

MORAL AFFECTS, EMPATHY, AND INTEGRATIVE SELF-KNOWLEDGE IN IRAN

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ABSTRACT

In the more individualistic West, guilt promotes and shame interferes with empathic sensitivity. This investigation sought to determine if similar results would appear in the presumably more interdependent cultural context of Iran. Iranian university students ($N = 220$) responded to guilt and shame scales along with measures of other-oriented empathy and empathic distress. As in the West, guilt predicted greater other-oriented empathy, shame correlated positively with empathic distress, and relationships with integrative self-knowledge, self-esteem, covert narcissism, depression, and anxiety confirmed guilt and other-oriented empathy as adaptive and shame and empathic distress as maladaptive. Integrative self-knowledge mediated shame but not guilt relationships with other measures. In contrast to Western findings, Iranian women did not score higher on shame, and guilt correlated positively with empathic distress. These data confirmed Iranian parallels with the previously reported dynamics of empathy and moral affects in the West, but Iranian differences also pointed toward the need for additional research.

Research into the psychology of morality has benefited from empirical delineations between shame and guilt as moral affects with strikingly different implications (Lewis, 1971). Shame theoretically operates as a condemnation of the whole self after a self-perceived moral transgression. Guilt functions, instead, as a more focused negative evaluation of the specific behaviors associated with a transgression. Assessment of tendencies toward these two emotional reactions is possible with the third version of the Test of Self-Conscious Affect (TOSCA; Tangney & Dearing, 2002). Studies using this instrument have identified its Shame Scale as a consistent predictor of maladjustment, whereas the Guilt Scale displays reliable connections with relative mental health.

Arguments that the self is, at least in part, a cultural construction point toward a need to determine if findings observed for moral affects in the West can be observed elsewhere. Of particular interest is the suggestion that Western societies nurture a more individualistic form of personality development in contrast to a greater emphasis placed upon interdependence elsewhere (Kitayama, Markus, & Matsumoto, 1995). Interdependence might modify how moral affects operate (Tangney, 2003). In exploring this possibility, Furukawa, Tangney, and Higashibara (2012) found that Korean, Japanese, and American children displayed differences in their average levels of shame and guilt, but linkages of these measures with other variables were similar across cultures. Japanese investigations examining university students also found that the TOSCA Shame Scale predicted maladjustment, but yielded little or no support for the contention that its guilt scale operationalized a more adaptive form of functioning (Hasui, Kitamura, Tamaki, Takahashi, Masuda, & Ozeki, 2009; Uji, Kitamura, & Nagata, 2011a, 2011b; Uji, Nagata, & Kitamura, 2012). In comparison to Western findings, therefore, studies in the Far East suggest that average levels of these moral affects may be different, that shame displays conceptually similar patterns of relationships with other measures, but that guilt may develop with less positive mental health implications.

A recent study also used university students to examine shame and guilt in the presumably more interdependent Muslim cultural context of Iran (Ghorbani, Watson, Salimian, & Chen, *in press*). As in the West, shame and guilt in Iran predicted maladjustment and adjustment, respectively. Such outcomes appeared, for example, in relationships of these moral affects with integrative self-knowledge, mindfulness, and internalized self-criticism. In addition, however, associations between measures sometimes proved to be more reliable in women than in men. Guilt, for instance, predicted higher levels of integrative self-knowledge in women but not in men, and similar gender differences appeared in correlations for shame that were negative with self-control and positive with three indices of interpersonal problems and two measures of obsession. Women also scored higher than men on guilt but not on shame in contrast to previous observations that Western women scored higher on both (Tangney & Dearing, 2002). In short, preliminary evidence from Iran suggests that both shame and guilt have

QA: Update?

psychological implications that are similar to those observed in the West, although the effects of gender may differ.

The previous analysis of moral affects in Iran examined relationships with measures of interpersonal maladjustment and found that shame and guilt displayed expected connections with aggression, interpersonal sensitivity, and interpersonal ambiguity, either in the full sample or in women alone. However, this earlier study did not examine any index of interpersonal adjustment, and the present investigation most importantly seeks to broaden the analysis of moral affects in Iran by examining shame and guilt relationships with the interpersonal adjustment of empathy.

