days on their emotions; we extracted those interpersonal situations that had elicited anger (e.g., ikari and irairai) or shame (e.g., hazukashii or terekusasa). From the whole set of situations, we excluded nine situations because they did not contain sufficient detail, were too complex to be condensed to short vignettes or occurred before the participant had started college, which left us with a final sample of 53 anger and 38 shame situations. Because we wanted to compare affordances across close and distant contexts, we classified the situations according to the relational context in which they took place. We then took a random sample of eight situations with close others (e.g., family and close friends) and eight with distant others (e.g., acquaintances and strangers) from both the anger and shame situation pool. To allow for a comparison between gender contexts, we stratified our random sample by gender such that half of the situations had initially been reported by women (and thus contained a female protagonist) and half by men (and thus contained a male protagonist). The final selection of Japanese situations thus consisted of 16 anger and 16 shame situations (of which 78% were identical to the final sample used in Boiger et al., 2013; see Supplementary Online Material).

Turkish anger and shame situations

All Turkish situations were derived from a daily diary study in which 50 participants (58% female) reported for seven consecutive days their most important anger and shame experiences of the day. We opted for the more targeted daily diary approach in Turkey because the rate of anger and shame occurrences was fairly low in our Japanese experience sampling study and because a daily diary was assumed to yield a blend of salient and daily events. Participants were on average 22 years old ($SD = 1.90$) and received 50 Turkish Lira for their participation. We selected those situations that were interpersonal in nature and contained enough information to be reduced to short situation vignettes, which resulted in a pool of 310 anger and 316 shame situations. Again, we classified the situations according to relational contexts and randomly sampled eight situations with close others (family and close friends) and eight with distant others (acquaintances and strangers) from the respective pools of anger and shame.
situations; these samples were also stratified by gender. Consequently, the final selection of Turkish situations used in this study consisted of 16 anger and 16 shame situations (see Supplementary Online Material).

**Scripting situation vignettes**

The anger and shame situations from Turkey and Japan were rewritten into short, scripted situation vignettes that were succinct yet retained three core features: (1) The ongoing activity of the protagonist, (2) the relationship between the actors involved and (3) the specific event that triggered the experience of the emotion (for this procedure, see also Boiger et al., 2013). To make the vignettes relevant to a student population, all protagonists were given popular Japanese and Turkish names. That is, Japanese participants read vignettes about protagonists with Japanese names and Turkish participants read vignettes about protagonists with Turkish names, even though, for both samples, half of the situations had initially been reported by participants from the other culture. We respected the gender of the protagonists in naming them.

**Questionnaire**

Two versions of the questionnaire were created, one consisting of 32 anger situations and one consisting of 32 shame situations. In each version, half of the situations came from Turkey, and half from Japan. Moreover, half of the situations from each culture were about interactions with close others (e.g., family and close friends) and other half were about interactions with distant others (e.g., acquaintances and strangers). Finally, approximately half of the situations from each culture were about interactions experienced by female protagonists and half were about interactions experienced by male protagonists.

For each situation, participants indicated how frequently this situation would occur in their culture (“How likely do most students you know experience a situation like this?”) and how powerful the situation was in eliciting the emotion (“How likely is it that a situation like this—if it were to happen—would lead to anger/shame?”) using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (not at all likely) to 6 (extremely likely). We chose a referent-shift approach because we were interested in participants’ shared cultural representations and because we wanted to avoid self-presentational biases (Chiu, Gelfand, Yamagishi, Shteynberg, & Wan, 2010; Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, & Norasakkunkit, 1997); the referent “most students you know” was chosen to ensure relevance to our student samples as well as comparability of responses across samples. Anger and shame were defined in an introductory paragraph to the questionnaire in ways that included less intense experiences: “In this study we are interested in how and when people experience anger (this includes being angry, mad or annoyed with someone)” or “In this study we are interested in how and when people experience shame (this includes feeling humbled, feeling inadequate, or feeling embarrassed”). We reported all manipulations and all measures in the study.

