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**ASSESSING THE PERCEPTION OF TWO GENERATIONS IN THE
MAINTENANCE OF HONOR KILLING: A CROSS-CULTURAL
PERSPECTIVE**

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ASSESSING THE PERCEPTION OF TWO GENERATIONS IN
THE MAINTENANCE OF HONOR KILLING:
A CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

to the faculty of the

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

of

ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES

at

ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY

New York

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ABSTRACT

ASSESSING THE PERCEPTION OF TWO GENERATIONS IN THE MAINTENANCE OF HONOR KILLING: A CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Litika Sharma

Honor killing is a complex social phenomenon arising from system norms that govern family, social unit, and community relationships in countries where it occurs. It is particularly prevalent in communities or societies where it is ingrained in traditions and heritages. Although it is a global phenomenon (Warraich, 2005) found in many South Asia, the Middle East, Africa, South America, and several European countries (Ali, 2008), there has not been any concerted effort to study the phenomenon more systematically. This proposed study is the first attempt to explore more systematically some of the factors that maintain honor killing. To that end, we are presenting preliminary data where we included two age groups representing two different generations and different geographical locations (e.g., India and the USA, particularly New York) to allow us to examine the extent to which these factors may be impacting views of honor killing. The project focused on the Indian population because of the researcher's familiarity with that community. Such familiarity was expected to bring an important perspective on the issue. The findings are expected to provide a more systematic understanding of this phenomenon that could guide more systematic intervention to ultimately prevent honor killing.

Keywords: Honor killing, social phenomenon, cultural-based behavior, religion-based behavior

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is a pleasure to express my deep sense of thanks and gratitude to my thesis mentor and guide Dr. Rafael A. Javier, Professor, St. John's University. His dedication, keen interest, and overwhelming attitude to help his students in every situation had been solely and mainly responsible for completing my research. His timely advice, meticulous scrutiny, scholarly advice, and scientific approach have helped me greatly to accomplish this task.

I deeply thank Dr. William Chaplin, Coordinator of the General Master's Program and Director of Research at the Psychological Services Center at St. John's University for his keen interest at every stage of my research. His prompt inspirations, timely suggestions with kindness, enthusiasm, and dynamism have enabled me to complete my thesis.

I am eternally grateful to Dean Gregory Gades, Senior Assistant Dean, and Chair of the PreHealth Advisory Committee at St. John's University for his valuable suggestions, keen interest, and constant encouragement in carrying out this research.

I am thankful to Dr. Basilio G. Monteiro, Director, Institute for International Communication at St. John's University, for connecting me with prospective Indian participants living in the United States. His social connections and willingness to assist have been a great help to this research.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank my family and friends who have supported me in multiple ways and have always believed in me. It would not have been possible without their constant encouragement throughout my research period.

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Chapter I

Introduction

An honor killing can only be understood as a complex social phenomenon emerging from system norms that govern family, social unit, and community relationships in countries where this phenomenon operates. It tends to occur in response to behaviors that are thought to bring about dishonor and defiance to the family, communities, and social units. Honor killings represent the most aggressive and salient form of honor violence, in which the family honor is meant to be restored by killing the offending family member. Such a view is anchored in the country's complex social and cultural structures which include intolerance towards pre-marital relationships, inter-caste and inter-religion marriages, widow remarriage, and same sub-caste (in Hindi, '*gotra*') marriage by females. These are deemed shameful deeds and be the leading cause of honor killings in India's northern states (Jain et al., n.d.). This is guided by blind adherence to a cultural expectation that contributes to a mindset that leads them to take the law into their own hands and become violent toward others, including engaging in killing (Brown, 2016). It is particularly present in communities or societies that are very ingrained in traditions and heritages where their members are compelled to follow blindly those traditions and heritages.

There is no clear inherent support for such practice in the Indian Constitution or any other official documents reviewed, and yet justifications for honor killings continue to be passed on from generation to generation. It is our view that such a view is shaped from the formative years of children when a 'Hindu' child is told to not make 'Muslim' friends or an 'Upper-caste' child to maintain distance from 'Lower-castes'. These beliefs are instilled and so deeply rooted that over the years these individuals begin to

believe and form their perceptions accordingly. This is in keeping with findings from many developmental researches that emphasize the role of parents and society in children's cognitive and emotional development (Mahler, 2000; Piaget, 1951). According to Cialdini and Trost (1998), society plays the most important role in proper child development in that parents are the greatest role models who affect the child's values and opinions, the development of the child's personality and the acquisition of their mindset (Cox, 2010).

Although honor killing is a global phenomenon (Warraich, 2005) found in many South Asia, the Middle East, Africa, South America, and several European countries (Ali, 2008), there has not been any concerted effort to study the phenomenon more systematically. It is a serious social problem still in need of a more systematic examination. Each year, it is estimated that there are at least 5,000 honor killings of women and girls (United Nations Population Fund, 2000). However, the given number of honor killings is likely to be inaccurate and to severely underestimate the true prevalence (Chesler, 2010): Statistics about the incidence of honor killings are not systematically collected by countries, and as such, no official national estimates of the prevalence of honor killings exist. In addition, honor killings might often be camouflaged as, for example, suicides, accidents, or disappearances (Wikan, 2008). Therefore, this proposed study is the first attempt, to our knowledge, to explore more systematically some of the factors normally involved in honor killing. To that end, we will include two age groups representing two different generations and different geographical locations (e.g., India and USA, particularly New York) to allow us the examination the extent to which these factors may be impacting the view of honor killing and its consequences differently as a function of these factors. Most specifically, this project aims to gain some understanding of the psyche of Indians who feel or are

compelled to murder an individual, whether an outsider or a family member, to protect what they see as the dignity and honor of their family/community. The project is focusing on the Indian population because of the researcher's familiarity with that community by virtue of coming from that country and being part of the same cultural upbringing. Such familiarity is expected to bring an important perspective on the issue.

