

Learning to Be Unsung Heroes: Development of Reputation Management in Two Cultures

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The effective management of one's reputation is an important social skill, but little is known about how it develops. This study seeks to bridge the gap by examining how children communicate about their own good deeds, among 7- to 11-year-olds in both China and Canada (total $N = 378$). Participants cleaned a teacher's messy office in her absence, and their responses were observed when the teacher returned. Only the Chinese children showed an age-related increase in modesty by choosing to falsely deny their own good deeds. This modest behavior was uniquely predicted by Chinese children's evaluations of modesty-related lies. The results suggest that culture-specific socialization processes influence the way children communicate with authority figures about prosocial deeds.

The way in which children learn to manage their reputations can have important implications for their social acceptance and for their opportunities to work with others. In the present research, we focused on one challenge children face in managing their reputations: deciding how to communicate about their own good deeds. Such communication poses a dilemma for children because acknowledging one's own good deeds can be useful for making others aware of reputation-enhancing information, but being perceived as trying to call attention to such deeds in order to promote one's own reputation can have negative reputational consequences. The present research examines age-related changes and cultural differences in children's responses to this modesty dilemma.

To date, most developmental research examining this modesty dilemma has addressed children's *reasoning* about possible responses to this dilemma (Banerjee, 2000; Bennett & Yeeles, 1990; Lee, Cameron, Xu, Fu, & Board, 1997; Watling & Banerjee,

2007). This work provides evidence that during the middle childhood years, children become increasingly aware of the potential costs of self-promotion. For example, Banerjee (2000) asked children in the United Kingdom to evaluate the responses of protagonists who had been praised for a skill in front of the class (e.g., for making a good catch). Starting at around age 8, children preferred modest responses to the praise (e.g., "Oh, I was just lucky") to self-enhancing ones (e.g., "Well, that's because I'm really good at basketball"), and justified this preference in terms of the negative social-evaluative implications of making immodest statements. Bennett and Yeeles (1990) found that by age 8, children in the United Kingdom were able to appropriately define self-enhancing tendencies in behavioral terms, but it was not until around age 10 that they could articulate the interpersonal goals of doing so (i.e., that they could understand the reputational implications).

Children's ideas about the appropriateness of emphasizing or de-emphasizing their own accomplishments can vary with the intended audience (Watling & Banerjee, 2007; Yoshida, Kojo, & Kaku, 1982). Watling and Banerjee (2007), like Banerjee (2000), asked children in the United Kingdom not only to evaluate the responses of protagonists who

This work was supported by National Natural Science Foundation of China Grants 31371041 and 31470993; by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada; and by Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Grant HD047290.

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DOI: 10.1111/cdev.12494

had been praised for a skill, but they also manipulated whether the communication was with a classmate or with an adult. For example, Watling and Banerjee described a protagonist who was complimented by a classmate or a teacher for scoring a goal for his team, and gave either a modest response of, "Well, I only got it because my team helped set it up," or a self-enhancing response of, "Of course, I'm the best." They found that modest responses were viewed more favorably with a peer audience than with an adult audience.

Culture can also play a role in how people who talk about their own accomplishments are evaluated by others, with children in East Asia showing a greater appreciation of modesty than those in the West (Fu, Heyman, & Lee, 2011; Fu et al., 2010; Heyman, Itakura, & Lee, 2011). Lee et al. (1997) presented Chinese and Canadian children ages 7–11 with scenarios in which a protagonist does a good deed and is asked about it by a teacher. The protagonist either truthfully acknowledges the deed or falsely denies it. Children from China rated truthful acknowledgments less favorably and denials more favorably as compared to the Canadian children, and these cross-cultural differences were strongest among the older participants. These cultural differences likely result from the role modesty can play in maintaining group harmony (Fu, Lee, Cameron, & Xu, 2001; Miller & Schlenker, 1985; Sun, 1993); consequently, it is emphasized to a greater extent in East Asia where group harmony is highly valued (Bond, Leung, & Wan, 1982; Kanagawa, Cross, & Markus, 2001; Lee, Xu, Fu, Cameron, & Chen, 2001). For example, children in China are explicitly taught to be "unsung heroes" who do good deeds without taking credit for them (Lee & Evans, 2013; Lee et al., 1997).