**Procedure**

Half of the participants completed the anger version of the questionnaire, and the other half completed the shame version. All materials were created in English and then translated into (1) Japanese by a professional translator and (2) into Turkish by one of the authors who is a native Turk and fluent in English. One of the authors, who is a native Japanese and fluent in English, additionally checked all Japanese translations and a native Turkish research assistant, who is fluent in English, checked all the Turkish translations. Cross-cultural comprehensibility of the situations was pilot-tested.

**Analytic strategy**

We used multilevel regression models (with situations nested within respondents) to test our hypotheses. All analyses were conducted using the program MLwiN 2.10 (Rasbash, Charlton, Browne, Healy, & Cameron, 2009). We tested the hypotheses about emotion promotion (i.e., that situations occur frequently to the extent that they
elicit beneficial emotions) and emotion avoidance (i.e., that situations occur rarely to the extent that they elicit harmful emotions) by regressing the perceived frequency of anger and shame situations on the perceived emotion-eliciting power of these situations, allowing for random intercepts and slopes. To test Hypothesis 1 (the culture-specific affordance of anger and shame), we first conducted the analyses for each cultural group separately and then tested for significant cultural differences in promotion and avoidance by using the full data-set and entering culture of the participant as a level-2 moderator.

In order to test our situation-specific (within-culture) hypotheses, we created separate data-sets for each culture. We tested Hypothesis 2 (the relation-specific affordance of anger and shame) by first conducting analyses for situations with close and distant other separately; we then tested for significant differences between close and distant situations by entering relational context as a level-1 moderator. We tested Hypothesis 3 (the gender-specific affordance of anger and shame) in an analogous way. Because participants reported on their shared cultural perceptions rather than their own experiences, we assumed that the predicted gender differences should lie in the shared perception of male and female situations (and not differ between male and female participants). Indeed, gender differences between participants were not found for any of the hypotheses and are, therefore, not reported.

RESULTS

Preliminary analyses: Establishing consensus among participants

We first established that our referent-shift questionnaire elicited culturally shared perceptions of situation frequency and emotion-eliciting power in each culture. To this end, we conducted cultural consensus analyses (Romney, Weller, & Batchelder, 1986). Consensus analysis establishes if participants reported on a shared cultural representation by means of a factor analysis principal component analysis (PCA) on the participants as units of analysis given their responses; a ratio between the first and the second eigenvalue of three or larger participants is taken as an indication of consensus within the participant group (Weller, 2007). Across 2 (cultural groups) × 2 (emotions) × 2 (frequency or emotion-eliciting power) consensus analyses, the average ratio between the first and the second eigenvalue was larger than three ($M = 4.68$, $SD = 2.46$), indicating that participants indeed reported on perceptions that were shared within their respective cultural groups. 

Hypothesis 1: Culture-specific affordances of anger and shame

Consistent with the Turkish concern for defending honour and the Japanese concern for keeping face, we predicted that anger is promoted in Turkey but avoided in Japan and that shame is promoted in both Turkey and Japan. Our findings supported this prediction. In line with our hypothesis, Turkish participants reported that anger was promoted in Turkey—that is, they perceived anger situations to occur more frequently to the extent that they elicited intense feelings of anger ($b = .23$, $Z = 10.90$, $p < .001$). In contrast, Japanese participants reported that anger was avoided in Japan—that is, they perceived situations to occur less frequently to the extent that they elicited intense feelings of anger ($b = -.07$, $Z = 4.50$, $p < .001$). This difference was significant between the two cultural groups, as indicated by the significant interaction between participant culture (effect coded: −1 = Japan, 1 = Turkey) and the situations’ emotion-eliciting power (respondent-mean centred), $b = .15$, $Z = 10.50$, $p < .001$.