Hypotheses Guiding the Present Study

It is clear that honor killings continue to be a serious phenomenon in need of careful empirical examination toward the goal of identifying important factors that can lead to the development of adequate and effective interventions within the cultural contexts where this phenomenon is still an active and real concern. To that end, we are proposing the following hypotheses to guide our project:

1. The older generation will be more likely to endorse more authoritarian/conservative beliefs than the younger generation-This hypothesis is meant to assess the underline belief system that is assumed to guide the endorsement of Honor Killing. It is considered an indirect measure of whether the older generation will have a stronger belief and acceptance of Honor killing than the Younger generation. We also expect that the older generation will be less likely to endorse women's rights as compared to the younger generation.
2. Indian descendants living in the United States (Indian diaspora) will be expected to be less accepting of Honor Killing in comparison to those living in India.
3. Males will be expected to be more accepting of honor killing than Females.

Chapter II

Method

Participants:

The participants in this study included 197 Indians living in different geographical locations which were the United States of America and India. Each of these two groups has 2 age groups which are the ‘Older Generation’ (45-55 years old) and the “Younger Generation (20-30 years old). The following groups had a further sub-group for the gender (which included males and females). Further, 3 responses were eliminated to give a sense that not everyone was accepted, and going over their responses made the researcher believe that they did not understand the statements. Therefore, for this study, there were 194 participants (**N=194**) in total. It was proposed at the beginning that the bifurcation was supposed to be equal for all the groups and sub-groups but this was not the case during data collection. As a result, it kept coming in odd numbers (see Table 1).

Table 1. Bifurcation of participants: Shows the number of participants in each group (N=19)

| Countries | Elder Generation | | Younger Generation | |
|-----------|------------------|---------|--------------------|---------|
| | Males | Females | Males | Females |
| India | 18 | 36 | 26 | 43 |
| USA | 14 | 16 | 14 | 27 |
| Total | 32 | 52 | 40 | 70 |

Measures:

Several measures will be utilized to gather relevant information to address the list of hypotheses listed earlier: The Lack of Support for Women's Rights is a self-designed questionnaire that aims to gather information about the support women are given in making decisions for their own lives by the other women and men in society. It is a brief questionnaire with 5 statements for which the respondent could choose between 'yes' and 'no'. For example, there is a statement which is "*a daughter should always obey the decisions made by her father*", this will be analyzed through Classical Correlation, ANOVA, and Independent Sample T-Test to understand the inferences between subgroups and lack of support for women's rights scale using the JASP software. It was considered that higher scores imply being unsupportive towards women's rights.

Another measure will be a short version of the Right-Wing Authoritarianism Scale original context (Altemeyer, 1998) initially modified Italian context (Aiello et al., 2004) (commonly known by the acronym as RWA Scale) and used here with additional changes (a 14-item scale) to make it relevant to the sample populations under consideration. We would consider it as an adopted RWA scale. These changes were necessary to facilitate an easier understanding of the different choices to be made by the participants, particularly Hindus in India who many might not relate to items referred to the Catholic Church and the Pope. Similar changes were made with items related to the Government to avoid any reference to political themes that might impact the primary focus of this study. It is a 15-item scale measured using the 9-point Likert-type response scale where 1 is 'very strongly disagree' and 9 is 'very strongly agree'. The sum of individual scores will be taken to analyze the data. Higher scores imply

authoritativeness. Classical Correlation will be used to understand the inferences between subgroups and the RWA scale using the JASP software.

Lastly, the participants will be asked to assess a series of vignettes developed by the researcher depicting several culturally specific scenarios related to attitudes toward honor killings (see Appendix F). In that context each vignette will be followed by a series of questions asking the participants to identify their personal feelings and the scenarios presented by asking '*Do they think the act was justified*'. The vignette technique has been used as an effective method to elicit perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes from responses or comments to the different stories depicting scenarios and situations (Hill, 1997). The current vignettes were developed with a specific reference to the situation of religion, caste, and consequences for the family members. We believe that these short stories will help us understand the core issues of this project, particularly related to helping us assess the participants' judgments and moral standing regarding the different dilemmas. It will also cater to the question of how prevalent it is still seen or heard practicing. All three vignettes will be analyzed separately using the Contingency Tables followed by the Chi-Squared Tests to understand the inferences between the subgroups and vignettes using the JASP software.

Procedure:

Prospective participants will be reached out through community contacts and will also disseminate flyers through social media and circulate the Google Form link on different platforms. All participants are expected to be able to access the survey via their computer, iPad/tablet, or smartphone.

Those interested participants will be given the consent form (see Appendix A) which they will be required to sign before proceeding with the study. This will be

followed by asking the participants to complete questions about the demographics (e.g., age, gender, geographical location, educational background, socioeconomic status, and religion). Once the participants complete the Lack of Support for Women's Rights questionnaire, they will be asked to complete the short version of the Right-Wing Authoritarianism Scale (RWA scale) to assess basic attitudes about social norms. The final task asked of the participants is to respond to a series of questions about a series of vignettes depicting various scenarios related to honor killings. The total time needed to complete all the assessments would be 20-25 minutes. Participants will be debriefed about the study once all these tasks are completed and finalized (see Appendix B).

Chapter III

Results

Our first hypothesis is that *the older generation will be less likely to endorse women's rights as compared to the younger generation*; we also expected that *'the older generation will be more likely to endorse more authoritarian/conservative beliefs than younger generation'*, and that *'Older generation will have a stronger belief and acceptance of Honor killing than the Younger generation'*. To assess this hypothesis, we used the Lack of Support for Women's Rights scale (refer to Table 2, which depicts two age groups indicating the younger and older generation); it was found that younger people endorsed statements that were more supportive of women's right in comparison to older people. In addition, we analyzed findings from the RWA scale using Pearson's correlation. This scale was used to assess authoritarianism among the participants (refer to Table 3). It was found that the younger people endorsed more authoritative statements in comparison to the elder sample, which was contrary to our hypothesis. Further, when we analyzed findings from the three vignettes (based on religion, caste, and consequences for the family members) using the frequency contingency, we found that there was no age effect in either of the three vignettes (refer to tables 4, 5 and 6); this suggests that both age groups endorsed equal experience in hearing about honor killing.