Cultural effects may also play a role in children's sensitivity to the intended audience of their communication. As noted previously, children in Western cultures sometimes show sensitivity to their audience when they communicate about themselves (Watling & Banerjee, 2007; see also Baumeister & Ilko, 1995, for related findings in adults). However, there is also reason to believe that this type of sensitivity may be stronger in Eastern cultures because the more public an episode of immodest behavior is, the more likely the individual engaging in the behavior will gain a reputation as someone who stands out from the group. Such a reputation threatens the culturally valued qualities of group cohesion and harmony (Lee et al., 1997). There is also evidence of sensitivity to social context in Eastern but not Western cultural contexts (Fu et al.,

2010; Heyman et al., 2011; Kanagawa et al., 2001). For example, Heyman et al. (2011) found that Japanese children judged protagonists who acknowledged their own good in front of all their classmates less favorably than those who did so more privately; in contrast, children from the United States showed no evidence of making such a distinction.

Of primary interest in the present research was examining how the pattern of findings that has been observed in previous research on children's reasoning about the self-promotional dilemma might translate into actual communicative behaviors. We focused on children aged 7–11 because prior research has established clear patterns of age-related change in reasoning about the self-promotional dilemma during this time period. In addition, it is clear that by age 7 children already show a range of behavioral strategies that promote their reputational interests (Engelmann, Herrmann, & Tomasello, 2012; Engelmann, Over, Herrmann, & Tomasello, 2013; Leimgruber, Shaw, Santos, & Olson, 2012; Piazza, Bering, & Ingram, 2011; Ross, Smith, Spielmacher, & Recchia, 2004; Shaw et al., 2014; Stipek, Recchia, & McClintic, 1992; Yoshida et al., 1982; see Tomasello & Vaish, 2013). For example, by age 5 children share more resources with others (Engelmann et al., 2013) and are more likely to flatter individuals who are in a position to reciprocate later than those who are not (Fu & Lee, 2007).

We conducted our research in two cultures: China (Study 1) and Canada (Study 2). We selected these cultures in light of prior findings of cross-cultural differences in reasoning about reputational management in the East and the West (Fu et al., 2001; Lee et al., 1997) as well as differences in the cultural values of modesty and self-enhancement that presumably underlie this pattern of results (Miller, Wang, Sandel, & Cho, 2002; Ng, Pomerantz, & Lam, 2007; Sun, 1993). Of primary interest was how children in China actually communicate about their own good deeds in light of the strong cultural emphasis on modesty. We also included a Western comparison sample as a means of gaining insight into the cultural specificity of any effects that might be observed in China.

To address our primary research question we developed a new paradigm to examine how children behave in response to the modesty dilemma. In this paradigm, participants were prompted to perform a standardized good deed in their own school that involved helping a teacher, and were later given opportunities to communicate about that deed. The primary question was whether children

would show modesty by falsely denying having done it when asked.

We also tested how the social context in which communication occurs affects behavior by including two conditions: an individual condition, in which the audience was a teacher who entered the room alone, and a group condition, in which the audience was a teacher who entered the room along with five students from a different class at the same school. On the basis of prior research examining children's moral reasoning, we expected that any modest responses we would observe in China would be amplified in the group condition (Fu et al., 2010; Heyman et al., 2011).

A final goal of the research was to examine the relation between children's moral reasoning about self-promotional or modest communicative acts, and their actual behavior with reference to disclosing or concealing their good deeds. The extent to which moral reasoning might underlie moral behavior, and the reasons for findings that suggest a disconnect between the two, have been the subject of long-standing debate (Blasi, 1980; Krebs & Denton, 2005).