Empathy and Moral Affects

Empathy involves a vicarious openness to the experience of others that has long been implicated in morality (Eisenberg & Miller, 1987; Hoffman, 1975). Relationships with morality are, nevertheless, complex and vary with what Tangney and Dearing (2002) describe as “other-oriented” and “self-oriented empathy.” With other-oriented empathy, an individual emotionally and cognitively assumes the perspective of another person in ways that motivate altruistic behavior (Batson, 1990; Hoffman, 1985). With self-oriented empathy, individuals are so emotionally overwhelmed by the difficulties of others that they instead focus on trying to take care of themselves (e.g., Estrada, 1995).

The Interpersonal Reactivity Index records dispositions toward these two types of empathic reactions (Davis, 1983). Its empathic concern and perspective taking subscales measure the emotional and cognitive elements of other-oriented empathy, respectively. Personal distress operationalizes the self-oriented response. Research generally identifies empathic concern and perspective taking as predictors of prosocial adjustment (Konrath, O’Brien, & Hsing, 2011), but personal distress points toward a maladjustment that can include a moral insensitivity toward others (e.g., Skoe, 2010). With regard to the specific issue of moral affects, Western studies demonstrate that guilt correlates positively with other-oriented empathy and that shame predicts lower other-oriented empathy and higher empathic distress (Tangney & Dearing, 2002). The most important prediction of the present project is that this same pattern of relationships will appear in Iran.

Additional Issues

The accompanying analysis of this primary issue was an exploration of two secondary questions. First, as already noted, guilt and other-oriented empathy have positive and shame and empathic distress have negative mental health implications. Attempts to confirm similar results in Iran involved administration of Integrative Self-Knowledge (Ghorbani, Watson, & Hargis, 2008), Self-Esteem (Rosenberg, 1965), Narcissism (Margolis & Thomas, 1980), and

Depression and Anxiety (Costello & Comrey, 1980) Scales. Integrative self-knowledge represents the active effort of an individual to unite past, present, and desired future self-experience into a meaningful whole and is like self-esteem in generally predicting relatively better psychological functioning in Iran (e.g., Tahmasb, Ghorbani, & Watson, 2008; Ghorbani, Watson, Hamzavy, & Weathington, 2010).

QA: 1967 in Refs?

Like depression and anxiety, the Margolis and Thomas (1980) Narcissism Scale recorded maladjustment. Factor analysis of narcissism measures in the West has pointed toward two types of narcissistic self-functioning (Wink, 1991). Overt narcissism involves a grandiose and exhibitionist form of dysfunction that correlates positively with self-esteem. Covert narcissism reflects, instead, a vulnerability and hypersensitivity in response to others and correlates negatively with self-esteem. As Honeycutt, Pence, and Gearhart (2013) recently pointed out, the validity of this distinction is the subject of current debate (Brown, Budzek, & Tamborski, 2009; Campbell & Miller, 2011; but the Margolis and Thomas scale nevertheless correlates negatively with self-esteem in Iran and thus appears to record covert narcissism (Ghorbani, Watson, et al., 2010).

Narcissism seemed especially germane to understandings of empathy and the moral affects. Diminished empathic capacity and a morally problematic interpersonal exploitativeness are symptoms of the narcissistic personality disorder. Indeed, narcissism in the West correlates negatively with other-oriented empathy and positively with empathic distress (e.g., Watson, Little, Sawrie, & Biderman, 1992) and also predicts greater shame and lower guilt (Gramzow & Tangney, 1992). In short, the hypothesis of this investigation is that shame and empathic distress will correlate negatively with integrative self-knowledge and self-esteem and positively with covert narcissism, depression, and anxiety. An opposite pattern of relationships is the expectation for guilt and other-oriented empathy.