Table 2. T-test on Lack of Support for Women's Rights Scale and the Generations: Independent Sample T-test on the Scale, representing the two generations, where 0 indicates 20-30 years and 1 indicates 45-55 years (N = 194).

Independent Samples T-Test ▼

Independent Samples T-Test

| | t | df | p |
|-----------------------------------|--------|-----|--------|
| Lack of Support for Women's Right | -2.480 | 192 | 0.014* |

Note. Student's t-test.

* Brown-Forsythe test is significant ($p < .05$), suggesting a violation of the equal variance assumption

Descriptives ▼

Group Descriptives ▼

| | Group | N | Mean | SD | SE | Coefficient of variation |
|-----------------------------------|-------|-----|-------|-------|-------|--------------------------|
| Lack of Support for Women's Right | 0 | 110 | 0.518 | 0.843 | 0.080 | 1.627 |
| | 1 | 84 | 0.869 | 1.128 | 0.123 | 1.298 |

Table 3. Correlation on the Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA) Scale, representing different variables and their correlation (N = 194).

Correlation ▼

Pearson's Correlations

| Variable | | RWA | Gender | Location | Age |
|-------------|-------------|-----------|--------|----------|-----|
| 1. RWA | Pearson's r | — | | | |
| | p-value | — | | | |
| 2. Gender | Pearson's r | -0.046 | — | | |
| | p-value | 0.524 | — | | |
| 3. Location | Pearson's r | -0.095 | 0.037 | — | |
| | p-value | 0.189 | 0.613 | — | |
| 4. Age | Pearson's r | -0.338*** | 0.018 | -0.016 | — |
| | p-value | < .001 | 0.806 | 0.824 | — |

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

Table 4. Contingency Analysis for Generations and Vignette 1: Frequency Contingency analysis was used to understand if the two generations were aware of such scenarios taking place in society. Vignette 1, represents the religion-based honor killing. Here, under age 0 indicates 20-30 years and 1 indicates 45-55 years; and under vignette, 0 indicates ‘No’ and 1 indicates ‘Yes’ (N = 194).

| Vignette 1 | | Age | | Total |
|------------|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | | 0 | 1 | |
| 0 | Count | 26.000 | 19.000 | 45.000 |
| | % within column | 23.636 % | 22.619 % | 23.196 % |
| 1 | Count | 84.000 | 65.000 | 149.000 |
| | % within column | 76.364 % | 77.381 % | 76.804 % |
| Total | Count | 110.000 | 84.000 | 194.000 |
| | % within column | 100.000 % | 100.000 % | 100.000 % |

Chi-square= 0.028 and p-value= 0.868

Table 5. Contingency Analysis for Generations and Vignette 2: Frequency Contingency analysis was used to understand if the two generations were aware of such scenarios taking place in society. Vignette 2, represents the caste-based honor killing. Here, under age 0 indicates 20-30 years and 1 indicates 45-55 years; and under vignette, 0 indicates ‘No’ and 1 indicates ‘Yes’ (N = 194).

| Vignette 2 | | Age | | Total |
|------------|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | | 0 | 1 | |
| 0 | Count | 52.000 | 37.000 | 89.000 |
| | % within column | 47.273 % | 44.048 % | 45.876 % |
| 1 | Count | 58.000 | 47.000 | 105.000 |
| | % within column | 52.727 % | 55.952 % | 54.124 % |
| Total | Count | 110.000 | 84.000 | 194.000 |
| | % within column | 100.000 % | 100.000 % | 100.000 % |

Chi-square= 0.200 and p-value=0.655

Table 6. Contingency Analysis for Generations and Vignette 3: Frequency Contingency analysis was used to understand if the two generations were aware of such scenarios taking place in society. Vignette 3, represents the consequences on the family members. Here, under age 0 indicates 20-30 years and 1 indicates 45-55 years; and under vignette, 0 indicates ‘No’ and 1 indicates ‘Yes’ (N = 194).

Contingency Tables

| Vignette 3 | | Age | | Total |
|------------|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | | 0 | 1 | |
| 0 | Count | 56.000 | 38.000 | 94.000 |
| | % within column | 50.909 % | 45.238 % | 48.454 % |
| 1 | Count | 54.000 | 46.000 | 100.000 |
| | % within column | 49.091 % | 54.762 % | 51.546 % |
| Total | Count | 110.000 | 84.000 | 194.000 |
| | % within column | 100.000 % | 100.000 % | 100.000 % |

Chi-square= 0.613 and p-value= 0.434

For the second hypothesis we expected that ‘*Indian descendants living in the United States (Indian diaspora) will be less accepting of Honor Killing in comparison to those living in India*’; to assess this hypothesis we again looked at the Lack of Support for Women’s Right scale which, as indicated earlier, was not meant to directly measure Honor Killing but it does measure the attitude towards the women’s right among the two different geographical locations (Indians living in India and United States of America) (refer to Table 7). It was found that Indian descendants living in the US endorsed being more supportive of women's rights in comparison to Indians living in India. This suggests that those living in the USA endorse statements that show a more supportive attitude to women’s rights; as an extrapolation, such findings may suggest being less supportive of honor killing, although not a direct measure in this scale. Moreover, when analyzing the three vignettes (based on religion, caste, and

consequences for the family members) about their geographical location, we found that people living in India were more likely to endorse religion-based honor killing (almost 87%, see Table 8) more than people living in the USA. Also, it was seen that people living in India were more likely to endorse caste-based honor killing (almost 66%, see Table 9) than people living in the USA. In the vignette looking at the consequences on the family members, we again found that people living in India were more likely to endorse similar scenarios than people living in the USA (almost 60%, see Table 10). Overall, it can be said that findings from vignettes related to honor killing scenarios suggest that honor killings are more prevailing in India as compared to the USA.