Although associations between moral reasoning and behavior have not been examined with reference to modesty-related behavior, such as lying to avoid talking about one's own good deeds, they have been addressed with reference to other types of lying (Fu, Evans, Wang, & Lee, 2008; Talwar, Lee, Bala, & Lindsay, 2002; Xu, Bao, Fu, Talwar, & Lee, 2010). This work suggests that the link between moral reasoning and actual lying behavior varies depending on the type of lie in question. With regard to lying to conceal one's own transgression, no significant relation between moral reasoning and action has been found among children in the East or the West (see Lee, 2013; Lee & Evans, 2013). However, a clear relation between moral evaluation and moral behavior has been found regarding prosocial lying to be polite (Xu et al., 2010), and prosocial lying to protect one's group (Fu et al., 2008). For example, Xu et al. (2010) found that Chinese children who held favorable views of white lie telling were more likely to tell white lies when given the opportunity to do so (i.e., by falsely claiming to like an undesirable gift when asked about it by the giver). In the present study, we asked participants to reason about moral scenarios in addition to assessing their behavior in order to examine whether any age-related changes in behavior that we observed could be understood with reference to children's changing ideas about how people should communicate about themselves. We predicted that

as long as there is a strong cultural emphasis on modesty, the extent to which children endorse this value should predict their actual behavior.

Study 1

Method

Participants

Participants were 250 elementary school children (129 boys) from public schools in an eastern city in China. This included a group of second graders ($N = 80$, $M = 7.74$ years, $SD = 0.41$), a group of fourth graders ($N = 80$, $M = 9.95$ years, $SD = 0.40$), and a group of sixth graders ($N = 90$, $M = 11.98$ years, $SD = 0.44$). The sample was 100% Han Chinese from working-class and middle-class families, and the average parental education level was high school graduate. Children lived in high-density residential neighborhoods with families from all walks of life. They attended the neighborhood elementary schools from where we recruited the children.

Procedure

Before starting the main part of the experiment, all participants were required to provide oral consent in order to participate. After doing so, they responded to a set of questions about themselves. Specifically, each participant reported his or her name, birth date, grade, and teacher.

Behavior task. We used a novel *messy office* paradigm to create a situation in which children must decide whether to disclose or conceal a good deed. In this paradigm, an experimenter saw participants individually at their school under the pretext of giving them a cognitive test. The experimenter led the participant into a teacher's office. The office was staged previously with crumpled papers strewn on the floor in an otherwise well-organized office. The experimenter commented on the messiness of the room and on how nice it would be if someone cleaned it up (e.g., "I sure wish someone would help me clean up this room. It would be so nice if this mess is cleaned"). The experimenter continued hinting in this way until the participant actually cleaned up the room. After the participant finished, the experimenter thanked the child for his or her help, and commented that the child had done a good deed. Then the experimenter left, explaining that she needed to get something from her car that she had forgotten. While the experimenter was

away a teacher (a confederate, who was an actual teacher at the school) appeared and claimed to be the owner of the messy office, either alone (in the individual condition) or accompanied by five students, also confederates from the school, who silently observed the participant's interaction with the teacher (in the group condition).

In both conditions the teacher interacted with the participant in the same way. She began by apologizing for the messiness of the office by saying, "I am sorry for my messy office," but in mid-sentence she expressed delighted surprise in her voice tone as she said, "Oh. Someone has helped me by cleaning up my office!" She then said, "I wonder who helped clean it up for me," and paused to give the participant a chance to bring his or her good deeds without being asked. If children did not spontaneously take the credit for cleaning up the office, the teacher asked the participant, "Do you know who cleaned up my office for me?" If the participant still did not take the credit for cleaning up the office, she asked, "Did you clean up my office for me?" This gave participants an opportunity to show modesty by denying having done it.

Reasoning task. In addition to the primary behavioral measure described earlier, participants were read stories and asked to evaluate story characters who behaved modestly and story characters who behaved immodestly to examine whether these evaluations would be predictive of their behavior. The two key stories were taken from the social condition in Lee et al. (1997), in which protagonists were depicted as having done a good deed (e.g., secretly giving money to a classmate who either lost money for a class trip or lost lunch money). Next, a teacher directly asked the protagonist whether he or she knew who had done the good deed. The protagonist then responded with either an immodest truth (i.e., "I did it" for the immodest truth story) or a modest lie (i.e., "I did not do it" for the modest lie story).

An example scenario follows:

Here is Kelly. Kelly knew that her friend, Anne, had lost her money for the class trip and now could not go on the trip with the rest of her class. When Anne hung up her coat, Kelly secretly put some of her own money in Anne's pocket so Anne could go on the trip.