Second, use of the Integrative Self-Knowledge Scale also made it possible to explore the psychological dynamics through which moral affects might exert their effects. Research suggests that shame and guilt may impact psychological functioning via influences on processes of self-regulation (e.g., Joireman, 2004; Sheikh & Janoff-Bulman, 2010). Guilt, for instance, presumably serves as an emotional signal that triggers self-regulatory processes, and these self-regulatory processes then engage psychological reactions that help the individual make amends for behavioral transgressions.

Recent investigations have identified integrative self-knowledge as relevant to self-regulation. In university students coping with final exams, for example, integrative self-knowledge predicted lower levels of self-reported perceived stress and physical symptoms and greater vitality (Ghorbani, Cunningham, & Watson, 2010). Another investigation examined autoimmune patients along with other patient and non-patient controls and found that integrative self-knowledge partially mediated the association of self-reported perceived stress

with greater interpersonal problems. This effect more specifically suggested that integrative self-knowledge served as a self-regulatory process that reduced and thus ameliorated the apparent influences of stress (Ghorbani, Mousavi, Watson, & Chen, 2011). Similarly, an examination of cancer and coronary heart disease patients along with non-patient controls revealed that integrative self-knowledge partially mediated the relationships of self-reported perceived stress with anger-anxiety control, use of defense mechanisms, and depression-suppressed anger (Ghorbani, Tahbaz, Watson, & Chen, 2012). Once again, the pattern of these results suggested that integrative self-knowledge ameliorated the disturbances produced by stress.

In short, research has suggested that the self-insight of integrative self-knowledge may be involved in processes of self-regulation. The present study, therefore, tests the possibility that integrative self-knowledge helps explain the beneficial effects of guilt and ameliorates the potential disturbances of shame. In other words, the hypothesis is that integrative self-knowledge will mediate shame and guilt relationships with other variables.

Hypotheses

In summary, the present project responds to previous findings in the West and in Iran to test four broad sets of hypotheses about empathy and moral affects:

First, guilt will correlate positively with other-oriented empathy, whereas shame will display a negative linkage with other-oriented empathy and a positive connection with empathic distress.

Second, other-oriented empathy and guilt will correlate positively with self-esteem and integrative self-knowledge and negatively with covert narcissism, depression, and anxiety. Empathic distress and shame will exhibit an opposite pattern of relationships.

Third, integrative self-knowledge will mediate relationships of moral affects with other variables. Specifically, evidence that integrative self-knowledge ameliorates the problematic influences of shame will appear when integrative self-knowledge diminishes the linkages of shame with lower self-esteem and other-oriented empathy and with higher covert narcissism, empathic distress, depression, and anxiety. Conversely, a role in producing the apparent benefits of guilt will be apparent if integrative self-knowledge explains variance in guilt relationships with higher self-esteem and other-oriented empathy and with lower covert narcissism, empathic distress, depression, and anxiety.

Finally, based upon previous Iranian findings, the expectation is that women will score higher than men on guilt but not on shame. In addition, moral affects will interact with gender in a manner revealing that at least some shame and guilt relationships with other variables will be more apparent in women.

METHOD

Participants

Students from the University of Tehran served as the research participants. The average age of these 116 women, 102 men, and 2 individuals who failed to indicate their gender was 21.9 years ($SD = 3.2$).

Materials

The psychological instruments of this project appeared in a single questionnaire booklet that presented scales in the order in which they are described below. All measures had been developed in or translated into Persian during previous investigations that established their validity for use in Iran (see, e.g., Ghorbani, Watson, et al., 2010; Ghorbani et al., 2008; Ghorbani, Watson, Krauss, Bing, & Davison, 2004). With one exception, all instruments utilized 1-to-5 response options that allowed respondents to indicate their degree of agreement with each statement. The one exception was the narcissism measure which asked participants to choose between a narcissistic (1) and a non-narcissistic (0) response. Statistical procedures scored each measure in terms of the average response per item.