Table 7. T-test on Lack of Support for Women's Rights Scale and the Geographical Locations: Independent Sample T-test on the Scale, representing the two geographical locations, where 0 indicates India and 1 indicates USA (N = 194).

Independent Samples T-Test

| Independent Samples T-Test | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|-----|---------------------|
| | t | df | p |
| Lack of Support for Women's Right | 4.171 | 192 | < .001 ^a |

Note. Student's t-test.

^a Brown-Forsythe test is significant ($p < .05$), suggesting a violation of the equal variance assumption

Descriptives

| Group Descriptives | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|-----|-------|-------|-------|--------------------------|
| | Group | N | Mean | SD | SE | Coefficient of variation |
| Lack of Support for Women's Right | 0 | 123 | 0.886 | 1.034 | 0.093 | 1.167 |
| | 1 | 71 | 0.296 | 0.782 | 0.093 | 2.643 |

Table 8. Contingency Analysis for Geographical Locations and Vignette 1: Frequency
Contingency analysis was used to understand the two geographical locations and Vignette 1, which represents the religion-based honor killing. Here, under location 0 indicates India and 1 indicates USA; and under vignette, 0 indicates ‘No’ and 1 indicates ‘Yes’ (N = 194).

Contingency Tables

| Vignette 1 | | Location | | Total |
|------------|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | | 0 | 1 | |
| 0 | Count | 16.000 | 29.000 | 45.000 |
| | % within column | 13.008 % | 40.845 % | 23.196 % |
| 1 | Count | 107.000 | 42.000 | 149.000 |
| | % within column | 86.992 % | 59.155 % | 76.804 % |
| Total | Count | 123.000 | 71.000 | 194.000 |
| | % within column | 100.000 % | 100.000 % | 100.000 % |

Chi-square= 19.580 and p-value<.001

Table 9. Contingency Analysis for Geographical Locations and Vignette 2: Frequency
Contingency analysis was used to understand the two geographical locations and Vignette 2, which represents the caste-based honor killing. Here, under location 0 indicates India and 1 indicates USA; and under vignette, 0 indicates ‘No’ and 1 indicates ‘Yes’ (N = 194).

Contingency Tables

| Vignette 2 | | Location | | Total |
|------------|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | | 0 | 1 | |
| 0 | Count | 42.000 | 47.000 | 89.000 |
| | % within column | 34.146 % | 66.197 % | 45.876 % |
| 1 | Count | 81.000 | 24.000 | 105.000 |
| | % within column | 65.854 % | 33.803 % | 54.124 % |
| Total | Count | 123.000 | 71.000 | 194.000 |
| | % within column | 100.000 % | 100.000 % | 100.000 % |

Chi-square= 18.624 and p-value<.001

Table 10. Contingency Analysis for Geographical Locations and Vignette 3: Frequency Contingency analysis was used to understand the two geographical locations and Vignette 3, which represents the consequences on the family members. Here, under location 0 indicates India and 1 indicates USA; and under vignette, 0 indicates ‘No’ and 1 indicates ‘Yes’ (N = 194).

| Vignette 3 | | Location | | Total |
|------------|-----------------|----------|----------|----------|
| | | 0 | 1 | |
| 0 | Count | 49.000 | 45.000 | 94.000 |
| | % within column | 39.837% | 63.380% | 48.454% |
| 1 | Count | 74.000 | 26.000 | 100.000 |
| | % within column | 60.163% | 36.620% | 51.546% |
| Total | Count | 123.000 | 71.000 | 194.000 |
| | % within column | 100.000% | 100.000% | 100.000% |

Chi-square= 9.990 and p-value= 0.002

For the third hypothesis we expected that ‘*Males will be more accepting towards honor killing than Females*’; to assess this hypothesis we relooked at the Lack of Support for Women’s Right scale which was not directly measuring Honor Killing but it does measure the attitude towards the women’s right among the gender (specifically, male and female) (refer to Table 11). The data depicts that women (regardless of their age and geographical location) endorsed statements that were more supportive of women’s rights in comparison to men in general. Further, findings from the three vignettes that focused on religion, caste, and consequences for family members in this regard, suggest no gender effect in either of the vignettes (refer to Tables 12, 13, and 14).

Table 11. T-test on Lack of Support for Women’s Rights Scale and the Gender: Independent Sample T-test on the Scale, representing the gender, where 0 indicates Females and 1 indicates Males (N = 194).

Independent Samples T-Test

| Independent Samples T-Test | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------|-----|--------|
| | t | df | p |
| Lack of Support for Women's Right | -2.395 | 192 | 0.018* |

Note. Student's t-test.

* Brown-Forsythe test is significant ($p < .05$), suggesting a violation of the equal variance assumption

Descriptives

| Group Descriptives | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|-----|-------|-------|-------|--------------------------|
| | Group | N | Mean | SD | SE | Coefficient of variation |
| Lack of Support for Women's Right | 0 | 122 | 0.541 | 0.864 | 0.078 | 1.597 |
| | 1 | 72 | 0.889 | 1.145 | 0.135 | 1.288 |

Table 12. Contingency Analysis for Gender and Vignette 1: Frequency Contingency analysis was used to understand from the viewpoint of gender and Vignette 1, which represents the religion-based honor killing. Here, under gender 0 indicates females and 1 indicates males; and under vignette, 0 indicates ‘No’ and 1 indicates ‘Yes’ (N = 194).

Contingency Tables

| Vignette 1 | | Gender | | Total |
|------------|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | | 0 | 1 | |
| 0 | Count | 23.000 | 22.000 | 45.000 |
| | % within column | 18.852 % | 30.556 % | 23.196 % |
| 1 | Count | 99.000 | 50.000 | 149.000 |
| | % within column | 81.148 % | 69.444 % | 76.804 % |
| Total | Count | 122.000 | 72.000 | 194.000 |
| | % within column | 100.000 % | 100.000 % | 100.000 % |

Chi-square= 3.481 and p-value= 0.062

Table 13. Contingency Analysis for Gender and Vignette 2: Frequency Contingency analysis was used to understand from the viewpoint of gender and Vignette 2, which represents the caste-based honor killing. Here, under gender 0 indicates females and 1 indicates males; and under vignette, 0 indicates ‘No’ and 1 indicates ‘Yes’ (N = 194).