So Kelly left the money for Anne, and when Anne found the money and told her teacher, the teacher said to the class, "Anne just told me that someone

has given her money so she can now go on the trip. "The teacher then asked Kelly, "Do you know who left the money for Anne?" Kelly said to her teacher, "I did not do it." Participants rated each protagonist's response on a 7-point scale they had been trained to use. The scale ranged from "very very bad" (-3) to "very very good" (+3).

For comparison purposes, participants were also read two control stories in which a protagonist commits a transgression (e.g., pushing a classmate to the ground and making the classmate cry) and either lies about it (the transgression lie story) or tells the truth about it (the transgression truth story). Appendix S1 shows a complete list of the stories that were used.

Participants were randomly assigned to respond to these stories either 2 weeks before the behavioral manipulation or 2 weeks after it.

Results

Preliminary analyses examined the potential role of task order, sex, experimenter identity, and amount of encouragement that was required to make the child clean the room, and we found no significant effects. Consequently, these variables were not included in subsequent analyses.

Behavior Task

Children's modesty-related tendencies were assessed based on whether they denied having cleaned the room after being directly asked by the teacher. Overall, 24.4% of the children showed modesty-related tendencies, including 12.5% of the youngest group, 28.8% of the intermediate group, and 31.1% of the oldest group.

We performed chi-square analyses on children's responses. Children's modesty-related tendencies were stronger in the group condition than in the individual condition, $\chi^2(1, N = 250) = 8.24, p < .004$ (see Figure 1). Looking at the two conditions separately, there were no age differences in modesty-related tendencies in the group condition, but there were age differences in the individual condition, $\chi^2(2, N = 126) = 6.90, p = .032$, with 5% of the children in the youngest age group doing so, as compared with 17.5% of the intermediate group, and 26.1% of the oldest group.

As is generally consistent with the pattern of increased modesty with age, children in the youngest group were more likely to spontaneously report on their own good deed with minimal prompting

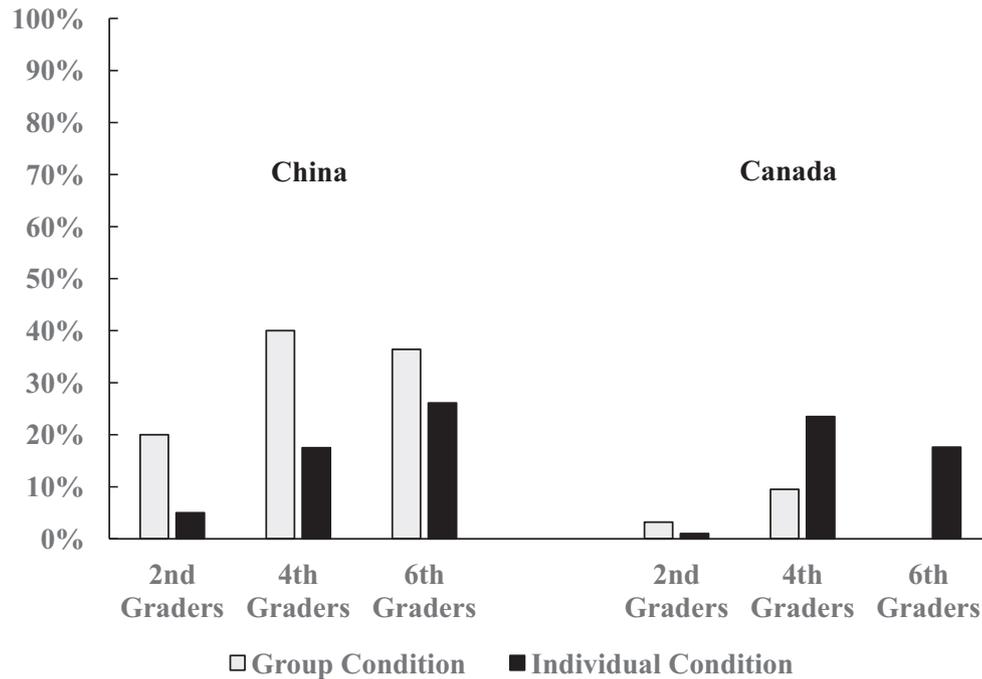


Figure 1. Percentage of children who lied to conceal their own good deeds.