2 When looking at each consensus analysis separately, there were two exceptions to the overall pattern of agreement: Turkish participants did not strongly agree on how frequently shame situations occur in their culture (ratio = 1.68) and showed only tendential agreement on how frequently anger situations occur (ratio = 2.66).
Equally supporting our predictions, both Turkish and Japanese participants perceived shame to be promoted—that is, they perceived shame situations to occur more frequently to the extent that they elicit stronger feelings of shame (Turkey: $b = .15, Z = 7.35, p < .001$; Japan: $b = .04, Z = 2.11, p < .05$). Although the direction of the association was the same for both cultural groups, the promotion of shame was more pronounced in Turkey than in Japan, as indicated by the significant interaction between participant culture (effect coded: $-1 =$ Japan, $1 =$ Turkey) and the situations’ emotion-eliciting power (respondent-mean centred), $b = .05, Z = 3.79, p < .001$.

Post-hoc analyses: The role of own- vs. other-culture situations

Previous studies identified stronger effects of affordance for situations that matched the culture of the participants (Boiger et al., 2013; Kitayama et al., 1997; Savani, Morris, Naidu, Kumar, & Berlia, 2011). One reason for this observation may be that same-culture situations have been selected over time and are structured in ways that are in line with the respective cultural concerns (see Savani et al., 2011). However, these previous studies focused on cultural contexts that had been selected in terms of their differences rather than commonalities, such as North American (independent) contexts and East Asian (interdependent) contexts. In contrast, Turkey and Japan share both differences (the internal determination of honour but not face) and similarities (the external determination of both honour and face) in their central concerns. We, therefore, assumed that the affordance of anger and shame across same- and other-culture situations may be less straightforward in Turkey and in Japan.

We found that Japanese participants perceived anger to be more strongly avoided in situations of Japanese origin ($b = -.13, Z = 6.19, p < .001$) compared to Turkish origin ($b = .01, Z = .52, p = .60$), as indicated by the significant interaction between situation culture (effect coded: $-1 =$ Japan, $1 =$ Turkey) and the situations’ emotion-eliciting power (respondent-mean centred), $b = .06, Z = 4.38, p < .001$. Japanese participants also perceived shame to be more strongly promoted in situations of Japanese origin ($b = .09, Z = 4.38, p < .001$) as compared to Turkish origin ($b = -.04, Z = 1.52, p = .13$), as indicated by the significant interaction between situation culture and the situations’ emotion-eliciting power (respondent-mean centred), $b = -.08, Z = 5.43, p < .001$. However, Turkish participants did not differ significantly between same- and other-culture situations in terms of their perception of the promotion of anger ($b = -.01, Z = 1.09, p = .28$) or shame ($b = -.02, Z = 1.60, p = .11$).

Hypothesis 2: Relation-specific affordances of anger and shame

Because honour and face are primarily at stake during interactions with distant others, we expected that, in both cultures, the predicted pattern of anger and shame affordances is more pronounced for situations with distant compared to close others. Figure 1 shows the promotion and avoidance of anger and shame across situations with close and distant others for Turkish and Japanese participants (in terms of the beta weights of the estimated random slopes predicting
situation frequency from the situations’ emotion-eliciting power). In line with our predictions, Turkish participants perceived anger to be more promoted in situations with distant others compared to situations with close others, as indicated by the significant interaction between situation context (effect coded: −1 = close, 1 = distant) and the situations’ emotion eliciting-power (respondent-mean centred), \( b = .05, Z = 4.55, p < .001 \). Japanese participants perceived anger to be more avoided in situations with distant than close others, as indicated by the significant interaction between situation context and the situations’ emotion-eliciting power (respondent-mean centred), \( b = −.03, Z = 2.23, p < .05 \).

For shame, we also found a more pronounced pattern for situations with distant others. In line with our predictions, Turkish participants perceived shame to be more promoted in situations with distant others than close others, as indicated by the significant interaction between situation context (effect coded: −1 = close, 1 = distant) and the situations’ emotion eliciting-power (respondent-mean centred), \( b = .03, Z = 2.90, p < .01 \). Japanese participants equally perceived shame to be more promoted in situations with distant others compared to close others, as indicated by the significant interaction between situation context and the situations’ emotion-eliciting power (respondent-mean centred), \( b = .10, Z = 6.93, p < .001 \).