Contingency Tables

| Vignette 2 | | Gender | | Total |
|------------|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | | 0 | 1 | |
| 0 | Count | 56.000 | 33.000 | 89.000 |
| | % within column | 45.902 % | 45.833 % | 45.876 % |
| 1 | Count | 66.000 | 39.000 | 105.000 |
| | % within column | 54.098 % | 54.167 % | 54.124 % |
| Total | Count | 122.000 | 72.000 | 194.000 |
| | % within column | 100.000 % | 100.000 % | 100.000 % |

Chi-square= 8.508×10^{-5} and p-value= 0.993

Table 14. Contingency Analysis for Gender and Vignette 3: Frequency Contingency analysis was used to understand from the viewpoint of gender and Vignette 3, which represents the consequences on the family members. Here, under gender 0 indicates females and 1 indicates males; and under vignette, 0 indicates ‘No’ and 1 indicates ‘Yes’ (N = 194).

Contingency Tables

| Vignette 3 | | Gender | | Total |
|------------|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | | 0 | 1 | |
| 0 | Count | 58.000 | 36.000 | 94.000 |
| | % within column | 47.541 % | 50.000 % | 48.454 % |
| 1 | Count | 64.000 | 36.000 | 100.000 |
| | % within column | 52.459 % | 50.000 % | 51.546 % |
| Total | Count | 122.000 | 72.000 | 194.000 |
| | % within column | 100.000 % | 100.000 % | 100.000 % |

Chi-square= 0.110 and p-value= 0.741

Chapter IV

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to assess our knowledge, explore and investigate more systematically the group differences among the participants of the study for understanding the ideology and attitudes toward honor killing. For that purpose, we looked at this issue from generational, gender, and geographical location contexts.

The results of the study did trend in a predicted direction.

For the *first hypothesis*, using the Lack of Support for Women's Rights scale it was found that younger people endorsed to be more supportive of women's rights in comparison with the older people. It would be the case because older people still believe in the patriarchal system and somewhere consciously or unconsciously the beliefs and mindset do exist. They are considered to be righteous and have a deep connection with their traditional values and norms. Similar research indicates that being older is associated with more strongly endorsing conservative values such as tradition and conformity (Robinson, 2013). They have a fixed mindset where there is no window for acceptance and what 'society' thinks holds more weight than anything else. In other literature, age was also considered a significant variable that can affect the attitudes and perceptions regarding honor killing (Kardam et al., 2005; Nurten & Turan, 2018). Further, it was expected that the younger generation will be against honor killing because they are considered to be more rational in their approach and more likely to question the premise of honor killings instead of blindly accepting it. Literature support can also be seen in Pakistan, where a study explored perceptions of honor-killing attitudes and found that people in their twenties did not justify honor killings as compared with older adults (Shaikh et al., 2015).

However, contrary to our hypothesis, it was found using the RWA scale that younger people endorse higher on the authoritarian scale in comparison to elders. The scale was meant to assess the mindset possibly guiding the view of honor killing. Considering our findings, it is clear that RWA was not a good scale to be used for this kind of assessment. It is a very generic scale (refer to Appendix E) with statements like *'it is good that nowadays young people have greater freedom 'to make their own rules' and to protest against things they don't like'* or *'There is no 'ONE right way' to live life; everybody has to create their way'*. It also included other statements catering to political mindsets and opinions formed towards government authorities which might not be directly related to the thrust of this study. Examples of these statements are the following: *'The majority of those who criticize proper authorities in government and religion only create useless doubts in people's minds'* or *'It is always better to trust the judgment of the proper authorities in government and religion than to listen to the noisy rabble-rousers in our society who are trying to create doubt in people's minds'*.

For the second hypothesis, using the Lack of Support for Women's Rights scale and three vignettes it was found that Indian descendants living in the US endorsed more supportive statements in comparison to Indians living in India; Indians in India were more likely to be aware of such scenarios taking place around them in comparison to Indians living in the USA, respectively. These findings imply that geographical location does play a major role in shaping the perception. It also points to the concept of 'acculturation', described as *"the patterns of cultural and psychological changes that result from the integration of individuals from two or more cultures, which often result in long-term psychological and socio-cultural adaptations between both groups"* (Berry et al., 2006, pages 303–332). The United States is a developed country and more liberal in their thoughts as compared to India, considered a still developing country. A

news release stated that *'Americans attitudes and behaviors have become more liberal overall in the past 50 years and have taken a decidedly liberal tilt since the 1990s, showing a new analysis of public opinion data. For instance, Americans are substantially more liberal on matters of gender, sexuality, race, and personal liberty than they were in the 1970s'* (Communications, 2021). Further, there is a contrast in the ideology of people living in a country having an individualistic approach as compared with people living in a country having a collectivist approach. 'Collectivism'—a cultural orientation that is predominant in East Asia—refers to assessing the self in relation to others (interdependent self-construal) and placing group concerns (e.g., group harmony and cohesion) above personal concerns (e.g., self-enhancement). In contrast, individualism—a cultural orientation that is predominant in Western Europe and North America—refers to assessing the self as separate from others (independent self-construal) and placing individual concerns above those of the group (Gelfand & Triandis, 2012; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In addition, it has been suggested that people from different cultural spheres may use both assessments of the self, which indicates that there will always be two elements to their selves with different probabilities (Triandis, 1989). However, literature does support that people who live in their country of origin may differ from those who emigrated (or whose parents did) in a variety of ways (Taras et al., 2010). Moreover, it was found that social norms are particular to South Asia, but honor killings are not (Doğan, 2011). They have also been documented over the last 20 years in some countries in the Middle East (including Israel), North Africa, South Asia, and more recently, among immigrant communities in the USA, Canada, and Europe (Feldman, 2010; Madek, 2005; Terman, 2010). This indicates that it does happen in other parts of the world including the USA. It is not as prevalent as in South Asian countries like India which is why there is a difference in

their percentages of being aware of such scenarios taking place. To support this, some media reports have noted a spike in honor killings in countries such as India since 2016 (Al Jazeera, 2016). Similarly, it was stated that the “Indian family structure is entirely different from the Western unit”. It has great cohesions and greater continuity. The ties among the member remain more tenuous, subtle, and slender (Ahuja, 2006).