TOSCA

Included in the third version of the Test for Self-Conscious Affect (TOSCA) were 11 negative and 5 positive scenarios to which respondents self-reported their emotional reactions (Tangney & Dearing, 2002). One negative scenario said, for example, "You are driving down the road, and you hit a small animal." Assessment of shame involved reactions to the statement, "You think: 'I'm terrible.'" Guilt appeared in response to the statement, "You'd feel bad that you hadn't been more alert driving down the road." Internal reliabilities for shame ($\alpha = .84$, $M = 2.27$, $SD = 0.59$) and guilt ($\alpha = .76$, $M = 3.61$, $SD = 0.65$) proved to be acceptable for research purposes.

Integrative Self-Knowledge

The Integrative Self-Knowledge Scale ($\alpha = .73$, $M = 3.58$, $SD = 0.60$) used 12 items to assess efforts to integrate past, present, and desired future self-experience into a meaningful whole (Ghorbani et al., 2008). An illustrative item said, "If I need to, I can reflect about myself and clearly understand the feelings and attitudes behind my past behaviors."

Empathy

Within the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (Davis, 1983), seven items each assessed three dimensions of empathy. Empathic concern recorded emotional sympathy for others and appeared in such self-reports as, "I often have tender,

concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me.” Perspective taking measured a cognitive ability to assume the perspective of another and was exemplified in the claim, “I try to look at everybody’s side of a disagreement before I make a decision.” Personal distress expressed an emotional discomfort triggered by the difficulties of others. A representative item said, “When I see someone who badly needs help in an emergency, I go to pieces.” With the present sample, internal reliabilities for empathic concern (.56), perspective taking (.48), and personal distress (.57) were all unacceptably low, and further analyses revealed that the psychometrics of these measures could not be improved through the removal of any items.

In response to these difficulties, a principal axis factor analysis with a varimax rotation reexamined all 21 items from the Interpersonal Reactivity Index. This analysis uncovered seven eigenvalues greater than 1.0; but a scree test, cross-loadings on multiple factors, and factors defined by a trivial number of statements suggested that a two-factor structure offered the most meaningful description of empathy in this sample. With data forced into two factors, six empathic concern and three perspective taking items displayed loadings greater than .30 on the first factor, which therefore defined other-oriented empathy (eigenvalue = 2.52; % variance explained = 12.0%). Five statements of personal distress loaded on a second empathic distress factor (eigenvalue = 1.54; % variance explained = 7.4%). Computation of regression factor scores for these two dimensions resulted in the creation of other-oriented empathy and empathic distress measures that were employed in all subsequent statistical procedures.

Depression and Anxiety

Assessment of dispositional depression ($\alpha = .92$, $M = 2.27$, $SD = 0.82$) and anxiety ($\alpha = .78$, $M = 2.78$, $SD = 0.78$) involved use of Costello and Comrey (1967) scales. Illustrating the 14-item depression measure was the statement, “I feel sad and depressed.” Indicative of the nine expressions of anxiety was the self-report, “I’m a restless and tense person.”

QA: 1967 or 1980?

Covert Narcissism

The Margolis and Thomas (1980) Narcissism Scale used 24 forced-choice items to measure narcissism. In one item, for example, the narcissistic response was, “I find it easy to manipulate people,” in contrast to the non-narcissistic option that “I don’t like it when I find myself manipulating others.” Five items displayed negative or near-zero item-to-total correlations that reduced internal reliability ($\alpha = .58$). Their elimination resulted in a psychometrically sounder measure for use in all statistical procedures ($\alpha = .63$, $M = 0.28$, $SD = 0.17$).

Self-Esteem

The well-established Rosenberg (1965) scale used 10 statements to measure global self-esteem ($\alpha = .62$, $M = 3.74$, $SD = 0.71$). One item said, for instance, "I take a positive attitude toward myself."

Procedure

Student participation in this project was fully voluntary and completely anonymous. All procedures conformed to institutional ethical guidelines for research. Groups of varying size responded to the questionnaire booklet in a classroom setting.

Data analyses proceeded in three basic steps that began with an examination of correlations among measures. Multiple regression procedures then followed the conceptual framework of Baron and Kenny (1986) to determine if integrative self-knowledge mediated the relationships of shame and guilt with other constructs. Finally, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) examined sex differences. MANOVA procedures also evaluated the possibility that the covariance among measures differed across the two sexes and thus that gender might interact with shame and guilt to predict other variables.