Because post-hoc analyses had indicated that the culture-specific affordance of anger and shame depended on the cultural origin of the situation, we assumed that these effects may also matter at the level of the relationship context. We, therefore, checked in a set of additional post-hoc analyses if the pattern of promotion/avoidance in distant compared to close situations depended on the cultural origin of the situation. The origin of the situation mattered, as indicated by the significant three-way interaction (situations’ emotion-eliciting power × situation context × situation culture; effect codes as indicated above)—albeit in a non-systematic way: While the origin of the situation mattered for the pattern of anger affordance in distant compared to close situations for Turkish participants (\( b = .05, Z = 4.36, p < .001 \)), it did not matter for Japanese participants (\( b = .01, Z = 0.57, p = .57 \)); the origin of the situation mattered for the distant/close pattern of shame promotion for Japanese (\( b = −.08, Z = 5.79, p < .001 \)), but only tendentially for Turkish participants (\( b = −.02, Z = 1.88, p = .06 \)). When the origin of the situation mattered, the more pronounced pattern of promotion/affordance in distant compared to close situations was found for own-culture situations.

Hypothesis 3: Gender-specific affordances of anger and shame

Because of the link between female honour and shame and because of the link between male honour and anger, we predicted, for Turkish participants, that shame would be particularly promoted in situations that involved a female protagonist, while anger would be particularly promoted in situations that involved a male protagonist. We expected no gender differences in Japan. Figure 2 shows the gender-specific promotion and avoidance of anger and shame as perceived by the Turkish and Japanese participants. In line with our hypothesis, we found that Turkish participants perceived shame to be more...
promoted in situations that involved female protagonists compared to male protagonists, as indicated by the significant interaction between protagonist gender (effect coded: −1 = male, 1 = female) and the situations’ emotion-eliciting power (respondent-mean centred), $b = .06, Z = 5.70, p < .001$. Contrary to our predictions, anger was perceived to be similarly promoted in situations with male and female protagonists, as indicated by the non-significant interaction between protagonist gender and the situations’ emotion-eliciting power (respondent-mean centred), $b = −.02, Z = 1.36, p = .17$.

As expected, Japanese participants did not differ in their perception of anger avoidance and shame promotion between situations that involved male and female protagonists. Japanese participants perceived shame to be similarly promoted in situations that involved female and male protagonists, as indicated by the non-significant interaction between protagonist gender (effect coded: −1 = male, 1 = female) and the situations’ emotion-eliciting power (respondent-mean centred), $b = .01, Z = .64, p = .52$. Equally supporting our predictions, anger was perceived to be similarly avoided in situations with female and male protagonists, as indicated by the non-significant interaction between protagonist gender and the situations’ emotion-eliciting power (respondent-mean centred), $b = −.01, Z = .46, p = .65$.

Again, we conducted post-hoc analyses to examine if the identified pattern across male and female contexts depended on the origin of the situation. The origin of the situation mattered only for the Japanese students’ perception of anger promotion in situations with male compared to female protagonists, as indicated by the significant three-way interaction (situation’s emotion-eliciting power × situation context × situation culture interaction; effect codes as above), $b = −.07, Z = 5.69, p < .001$. This finding qualifies the above result that Japanese perceive anger to be similarly avoided in situations with male and female protagonists. When looking at the Japanese situations, Japanese actually perceived anger to be avoided only in situations with male protagonists ($b = −.18, Z = 7.28, p < .001$), but not in situations with female protagonists ($b = .00, Z = .06, p = .95$). The pattern reverses for the Japanese participants’ perception of the Turkish situations: While anger was actually perceived to be promoted in Turkish situations with male protagonists ($b = .08, Z = 2.71, p < .01$), it was perceived to be avoided in Turkish situations with female protagonists ($b = −.08, Z = 2.92, p < .01$).