From the vignettes, it was found that participants in both India (around 87%) and the USA (around 59%) reported religion-based honor killing to be more prevalent as compared to caste and consequences on family members. Marriage is a social institution and is considered that it is between two families. The findings indicate that inter-religion marriage holds a strong bias in societies and could be a major reason for this phenomenon. Recent research has mentioned that “*Indian families are not ready to accept the inter-religion marriage and it is okay to kill and spend their life in jail but would not tolerate their children marrying outside their religion*” (Mangdhana et al., 2022).

For the *last hypothesis*, it was found that the Lack of Support for Women's Right scale had statistically significant analysis stating that women endorsing were more supportive of women's rights in comparison to men regardless of their age and geographical location. Women relate to other women empathetically and would be in favor of their justice whereas men are expected to display their masculine virtues which are dominance, power, and control. ‘*You are the man of the house*’ is being passed over the years which is considered a seemingly harmless narrative pushed upon young boys from their formative years to boost their masculinity (Al Qahtani et al., 2022). Another study conducted in Peshawar, Pakistan explored the attitudes towards honor killing-related scenarios, and results indicated that, compared with women, men have more favorable attitudes towards honor killing (Rahim et al., 2016). Recent research has

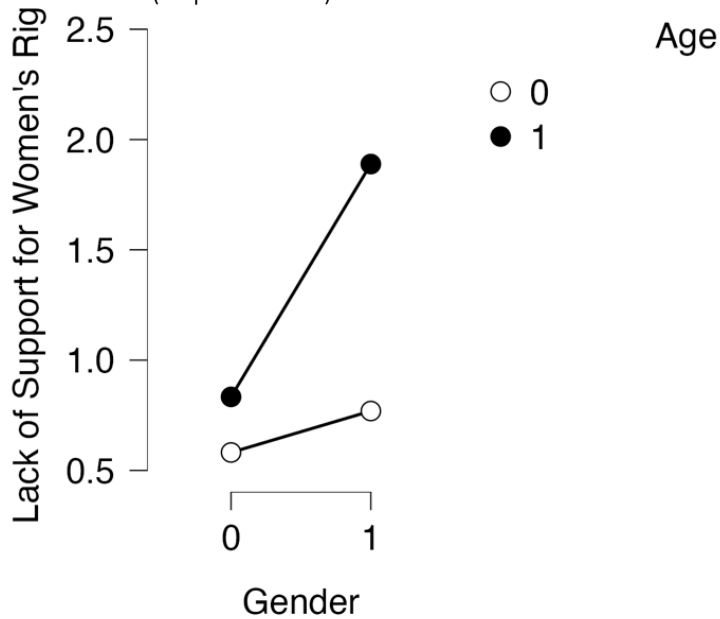
indeed found that the patriarchal society has been passing over the same agenda of guarding the female honor—represented by her sexual virginity—among males generation after generation (Gorar, 2021). However, on the contrary, previous studies have suggested that women might endorse violence to build their and their families' reputations by conforming to the social expectation that women should be loyal, humble, and submissive (Mosquera et al., 2002; Vandello & Cohen, 2003).

Also, age and gender have an interesting relationship from the findings of Lack of Support for Women's Rights (refer to Figure 1). It can be seen in the descriptive plots that in India, the older generation (specifically, men) endorsed being less supportive of women's rights in comparison to women. Whereas there is not much of a difference. However, the younger generation living in the US (specifically, men) endorsed being less supportive than women whereas, the effect is the opposite for older Indians living in the US which means that men are more supportive than women. This implies that age has the opposite effect on gender. This area is not yet explored from the research point of view and has no research to support these findings however, the research examines a cohort of aging adults in the USA as they age from their 50s into their mid-60s and it was found that the gender gap is likely to vary across the course of life. At retirement, men's need or desire to reorient their time toward other meaningful activities may be greater than for women because they invested so heavily in paid work earlier in life (Kahn et al., 2011).

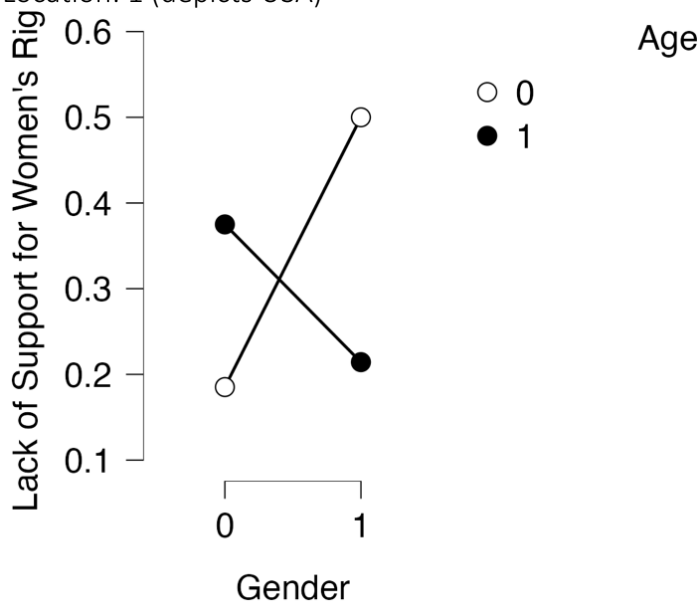
Figure 1. Descriptive plots on the Lack of Support for Women's Rights Scale: represents the two geographical locations, where the first part's location- 0 indicates India, and the second part- 1 indicates the USA. Both the parts, depict age (0 indicates 20-30 years and 1 indicates 45-55years) and gender (0 indicates females and 1 indicates males) (N = 194).