RESULTS

As Table 1 most importantly demonstrates, shame correlated positively with empathic distress, and guilt predicted higher levels of both other-oriented empathy and empathic distress. Shame also displayed negative linkages with integrative self-knowledge and self-esteem and positive associations with covert narcissism, depression, and anxiety. Conversely, guilt correlated positively with self-esteem and negatively with covert narcissism and depression. Confirming the beneficial mental health implications of other-oriented empathy were positive relationships with integrative self-knowledge and self-esteem and negative correlations with covert narcissism and depression. Opposite implications appeared in relationships of empathic distress that proved to be negative with integrative self-knowledge and self-esteem and positive with covert narcissism, depression, and anxiety. All other significant associations conformed to expectations. Specifically, the adjustment of integrative self-knowledge and self-esteem correlated positively; the maladjustment of narcissism, depression, and anxiety displayed positive linkages with each other; and inverse connections appeared between these two sets of constructs.

Again, analyses examined whether integrative self-knowledge mediated relationships of moral emotions with other measures. Mediation first requires that the independent variable of a model exhibit a significant association with the mediator (Baron & Kenny, 1986). This result did not appear for guilt ($\beta = .09$, $p = .17$), but it did for shame ($\beta = -.40$, $p < .001$). In addition, shame as the remaining possible

Table 1. Relationships among Measures of Shame, Guilt, Empathy, and Psychological Adjustment

Measures	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
1. Shame	—	.05	-.12	.43***	-.40***	-.36***	.25***	.26***	.25***
2. Guilt		—	.34***	.16*	.09	.17*	-.28***	-.23**	-.04
3. Other-Oriented Empathy			—	-.02	.36***	.27***	-.50***	-.40***	-.12
4. Empathic Distress				—	-.51***	-.32***	.26***	.25***	.48***
5. Integrate Self-Knowledge					—	.48***	-.43***	-.44***	-.54***
6. Self-Esteem						—	-.44***	-.61***	-.44***
7. Covert Narcissism							—	.49***	.27***
8. Depression								—	.45***
9. Anxiety									—

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

independent variable had to predict each potential dependent variable. Results confirmed such outcomes with all other measures, although the linkage with other-oriented empathy was significant only with the one-tailed test justified by the directional hypothesis of this project. After shame predicted each dependent variable on the first step of regression procedures, adding integrative self-knowledge on the second step significantly reduced relationships of shame with empathic distress and self-esteem and completely eliminated its associations with the other dependent variables. In other words, as Table 2 makes clear, integrative self-knowledge partially mediated shame linkages with empathic distress and self-esteem and fully mediated its connections with other-oriented empathy, covert narcissism, depression, and anxiety.

Use of the MANOVA uncovered overall gender differences, Wilks' Lambda = .854, $F(9, 208) = 3.96$, $p < .001$. Table 3 demonstrates that women scored lower on covert narcissism and higher on guilt, both forms of empathy, and self-esteem. Sex differences in the pattern of observed relationships only approached statistical significance, Box's $M = 63.709$, $F(45, 148177.44) = 1.35$, $p = .057$. Given this near significant outcome and previous observations that moral emotions interacted with gender to predict psychological functioning in Iran, multiple regression procedures focused on examining that possibility in the present sample as well. These analyses confirmed that neither shame nor guilt interacted with sex to predict any of the other measures.

DISCUSSION

In the West, evidence linking the affects of shame and guilt with morality includes their associations with empathy (Tangney & Dearing, 2002). Whether findings in the more individualistic West can be observed in more interdependent societies elsewhere is an important research question (Kitayama et al., 1995; Tangney, 2003). Most noteworthy in the present project, therefore, was the demonstration that at least some relationships of moral affects with empathy previously discovered in the West appeared in the presumably more interdependent Muslim cultural context of Iran as well. Specifically, guilt in Iran predicted greater other-oriented empathy, and shame displayed a positive association with empathic distress.