**DISCUSSION**

The goal of the present research was to study interpersonal affordances of anger and shame in two interdependent cultures—Turkey and Japan. In line with previous research on the affordance of anger and shame in the USA and Japan (Boiger et al., 2013), we predicted that anger and shame are culturally promoted and avoided to the extent that they benefit central cultural concerns. We identified two concerns that are pervasive in Turkish and in Japanese culture: The Turkish concern for defending honour and the Japanese concern for keeping face. Because honour is not only socially conferred but also needs to be claimed from others, we predicted that both anger (as an emotion of assertiveness) and shame (as an emotion of social connectedness) are promoted in Turkey; in comparison because face is socially conferred but cannot (and should not) be assertively claimed from others, we predicted that shame is promoted and anger is avoided in Japan.

Our findings supported the idea that, in each culture, emotions are afforded to the extent that they fit central cultural concerns. In line with the Japanese (interdependent) concern for face, Japanese participants perceived anger to be culturally avoided and shame to be promoted across a range of randomly sampled interpersonal anger and shame situations. We thus replicated our findings from previous research in Japan (Boiger et al., 2013), using a larger sample of participants and a partially different sample of situations (22% new Japanese situations, all new Turkish situations). We also confirmed our hypothesis for the Turkish cultural context: In line with the Turkish (interdependent) concern for honour, Turkish
participants perceived both anger and shame to be
promoted in interpersonal situations. Moreover,
by investigating emotional affordances in two
interdependent cultural contexts, our findings
underline that the distinction between independ-
ence (or individualism) and interdependence (or
collectivism) may overlook important distinctions
within these dimensions.

The present study also aimed to extend the
research on the affordance of emotion from the
level of culture-specific affordances to the level of
situation-specific affordances. Both honour and
face concerns are more salient in interactions with
distant others compared to situations with close
others, and the concern for honour is gendered,
which is not the case for face. Consequently, we
expected the affordance of anger and shame to
vary between these kinds of interpersonal situa-
tions. As expected, we found that the affordance
of anger and shame was perceived to be more
pronounced in interactions with distant than close
other: Turkish participants perceived both anger
and shame to be more promoted in situations with
distant compared to close others, and Japanese
participants perceived anger to be more avoided
and shame to be more promoted in situations with
distant compared to close others.

Consistent with our hypothesis, we also found
that Turkish participants distinguished between
genders, perceiving situations with female pro-
tagons to promote more shame than situations involving males. However, contrary to our predic-
tions, the Turkish respondents perceived anger to
be equally promoted for situations that involved
females and males. It is not entirely clear what may
have caused Turkish participants to perceive this
unexpected promotion of anger in female situa-
tions; the observed effect depended neither on the
sex of the participant nor on the origin of the
situation. Taken together, these findings suggest
both an extension and a qualification of the
concept of emotional affordance: Social interac-
tions appear to afford the emotions of anger and
shame not only in line with culture-specific con-
cerns but also in line with the concerns that are
particularly at stake in certain kinds of interactions.

The mutual influence of shared representations and situational characteristics

In a number of post-hoc analyses, we found that participant tendencies and situation characteristics
appear to have “amplified” each other: Participants
were more likely to perceive the typical patterns of
anger and shame avoidance and promotion in
situations from their own culture than in situations
from the other culture. For example, the pattern of
more pronounced emotional avoidance/promotion
in terms of situations with distant compared to
close others tended to hold more for own-culture
situations. This finding was expected, as same-
culture situations may have been selected over time
and may be structured in ways (e.g., in terms of
the constellation of relevant features or the asso-
ciated reward structures) that are in line with the
respective cultural concerns (see Kitayama et al.,
1997; Savani et al., 2011). In comparison, other-
culture situations may be structured in ways that
do not reinforce the perceivers’ representations,
explaining why we did not find (or found to a
lesser extent) the typical affordance patterns for
other-culture situations. For example, the Japanese
situations may have lacked the constellation of
elements that makes honour particularly salient for
Turkish during interactions with distant others.