(i.e., after the teacher said, “I wonder who cleaned up my office for me”) than were children in the older groups (51.3% of the youngest group, 30.0% of the intermediate group, and 34.3% of the oldest group). However, when interpreting these numbers it should be noted that they are not independent from our modesty-related tendencies measure above because children who engaged in such spontaneous reporting were not later given an opportunity to lie to be modest.

Reasoning and Behavior

To explore the relation between children’s reasoning and their behavior, a logistic regression was conducted with whether children lied to deny having done the good deed after direct questioning as the predicted variable, and the following variables as predictors: age in years, condition, and children’s moral evaluations of modesty lies, modesty truths, transgression lies, and transgression truths (see Table 1).

The entire model was significant, $\chi^2(df = 6, N = 250) = 24.96, p < .001$, Nagelkerke $R^2 = .15$. As shown in Table 2, the age effect was significant, $Wald(df = 1, N = 250) = 4.37, p = .037$. Odds ratio indicates that with every 1-year increase in age, the odds of children lying to be modest increased by 1.24 times. The condition effect was also significant,

$Wald(df = 1, N = 250) = 5.59, p = .018$. Odds ratio indicates that the odds of children lying to be modest in the group condition were 1.24 times greater than that in the individual condition. Furthermore, among the moral stories, only children’s evaluation of a story character telling a lie to conceal his or her good deeds was significantly and uniquely related to their tendency to lie to be modest, $Wald(df = 1, N = 250) = 6.13, p = .013$. Odds ratio indicates that with every 1-point increase in children’s rating, the odds of children lying to be modest increased by 1.25 times.

Discussion

The primary goal of Study 1 was to systematically examine whether children would acknowledge their own good deeds. We addressed this question in China, where there is a strong emphasis on the character trait of humility, and where children are explicitly socialized not to call attention to their own good deeds. We found that almost one fourth of children went as far as to falsely deny their good deed in an effort to appear modest. Our results also show that the extent to which children show these tendencies varied as a function of both age and context. Specifically, children in the youngest age group showed the lowest level of modesty, and tendencies toward modesty were stronger in the group

Table 1

Mean Ratings of Modest Lies, Transgression Lies, Immodest Truths, and Transgression Truths on a Scale Ranging From "Very Very Bad" (−3) to "Very Very Good" (+3), With Standard Deviations Shown in Parentheses

	Lie		Truth	
	Modest	Transgression	Immodest	Transgression
China				
Second grade	−0.33 (2.55)	−2.51 (1.32)	1.73 (2.08)	1.84 (1.92)
Fourth grade	1.76 (1.93)	−2.70 (1.05)	0.23 (1.84)	2.32 (1.61)
Sixth grade	1.40 (2.04)	−2.96 (0.21)	0.69 (1.65)	2.22 (1.59)
Canada				
Second grade	−1.37 (1.51)	−2.37 (0.99)	2.65 (0.59)	1.90 (1.60)
Fourth grade	−1.46 (1.10)	−2.41 (0.68)	2.23 (0.78)	1.92 (1.51)
Sixth grade	−1.19 (0.92)	−2.36 (0.64)	2.06 (0.75)	2.11 (0.85)