Additional parallels with Western data became obvious when guilt and other-oriented empathy reflected adjustment, and shame and empathic distress predicted maladjustment. Such outcomes became evident in relationships of these measures with integrative self-knowledge, self-esteem, covert narcissism, depression, and anxiety. Perhaps most noteworthy were the results for covert narcissism, because narcissism is defined, in part, by a morally problematic interpersonal exploitativeness and an empathic insensitivity to others (e.g., Watson et al., 1992). Guilt and other-oriented empathy correlated negatively, and shame and empathic distress correlated positively with covert narcissism. Overall, these data supplemented

Table 2. Analysis of Integrative Self-Knowledge (ISK) as Mediator of Shame Relationships with Other Variables

Dependent variable	Step 1		Step 2			Sobel Z
	R ²	β for Shame	ΔR ²	β for Shame	β for ISK	
Other-Oriented Empathy	.01*	-.12*	.16***	.03	.37***	-4.14***
Empathic Distress	.18***	.43***	.14***	.27***	-.40***	4.65***
Self-Esteem	.13***	-.36***	.13***	-.20**	-.40***	-4.50***
Covert Narcissism	.06***	.25***	.13***	.09	-.39***	4.33***
Depression	.07***	.26***	.13***	.10	-.40***	4.42***
Anxiety	.06***	.25***	.23***	.04	-.53***	5.15***

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.

Table 3. Mean (M), Standard Error (SEM), and Analysis of Sex Differences in Moral Emotions, Empathy, and Psychological Adjustment

Measure	Men		Women		F
	M	SEM	M	SEM	
Shame	2.22	0.06	2.29	0.05	0.85
Guilt	3.45	0.06	3.77	0.06	14.25***
Other-Oriented Empathy	-0.14	0.09	0.14	0.08	5.45*
Empathic Distress	-0.15	0.08	0.13	0.08	6.32*
Integrative Self-Knowledge	3.55	0.06	3.61	0.06	0.46
Self-Esteem	3.63	0.07	3.85	0.07	5.17*
Covert Narcissism	0.32	0.02	0.25	0.02	8.37**
Depression	2.32	0.08	2.22	0.08	0.84
Anxiety	2.71	0.08	2.84	0.07	1.38

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

previous Iranian analyses of empathy, narcissism, and moral affects in suggesting that the more individualistic Western and the more interdependent Iranian self may display important functional similarities (Ghorbani, Watson, et al., 2010; Ghorbani et al., in press). QA: Update?

Cultural Differences

Iranian contrasts with previously reported Western data also appeared. Of particular note was the unexpected finding that guilt correlated positively with the maladjustment of empathic distress. In at least some previous Western research, efforts to confirm hypotheses about guilt have sometimes required the use of statistical procedures that control for a positively correlated shame (Tangney & Dearing, 2002). Results for a “shame-free guilt” have then conformed to expectations that failed to appear with the guilt measure alone. Such a possibility could not explain the guilt relationship with empathic distress in this study because guilt and shame did not correlate. The implication, therefore, was that guilt may have negative mental health implications in Iran that are not evident in the West. This possibility seems apparent in at least some Japanese research as well (Hasui et al., 2009; Uji et al., 2011a, 2011b, 2012).

Results also did not confirm the hypothesis that shame would display a negative connection with other-oriented empathy. In this instance, however, the nonsignificant relationship was in the expected direction. Future research with larger samples or with more psychometrically robust measures of empathy might confirm that shame does indeed predict lower other-oriented empathy in Iran.

Relationships of gender with moral affects may also differ in Iran. In the West, women score higher on both shame and guilt (Tangney & Dearing, 2002), but in this and in a previous Iranian study (Ghorbani et al., in press), women scored higher only on guilt. This replicated effect, therefore, appeared to point toward a substantive cross-cultural contrast in the gender-related implications of shame. The present data do not make it clear whether this Iranian pattern occurred because men scored higher or women scored lower on shame than in Western societies. Attempts to answer that question will require cross-cultural research that explicitly addresses issues of measurement invariance across samples. QA: Update?