Descriptive plots

Location: 0 (depicts India)



Location: 1 (depicts USA)



The study was conducted by keeping the ethical consideration in mind, despite this there were many inherent limitations. Though the results were statistically significant,

more, and better scales should be used to assess this serious phenomenon. The Lack of Support for Women's Right scale was a self-designed questionnaire devised by the researcher for the sole purpose of this research but its reliability and validity need to be measured. As discussed earlier, RWA was a generic scale that could measure an authoritarian trait for other studies but was not a good idea to include it to assess the cross-cultural perspectives and understand the social dilemma. To elaborate, because our data consisted of the sample from cross-cultural tapping two different geographical locations coming from the same origin which is being 'Indian'. Hence, to provide stronger evidence the research should be complemented with other study designs for the in-depth analysis such as longitudinal, experimental methods in which different religious/ caste/ class beliefs, level of education, and rural vs. urban aspects should be the core.

To highlight, a takeaway from this study will be that "nobody" responded 'yes' to any of the three vignettes when they were asked, '*Was the act justified in your opinion?*' This implies that regardless of the age group, geographical location and gender nobody thinks that the idea of killing someone on the grounds of social and cultural norms is justified. It was interesting to find that despite having so many constituents their ideology was in sync. Even though this change is not statistically proven. But it does give an insight. The change will take time to get noticed but at least from this research, we know that the change exists.

Future studies could use more operationalization of this study as the current study will give more window to the constituents of their perception, which will be open for interpretation. Perhaps, in the future, researchers should try to measure the actual behavior using qualitative analysis to closely study this phenomenon. We did have time constraints while collecting the data, less than two months were given to the

respondents to fill out the survey. Larger samples could get more interesting aspects to be explored which can include the perception of those who were born and raised here with the ones who moved to the United States in the last few years.

Chapter V

Conclusion

This research was the first attempt to conduct an empirical study. To the researcher's surprise, even in today's time, phenomena like honor killing persist in different forms around the world. As participants reported hearing or seeing similar instances taking place in their society. Although it was interesting to see that no participants, regardless of their differences, were in favor of the scenarios showcased. However, there was some support for our hypotheses, but this area still needs more in-depth exploration involving more variables in future studies.

Chapter VI

Appendices

Appendix A: Informed Consent



Informed Consent Form St. John's University Department of Psychology

Researcher Name(s): Litika Sharma (litika.sharma21@my.stjohns.edu);

Thesis mentor: Dr. Rafael Art. Javier (javierr@stjohns.edu)

Purpose and Procedures

You have been invited to take part in a research study to learn more about cultural beliefs regarding Honor Killing. This study will be conducted by Litika Sharma under the supervision of her thesis mentor, Dr. Rafael Art. Javier at St. John's University as a part of the Master's Thesis Research. If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire about your background (i.e., age, ethnicity, gender) followed by brief questions for the study.

Time

Participation in this study will involve approximately 25-30 minutes.

Risk and Benefits

We anticipate that participation in this research presents no greater risk than everyday use of the internet. Although you will receive no direct benefits, this research is meant to help us gain further understanding of the factors that may be involved in Honor Killing that could assist us to develop possible interventions.

Remuneration:

No remuneration is being offered for your participation.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality of the research records will be strictly maintained. An abundance of caution is taken by keeping your information anonymous. You will not be asked to provide any identifying information (like, name, address) at any point. To that end, we have set our survey platform to ensure not to record identifying information such as IP

addresses. If we discover any identifying information, such data will be deleted from consideration. Any information obtained during the course of this research will remain confidential and will be used solely for research purposes. Raw data will be stored in the Google Form-protected platform and will be accessed by a password accessible only to the principal investigator.

Your Rights

Participation in this study is voluntary. That means that you may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty by informing the principal investigator Litika Sharma of your decision to withdraw. By completing and submitting the survey, we will consider your official consent to participate in this study.

Contact Information

If there is anything about the study or your participation that is unclear or that you do not understand, or if you have questions or wish to report a research-related problem, you may contact, Litika Sharma at litika.sharma21@my.stjohns.edu, or the faculty supervisor, Dr. Rafael Art. Javier at javierr@stjohns.edu.

For questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB), St. John's University, Dr. Raymond DiGiuseppe, Chair of the IRB digiuser@stjohns.edu 718-990-1955 or Marie Nitopi, IRB Coordinator, nitopim@stjohns.edu 718-990-1440.

Please, print a copy of this consent for your records confirming that you have received a copy of this consent document to keep.

Participant Signature : _____ Date : _____

Investigator Signature : _____ Date : _____

Appendix B: Debriefing Form

Thank you for participating in this research. The purpose of this research was to examine possible factors that might influence the beliefs towards Honor Killing. It is important that you do not disclose any aspect of this investigation and/or purpose to anyone who might participate in this study in the future, as this could affect the results of the study. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, please contact principal investigator Litika Sharma, litika.sharma21@my.stjohns.edu, or the faculty supervisor, Dr. Rafael Art. Javier, javierr@stjohns.edu.

Record keeping-Emergency contact

Any information obtained during the course of this research will remain confidential and will be used solely for research purposes. Although we do not expect any ill effect from your participation, we are providing the following resources if you find yourself experiencing psychological distress for any reason: The SJU Center for Counseling and Consultation: +1-718-990-6384, +1-718-990-6352 (after-hours); Crisis Text Line: Text "START" to 741-741; National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255; In a crisis or emergency, you can also call 911. The participants living in India, can call the 24/7 toll-free helpline number 'Kiran' (1800-599-0019), it was launched by Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Thawarchand Gehlot. The helpline has 13 language options.

Thank you again for your participation.

Appendix C: Demographics

Code _____

Any information obtained in this section will remain confidential and will be used solely for research purposes.