Table 2

Logistic Models

	B	SE	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% CI for Exp(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Logistic regression model of the Chinese data								
Condition	0.795	0.336	5.590	1	0.018	2.215	1.146	4.281
Age	0.216	0.103	4.372	1	0.037	1.241	1.014	1.520
Bad lie	−0.318	0.345	0.850	1	0.357	0.728	0.370	1.431
Good truth	−0.005	0.092	0.002	1	0.961	0.995	0.831	1.193
Bad truth	−0.130	0.097	1.801	1	0.180	0.878	0.727	1.062
Good lie	0.221	0.089	6.125	1	0.013	1.248	1.047	1.487
Constant	−4.793	1.379	12.078	1	0.001	0.008		
Logistic regression model of the Canadian data								
Condition	−1.316	0.733	3.222	1	0.073	0.268	0.064	1.129
Age	0.285	0.233	1.497	1	0.221	1.329	0.843	2.098
Bad lie	−0.202	0.360	0.314	1	0.575	0.817	0.404	1.655
Good truth	−0.170	0.265	0.410	1	0.522	0.844	0.502	1.419
Bad truth	0.018	0.491	0.001	1	0.971	1.018	0.389	2.666
Good lie	0.576	0.405	2.019	1	0.155	1.779	0.804	3.937
Constant	−3.119	2.518	1.534	1	0.215	0.044		
Logistic regression model for the group condition comparing the Chinese and Canadian data								
Age	0.212	0.102	4.358	1	0.037	1.237	1.013	1.509
Country	0.943	0.464	4.136	1	0.042	2.569	1.035	6.376
Constant	−3.826	1.017	14.168	1	0.000	0.022		
Logistic regression model for the individual condition comparing the Chinese and Canadian data								
Age	0.313	0.140	5.019	1	0.025	1.367	1.040	1.798
Country	1.118	0.664	2.836	1	0.092	3.057	0.833	11.225
Constant	−5.951	1.438	17.126	1	0.000	0.003		

condition, where other children were present along with the teacher, than in the individual condition, when only the teacher was present. Additionally, with age children appeared to become less sensitive to whether communication took place in a group versus individual setting. This may be because it requires relatively less public pressure to persuade children in the oldest age group to act modestly.

We also found that children's reasoning about modesty situations was predictive of their behavior in similar situations: Children who rated modest lies more favorably showed a greater tendency to lie to be modest. This pattern of association between reasoning and behavior is similar to what has been observed in studies of children's prosocial lying to be polite (Xu et al., 2010) and to pro-

tect a group they are associated with (Fu et al., 2008), but it contrasts with what has been observed in studies of children's lying to conceal their own transgressions (see Lee, 2013; Lee & Evans, 2013).

Study 2

The goal of Study 2 was to examine the extent to which the patterns of results observed in Study 1 would be specific to a culture that emphasizes the importance of modesty. To examine this issue we conducted the same study in Canada. We predicted that Canadian children would not behave in a modest manner like Chinese children because Canadian children have not been consistently socialized specifically to be an unsung hero and to be modest about their good deeds. Also, we predicted that unlike in China, reasoning would not predict behavior because only when modesty is strongly valued in a particular cultural environment should reasoning be strong enough to guide behavior. Given the fact that modesty is not highly encouraged in the school setting in Canada (Fu et al., 2010; Lee et al., 1997), the linkage between Canadian children's evaluation of modesty-related lies and truths and their actual behavior should be weak or nonexistent.

Method

Participants

Participants were 128 elementary school children (60 boys) from public schools in an eastern city in Canada. This included a group of second graders ($N = 52$, $M = 7.10$, $SD = 0.73$), a group of fourth graders ($N = 39$, $M = 9.02$, $SD = 0.37$), and a group of sixth graders ($N = 36$, $M = 10.74$, $SD = 0.32$). The children were all Caucasians from working-class and middle-class families, with the average parental education level being high school graduate. The children lived in the suburbs of a small industrial city with families from all walks of life. They attended the neighborhood schools from which we recruited them.

Procedure

The procedure used in Study 1 was followed as closely as possible, but it was conducted in English for the Canadian sample.

Results

As in Study 1, preliminary analyses showed no effect of task order, sex, experimenter identity, or amount of encouragement that was required to make the child clean the room, and consequently these variables were not included in subsequent analyses.

Behavior Task

Modesty-related tendencies. Overall, 7.9% of children showed modesty-related tendencies (1.9% of the youngest group, 15.8% of the intermediate group, and 8.1% of the oldest group). As was the case with self-enhancing tendencies, these rates did not differ significantly between the private versus group conditions and the age effect was not significant (see Figure 1).

Notably, at least two thirds of children in all age groups reported on their own good deed without even being directly asked about it (67.7% of the youngest group, 66.7% of the intermediate group, and 70.0% of the oldest group). Although these numbers are not independent from the modesty-related tendencies, they give a sense of how little resistance most Canadian children had to letting people know about their good deed.