There was one exception to this pattern: in this
case, the different concerns encoded in the other-
culture situations appear to have “overridden” the
participant’s dominant concerns. Both Turkish
and Japanese participants perceived Turkish situa-
tions with male protagonists to frequently elicit
intense anger—despite the pervasive Japanese
tendency to perceive anger as being culturally
avoided in social interactions. It is imaginable
that the particular characteristics of the Turkish
situations made other concerns more salient than
the typical Japanese concern for face-saving. An
inspection of the Turkish situations suggests that
“purposeful offence” is a likely candidate, as acts of
intentional harm-doing were rather frequent in the
Turkish situations. Purposeful offence may be a
powerful and frequent elicitor of anger, regardless
of the culture of the respondent (see also Mes-
quita, 1993). This finding is also in line with
previous findings that Turkish situations during which honour is at stake (which is likely the case for situations of purposeful offence) are perceived as particularly impactful by Turkish and non-Turkish participants alike (Uskul et al., 2012).

Limitations and future directions

This research has certain limitations. First, we relied on samples of students, which may be more similar across cultures than, for example, community samples; our findings may thus have underestimated cultural differences in the interpersonal affordance of anger and shame. Second, for reasons of feasibility, we relied on a limited sample of anger and shame situations. Even though samples of \( N > 30 \) are commonly used in psychological research, future research may want to include a larger number of situations to increase external validity. Third, our findings rely on participants’ self-reported perceptions of the frequency and impact of emotional situations in their culture. Even though we established statistically that these perceptions were culturally shared and thus approximated the social realities in the respective cultures, our method focuses on situations as commonly encoded and remembered within a culture rather than on “objectively” occurring events. Future research may want to disentangle the complex interplay of individual tendencies at encoding and situational characteristics. One possibility may be to study emotional affordances in individuals that have been selected for their different concerns with honour or face (or have been primed with them) in a range of experimentally induced situations; situations could be structured in ways that highlight either matching or mismatching concerns.

We proposed that anger and shame fit (and benefit) the cultural goals of honour and face to different extents, and that, therefore, (intense) anger and shame interactions may be encountered at different rates in the respective cultures. This is not to say that each anger or shame situation is equally relevant for honour and face; rather we expected (and found) that, averaging across a random sample of emotional situations, both anger and shame are up-regulated in an honour context, and that only shame is up-regulated in a face-context. Future research may want to measure honour- and face-relevance of anger and shame situations, and investigate explicitly whether this relevance moderates the cultural promotion or avoidance of anger and shame. Finally, alternative explanations besides the cultural concerns for honour and face may account for our findings: For example, anger is more arousing than shame, and it is conceivable that anger situations are culturally avoided in Japan because of the East Asian preference for low-arousal affective states (Tsai, 2007). This account of the data is compatible with our face explanation. High-arousal emotions have been shown to benefit the task of influencing others (at least for the domain of positive emotions, Tsai, 2007). We argued that influencing is not required to keep face, and may even violate face concerns. Therefore, it may be this arousing quality of anger that limits the benefits of anger for keeping face in Japan.

Conclusion

Across cultures, people experience more of those emotions that help them to be a good and typical person in their culture. For different cultures, this may concern different emotions. Our findings underline that these cultural differences in emotion hinge on the culturally common ways of interacting: People encounter more of those interpersonal situations that give rise to culturally valued emotions and less of those situations that elicit culturally devalued emotions. Studying emotion in context not only helps understand the processes that may drive cultural variation in emotion, but is also closer to how people actually experience the majority of their emotions: In the context of their daily social interactions.

Manuscript received 30 June 2013
Revised manuscript received 20 December 2013
Manuscript accepted 1 January 2014
First published online 30 January 2014
Supplementary material

Supplementary content is available via the ‘Supplementary’ tab on the article’s online page (http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02699931.2014.881324).

REFERENCES