Interpretation of cross-cultural gender differences should remain sensitive to the other results of this project. In parallel with Western data (e.g., Davis, 1983; Jonason, Lyons, Bethell, & Ross, 2013), men scored higher on narcissism, and women exhibited higher levels of both other-oriented empathy and empathic distress. While a previous Iranian study found that moral affects sometimes predict psychological functioning only in women (Ghorbani et al., in press), this investigation failed to observe such outcomes, indicating that the operation of such effects may be limited. In short, attempts to explain why Iranian women failed to score higher on shame should be framed within an awareness that this one cultural difference occurred within the context of the many other similarities. QA: Update?

Moral Affects and Self-Regulation

Shame and guilt presumably affect psychological functioning via influences on processes of self-regulation (e.g., Joireman, 2004; Sheikh & Janoff-Bulman, 2010). In response to previous research (Ghorbani et al., 2010a, 2011, 2012), this study tested the hypothesis that integrative self-knowledge would regulate the psychological consequences of moral affects. Compelling support for that idea came when integrative self-knowledge ameliorated the apparent effects of shame. Specifically, integrative self-knowledge partially mediated shame relationships with empathic distress and self-esteem and fully mediated its linkages with other-oriented empathy, covert narcissism, depression, and anxiety. The implication, therefore, was that the self-insight operationalized by the Integrative Self-Knowledge Scale served as an effective tool in personal efforts to cope with the effects of shame.

The further hypothesis was integrative self-knowledge that would also mediate guilt relationships with other measures. This did not occur, indicating perhaps that integrative self-knowledge simply was not involved in self-regulatory responses to guilt and that other psychological processes must play that role instead. Logic, nevertheless, suggests that integrative self-knowledge should have mediated guilt relationships, and failures to observe such outcomes perhaps pointed toward questions about the TOSCA Guilt Scale. One recent study suggested that this scale records less an emotion and more a motivation to make amends for personal transgressions (Giner-Sorolla, Piazza, & Espinosa, 2011). Motivations presumably come after emotional reactions, and mediation effects might appear with a less ambiguous index of the emotional guilt that presumably precedes motivations to make amends. Future research will need to explore these issues.

Limitations and Conclusions

As with any project, limitations necessitate caution in the interpretation of results. First, university students were not typical of the wider Iranian population. Research using more representative samples will be necessary before confident generalizations can be extended to Iranian society as a whole.

Second, empathy scales displayed unacceptably low internal reliabilities. Factor analysis of these measures led to the use of other-oriented empathy and empathic distress factor scores in an attempt to address this problem. Patterns of relationship with other measures confirmed the basic validity of these factor scores, but they may not have been optimal for exploring the hypotheses of this investigation. As already noted, for example, the expected negative shame relationship with other-oriented empathy might appear with better empathy measures.

Third, this project examined moral affects in Iran in order to test the hypothesis that they would display psychological implications similar to those observed

in the West. Numerous parallels did indeed appear, but cannot be accepted as definitive in absence of a simultaneous examination of Iranian and Western samples. In such a study, stronger confirmation of hypotheses would appear not only with the observation of parallel relationships, but also with the use of measurement invariance procedures to establish the equivalent operationalization of constructs across cultures.

Finally, the correlational nature of these findings means that conclusions cannot be drawn about causality. It cannot be said, for instance, that guilt caused other-oriented empathy or vice versa. Nor do the present findings demonstrate that integrative self-knowledge *caused* a diminishment of the problematic influences of shame. Definitive analysis of questions related to causality will require the use of different research designs.

In conclusion, this investigation most importantly confirmed that the psychological dynamics of empathy and moral affects in the presumably more interdependent Muslim cultural context of Iran display important parallels with those observed in the more individualistic West. Some differences did appear, however. Iranian women did not score higher on shame, and guilt displayed a positive relationship with empathic distress. Also unexpected was the failure of integrative self-knowledge to mediate guilt linkages with other measures. Overall, such results documented the need for additional research into empathy and moral affects in Iran and elsewhere.

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