Reasoning and Behavior

The same logistic regression analyses that were conducted for Study 1 were again conducted for Study 2 (see Table 1 for means and standard deviations). Unlike the results of Study 1, the entire model was not significant, $\chi^2(df = 6, N = 127) = 6.57$, $p = .362$, Nagelkerke $R^2 = .12$. As shown in Table 2, none of the predictors in the equation was significant.

Comparison Between the Two Studies

We also explored the difference between Chinese children and Canadian children in their tendency to tell modesty lies. Two separate logistic regression analyses were performed for each condition, with modesty lying as the predicted variable and the age in years and country as the predictors. For the group condition, the model was significant, $\chi^2(df = 2, N = 180) = 12.75$, $p = .002$, Nagelkerke $R^2 = .10$. As shown in Table 2, the age effect was significant, $Wald(df = 1, N = 180) = 4.36$, $p = .037$. The country effect was also significant, $Wald(df = 1, N = 180) = 4.14$, $p = .042$. Odds ratio indicates that

the odds of Chinese children lying to be modest were 1.24 times greater than Canadian children in the group condition.

For the individual condition, the model was significant, $\chi^2(df = 2, N = 197) = 13.12, p = .001$, Nagelkerke $R^2 = .12$. As shown in Table 2, the age effect was significant, $Wald(df = 1, N = 197) = 5.02, p = .025$, but the country effect was not significant, $Wald(df = 1, N = 197) = 2.84, p = .092$.

Discussion

The primary goal of Study 2 was to explore the extent to which the pattern of results in Study 1 reflects culturally specific patterns of socialization. We did so by examining the tendencies to demonstrate modesty in North America, where there is not a strong cultural emphasis on modesty. We found that in Canada, children across all age groups were much more likely to engage in self-enhancement by spontaneously taking credit for their good deeds than were their counterparts in China: Overall about 68.1% of Canadian children showed this pattern as compared to 38.4% of their Chinese counterparts. It was also the case that Canadian children were less likely to show modesty by lying about their good deeds. This was seen among 7.9% of the Canadian children as compared to 24.4% of the Chinese children.

Overall, cultural differences in these tendencies were strongest for the oldest age group. The patterns seen in the youngest age groups were comparable, with 67.7% of Canadian children showing self-enhancement as compared to 51.3% of Chinese children, and 1.9% of Canadian children showing modesty as compared to 5% of Chinese children. These findings suggest that cross-cultural differences in these behaviors are minimal or nonexistent at age 7, and become substantially greater over time.

General Discussion

We investigated 7- to 11-year-old children's reputational management strategies by examining their responses to a modesty dilemma in which they had an opportunity to talk about a good deed they had done. This good deed was elicited through a novel messy office paradigm that was conducted in a naturalistic context at the child's own school. Of key interest was whether participants would show modesty by denying having done the good deed after being explicitly asked about it. We

manipulated whether the communication took place in front of a teacher only (i.e., the individual context) or in front of a teacher along with five additional unfamiliar students at the same school (i.e., the group context).

Among the Chinese participants in Study 1 we found that with age, children showed relatively increased levels of modesty, as is consistent with a model of cultural socialization in which effects accumulate over time. We also found effects of the social context of the communication, with children showing relatively lower levels of modesty when only the teacher was present as compared to when the teacher was accompanied by other students. This finding builds on prior research suggesting that children in this age range sometimes show sensitivity to their audience when considering how to present information about themselves (Banerjee, 2002), and that appearing immodest in front of peers can be seen as particularly problematic (Watling & Banerjee, 2007). Demonstrating modesty in the presence of peers is likely to be viewed especially positively in China, given that a major goal of socialization practices is to promote group harmony, and that demonstrating a lack of modesty in the presence of peers threatens harmony (Lee et al., 1997).

We also found that Chinese children's differentiation between the social contexts that were tested was stronger among the youngest children than among the older two groups, with significant age differences seen in the individual condition but not in the group condition. One possible explanation for this pattern of results is that it takes a greater level of social pressure to dissuade younger children from trying to obtain the reputational benefits of publicizing their own prosocial actions than it does for older children.

Additionally, we found higher levels of modest behavior in China than in the Canadian comparison sample when the communication took place in public. These cross-cultural differences were stronger in the older two age groups than in the youngest age group, perhaps resulting from enculturation processes after age 7.

