

I began as an undergraduate research assistant in Dr. Donald Saucier's Social Psychology lab in the summer of 2015. I was soon involved in a research program aimed at developing a thorough conceptualization of the feminine honor construct. This program began when graduate student, Amanda Martens, noticed that though research had provided a relatively thorough understanding of masculine honor there had been limited research on feminine honor. Thus far, in our data analyses, we have observed that there are at least two manifestations of feminine honor. One is the traditional manifestation of feminine honor, wherein a woman can earn an honorable reputation through demonstrating traditional feminine behaviors, such as being a devoted mother, and being chaste. The other is the modern manifestation of feminine honor, wherein a woman can earn an honorable reputation through demonstrating modern feminine behaviors, such as being independent, and pursuing a career. This is particularly interesting because the past social psychological research I was aware of on this topic only defines the construct by the traditional manifestation.

Because of this discrepancy, I became increasingly interested in analyzing the published literature feminine honor from all of the fields that have examined it. I questioned if the modern manifestation had been overlooked previously, or if our data was an anomaly. In order to answer this question we, that is Dr. Saucier, Amanda Martens, and I, decided that I should perform a thorough review and analyses on the past literature on feminine honor. Though the focus would be on the social psychological research, to be thorough I would also examine sociological, anthropological, and feminist studies literature on the topic. My aim would be to critically examine the articles in order to determine why the traditional manifestation had been assumed to be the complete definition of feminine honor. Doing so would require not only taking apart the arguments presented by past authors, but the data they presented, to see if data had been overlooked that may illuminate, or possibly validate, our discovery of the two manifestations.

To begin, I accessed PsycInfo through the K-State Libraries website and searched "feminine honor" in the abstract, and clicked the "peer reviewed" button. Having collected these articles and thumbing through their references to gather additional articles, I still only had a few articles collected. I tried all of the library search tricks I knew of to ensure I was being thorough, but did not come across anything I did not already have.

To rectify this I made an appointment with a librarian. I met with a librarian, and described the task at hand. I left the meeting with a plethora of new techniques. Not the least of which was several new databases, including several non-psychology based ones, such as Annual Reviews, and Diversity Data Base Suite. Possibly most helpful, I learned about proximity optimizer tools. Previously when I had been searching I often found articles that mentioned "feminine" or "honor" but there was no association between the two concepts. Using the proximity optimizer allowed me to narrow down to articles wherein the constructs were associated. Having learned these new techniques I was able to return to my searching.

Following the advice of the librarian, I switched over to Google Scholar and typed in "feminine honor." Though this returned some of the social psychological articles I already had, I found others and many from other fields. When a title looked promising, I would read the abstract thoroughly, and skim through the article. If it more than briefly mentioned feminine honor I saved the article. While using Google Scholar I often could not access the article of interest, I would then go back to PsychInfo or ProQuest and search by the author or year. Often I would then be able to access the article, or request it from interlibrary loan, but when I could not I would try searching by keyword or title. The simple act of trying to find a specific article would occasionally serve the dual purpose of finding other relevant articles. After this, I

expanded the search to the other suggested databases, such as.... When I had exhausted the databases with these terms I began using synonyms for “honor” and “female,” as well as different versions of the words. I eventually expanded the search further by unclicking “peer reviewed,” and allowing for the keywords to be located anywhere in the text rather than just the abstract.

Throughout my search, I examined the articles, not only for mentions of feminine honor, but evaluations of what this construct might mean. I was particularly interested in articles that went deeper than offering a definition to discussing how manifestations of feminine honor are created by or interact with broader systems such as heteronormativity, and patriarchy. Because most examinations of feminine honor are limited to its occurrence in Arabic culture, I was also interested in discussions of whether or not feminine honor is bound to a culture or it transcends cultures. Finally, particularly in regards to the Social Psychological literature, I paid special attention to the reported data to determine if the authors’ conclusions were supported by their data, or if their data may provide evidence for arguments not made within the articles.

Ultimately I found the search process alone, even before analyzing the individual articles, to be very telling of the quality and quantity of research on past research on feminine honor. Even after adding my new search skills in to the process, I found very few articles, from any field, that directly addressed feminine honor. Though this may be seen as somewhat discouraging, because it meant that we have a limited understanding of an important construct, I chose to see it as an opportunity. So often it seems that there are few new frontiers, but here was a topic in desperate need of exploration. With a new inspiration, and a thorough collection of the past literature, I was ready to write.