1. Where were you born?
 - ___ India
 - ___ United States of America
 - ___ Others (Please specify)

2. Where do you live?
 - ___ India
 - ___ United States of America

3. How long you've been living in India (in terms of years)
 - Choice from 1 to 10 years

4. How long you've been living in the United States of America (in terms of years)
 - Choice from 1 to 10 years

5. Which age group do you belong to?
 - ___ 20-30yrs
 - ___ 45-55yrs

6. Gender?
 - ___ Male
 - ___ Female
 - ___ Prefer not to say

7. Educational Qualification
 - ___ Never went to school
 - ___ Elementary school
 - ___ Sophomore Degree (till Grade 10)
 - ___ High School Degree (till Grade 12)
 - ___ Undergraduate/ Bachelor's Degree
 - ___ Graduate Degree (Master's level)
 - ___ Doctoral Degree (Ph.D.)
 - ___ Post-doctoral Degree

8. Which level would describe your socio-economic status? (self-appraisal)
 - ___ Lower level/ class
 - ___ Middle level/ class
 - ___ Upper- middle class

- ___ Upper level/ class

9. Religion?

- ___ Buddhism
- ___ Christianity
- ___ Hinduism
- ___ Jainism
- ___ Muslim
- ___ Sikhism
- ___ Other (Please specify) _____

Appendix D: Lack of Support for Women's Right Scale

In this section, there are few statements to answer in the best of your ability and there are no right and wrong answers.

1. A woman should have a right to marry any man she wants even without her family's permission/ approval.
 - ___ Yes
 - ___ No

2. A daughter should always obey the decisions made by her father.
 - ___ Yes
 - ___ No

3. A wife should always obey the decisions made by her husband.
 - ___ Yes
 - ___ No

4. Killing women/ girls in the name of honor is justified?
 - ___ Yes
 - ___ No

5. Killing in the name of honor is justified in some circumstances only.
 - ___ Yes
 - ___ No

Appendix E: Right-Wing Authoritarianism Scale

In this section, there are a few statements, you can choose what best describes you from 1 (very strongly disagree) to 9 (very strongly agree). There are no right and wrong answers.

1. The majority of those who criticize proper authorities in government and religion only create useless doubts in people's minds. - Italian context
2. What our country needs instead of more 'civil rights' is a good stiff dose of law and order. - Original
3. Everyone should have their lifestyle, religious beliefs, and sexual preferences, even if it makes them different from everyone else. - Original
4. Women should have to promise to obey their husbands when they get married. - Original
5. It is good that nowadays young people have greater freedom 'to make their own rules and to protest against things they don't like. - Italian context
6. Gays and lesbians are just as healthy and moral as anybody else. - Original
7. There is no 'ONE right way' to live life; everybody has to create their way. - Original
8. There is nothing wrong with premarital sexual intercourse. - Italian context
9. Homosexuals and feminists should be praised for being brave enough to defy "traditional family values." – Original
10. We should treat protestors and radicals with open arms and open minds since new ideas are the lifeblood of progressive change. - Italian context
11. It is always better to trust the judgment of the proper authorities in government and religion than to listen to the noisy rabble-rousers in our society who are trying to create doubt in people's minds. - Original
12. Our country needs free thinkers who have the courage to defy traditional ways, even if this upsets many people. - Original
13. Our country will be destroyed someday if we do not smash the perversions eating away at our moral fiber and traditional beliefs. - Original
14. The "old-fashioned ways" and the "old-fashioned values" still show the best way to live. - Original

15. A “woman’s place” should be wherever she wants to be. the days when women are submissive to their husbands and social conventions belonged strictly in the past. - Original

Appendix F: Vignettes

In this section, there are 3 different aspects, it is made on fictional grounds and is not intended to harm anyone's feelings. The follow-up questions can be answered to the best of your ability and there are no right or wrong answers for any of the sections.

1. A man named 'ABC' who belongs to a Muslim eloped with a woman named 'XYZ' who was from a Hindu religion and got married. The marriage was not approved by their families. They moved to a different city and after a year of their marriage, they had a child too. XYZ's brother found her where she was living and put her to death along with her baby girl (because that baby had the blood of a Muslim man). He did this because her sister brought disgrace to the family.

Follow-up questions about vignette 1,

1. Was the act justified in your opinion?

Yes

No

2. Are you aware of such scenarios taking place in our society?

Yes

No

2. A 25-year-old woman fell in love with a 26-year-old man, he was a house help (or servant) working at her place. The woman belonged to the 'upper caste' and the man was from a 'scheduled caste background. They both loved each other and were secretly having an affair. The mother of the girl observed that the two of them spend a lot of time together because of this she became suspicious and started keeping a close watch on her daughter. The day she found out about the truth without letting anyone else in the family, she poisoned their food and left

them to die. The mother in her defence said, ‘I took this step to protect the dignity of the family’.

Follow-up questions about vignette 2,

1. Was the act justified in your opinion?
 Yes
 No
2. Are you aware of such scenarios taking place in our society?
 Yes
 No
3. PQR and her brother UVX were Dalits. UVX decided to marry GHI, who belonged to a Hindu family. They both tried convincing their families but in return were locked in their rooms and both were tortured. Somehow, through a mutual friend they conveyed and decided that they will run away and shall never return to their hometown. Finally, they managed to escape. Since, GHI came from a well-off and powerful family, after it came to notice that they eloped they brought in UVX’s family. Everybody in his family had a tough time and warned if they do not find their daughter then they will make their lives miserable to death. Threatening continued along with the hunt went on for a few months. It was bringing too much shame to the family. To take revenge, they pretended to reconcile and went to his sister PQR’s house. However, the get-together ended with stabbing her with the knife in front of her one-year-old son and husband, and she was dead on the spot. Further, they said, ‘You ruined the pride and honor of our family so did we too. Now, it’s equal!’

Follow-up questions about vignette 3,

1. Was the act justified in your opinion?
 Yes

___No

2. Are you aware of such scenarios taking place in our society?

___Yes

___No

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