In contrast to the effects of the social context of communication that were observed in China, no such effects were seen in Canada. These findings are generally consistent with prior research suggesting that expectations of modesty are particularly strong in public settings in East Asian cultures (Fu et al., 2010; Heyman et al., 2011; Kanagawa et al., 2001). However, our findings of cross-cultural differences in sensitivity to social context should be

replicated, given that the Canadian sample was somewhat smaller than the Chinese sample. Additionally, it is possible that rather than Chinese children being more sensitive to social context than Canadian children in general, there may simply be cross-cultural differences in the particular social contextual cues that children tend to focus on.

One important question for future research will be to address the extent to which the results of the present study generalize beyond the specific situation that we tested. In the present experiment, we examined a situation in which a good deed was directed at a teacher, and children communicated about it to the teacher. Addressing the question in this way had a number of methodological advantages. It allowed us to more directly compare our results to a body of research examining how children reason about this context, and also allowed for a substantial degree of experimental control (i.e., adult confederates were able to act in a standardized manner to a wide range of possible participant behaviors that would have been difficult to train a child confederate to deal with). However, this way of operationalizing has the limitation that it is not possible to separate out the effects of children's beliefs regarding appropriate behavior toward authority figures. It is also not possible to determine whether students focused on the moral implications of helping versus other considerations (e.g., whether the child might want to avoid the possibility that the teacher might be angry at him or her).

We also tested for possible links between children's reasoning and their behavior. We found that reasoning about modest lying was predictive of children's communication about their own good deeds in China. Specifically, we found that favorable views of modest lies were associated with an increase in modest responses. These results contribute to evidence indicating that children's moral reasoning can sometimes be predictive of their behavior when reasoning and behavior are assessed in similar contexts (Fu et al., 2008; Xu et al., 2010), and they suggest a link between reasoning and behavior regarding modesty that is similar to what has been observed for prosocial lies. Our results also suggest that the age-related behavioral changes we saw in China reflect children's changing ideas about how people should communicate about themselves. Finally, the lack of any relation between moral reasoning and behavior in the Canadian sample suggests that moral reasoning may only be predictive of behavior when a culturally valued attribute is at stake.

It should be noted that in this research, as in all research in which cross-cultural comparisons are made, there are limitations related to the samples. In each country the samples were ethnically homogeneous, and we do not know how the results would generalize to other ethnicities. We also do not know how results might generalize to other parts of each country. For example, our sample in China was from an urban setting, and previous research suggests that whether children in China grow up in rural versus urban environments can have meaningful psychological consequences (Chen, Wang, & Wang, 2009; Fu et al., 2010; Helwig, Yang, Tan, Liu, & Shao, 2011; Zhang & Fuligni, 2006). On the basis of previous rural and urban comparisons (Fu et al., 2010), we would expect to see higher levels of modesty in rural areas, where there tends to be a greater emphasis on traditional Chinese values. An additional limitation is that even though the samples in both countries were quite large, the sample in Canada was not as large as the sample in China.

Another limitation is that we were not able to establish a direct causal link between cultural values and behavior. To do this we would need to experimentally manipulate cultural values and hold everything else constant, which would of course be impossible. In fact, the samples likely differed along many dimensions that could have influenced behavior. One way to further examine this issue will be to assess cultural values within each country and examine how these values relate to behavior (see Fu et al., 2010).

It will be important for future research to examine cultural influences on a range of other reputation management behaviors from a developmental perspective. In the present research, we focused on communication about one's own good deed, but children also face a range of other reputation management dilemmas, such as conflicts between maximizing their own material self-interests and appearing to be fair (Shaw et al., 2014), and decisions about whether to offer more help to others who are in a strong position to reciprocate (Engelmann et al., 2013).

Conclusion

Our results provide evidence that the way children learn to manage their reputation varies as a function of their cultural experience, and this illustrates one way in which cultural values can shape behavior across development. The findings highlight the challenges children face as they learn to

manage the reputational risks and benefits of calling positive attention to themselves, and more broadly, how they learn to coordinate their personal interests with the interests of the group

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Supporting Information

Additional supporting information may be found in the online version of this article at the publisher's website:

Appendix S1. Prosocial Behavior Stories