Forgiveness, Reconciliation, and Shame: Three Key Variables in Reducing School Bullying

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This study examined the relationships between forgiveness, reconciliation, shame and school bullying. The sample consisted of 1,875 Bangladeshi adolescents (60% girls) in grades 7 to 10 (M = 8.28). In a structural equation model, both forgiveness and reconciliation directly predicted less bullying. In addition to the direct effect, an indirect pathway showed reconciliation reduced bullying via adaptive shame management. Shame acknowledgment predicted less bullying whereas shame displacement predicted more in accord with the shame management theory. An alternative model was also tested, which demonstrated that parental forgiveness eroded when children displaced their shame. The nature of the intersection between these two theoretically viable psychological models has implications for both restorative justice theory and practice.

Although most would agree that the process used by restorative justice to reduce reoffending—restoring the relationships between the victim and the wrongdoer—is both socially responsible and justified (e.g., Ministry of Justice of New Zealand, 1996; Umbreit, Coates, & Kalanj, 1994), there is a paucity of empirical research testing the effectiveness of restorative justice principles as a means for reducing crime (Daly, 2003; Strang, 2002). Moreover, the research that has been conducted has occurred mainly in Western countries (e.g., Daly, 2003; Strang, 2002; Umbreit), with a few notable exceptions (e.g., Dinnen, 2001; Yoshida, 2003). The current study, therefore, empirically examines the extent to which principles of restorative justice can act in concert to reduce

wrongdoing (e.g., school bullying) in a naturalistic setting in a sample of students in Bangladesh.

Historically, restorative justice frames an offence to include the perpetrator, direct victim (e.g., person hurt), indirect victim (e.g., perpetrator or victim's family, community), and community of support (Braithwaite, 1989, 2002; Umbreit, 1995). As a consequence, research in this field has focused predominantly on interventions where the victims and the community participate in a process of dealing with offenders and repairing the harm caused by the offender. This process provides each party with an avenue for working through their difficulties in a formal context (e.g., restorative conferencing), but nevertheless with the support of their own community.

Of central interest in this study is exploring the effectiveness of restorative justice principles operating in a less formal context—everyday activities of a family in which parents are faced with school bullying by their children. Previous research suggests that parents are both familiar and comfortable with such principles in a child-rearing context (Braithwaite, 1989; Wachtel, 2000). This approach has the advantage of exploring the dynamics of wrongdoing, restoration of relationships, and shame management in a naturalistic context. Through understanding the process by which relationships are restored between the child and his parent after a hypothetical bullying incident, we will be in a better position to explain how restorative justice principles work to control wrongdoing in broader and more informal contexts like a school or a community or a state.

The Phenomenon of School Bullying

School bullying is most commonly defined as the exposure of a student, repeatedly and over time, to intentional injury or discomfort inflicted by one or more other students (Olweus, 1993; Rigby, 1996). Bullying implies an imbalance in power in which one student is victimized by more powerful other(s) through physical, verbal, and/or psychological assault. Exposure of incidents of bullying and violence in schools is commonplace in countries like the United States , England, and Australia, with cases increasingly being taken to the courts and judges awarding victims' compensation (http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/2100051.stm; http://www.abc.net.au/am/content/2003/s885073.htm).

Since the mid 1980s, extensive research on school bullying has been conducted in Western countries, particularly in Sweden (Olweus, 1984, 1993, 1997), Australia (Rigby, 1994, 1996), the United Kingdom (Smith, 1991), and the United States (Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996). The culmination of this work suggests that children who bully others are more likely to be exposed to punitive disciplinary practices themselves (Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2004b; Shields & Ciccetti, 2001), to be impulsive, dominating, and less empathic (Ahmed, 2001a; Rigby, 1996), and to have difficulties in adjusting to the demands of school life (Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2004a; O'Moore & Hillery, 1991). Because relational difficulties loom large in the

vast majority of accounts of bullying behavior, restorative justice is an intuitively appealing kind of intervention to recommend for such cases. The effectiveness of restorative justice, however, largely depends on the degree to which some key relational parameters can be altered, specifically acknowledgment of wrongdoing, awareness of harm done, willingness to make amends, and offering apology. Up until now, studies from a restorative justice perspective to address school bullying have been rather scarce (Cameron & Thorsborne, 2001).

The Bangladesh Context

Recently, school bullying has received extensive media coverage in Bangladesh (e.g., http://www.isiswomen.org/pub/we/archive/msg00138.html#bully) because of several extreme cases of violence in schools. However, school bullying remains an understudied subject in most Asian countries including Bangladesh (Ahmed, 2001b; Kikkawa, 1987). Basic prevalence data on bullying among Bangladeshi school children have only been made available recently (Ahmed, 2001b), and school intervention programs to deal with the problem are nonexistent. Although bullying in Bangladesh is a bit less prevalent (11%) than in other countries like Australia (13%; Ahmed, 2001b), Canada (15%; Ziegler & Rosenstein-Manner, 1991), and Norway (15%; Olweus, 1984), it poses a serious problem in Bangladeshi schools, which warrants empirically sound prevention plans.

While Western democracies have turned to the courts to send a message about the harm of school bullying, this option is less practicable in the less resource-rich countries of the world. Over the past several decades, there have been growing concerns about the criminal justice system in Bangladesh (e.g., Amnesty International, 2004; World Bank, http://www4.worldbank.org/legal/legop_judicial/ljr_conf_papers/Malik.pdf). Such heightened tension due to the collapse of law and order has been evident in many jurisdictions throughout the world (BBC News, 1999; http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/335727.stm), and moving toward a more restorative approach of justice is one option for providing security for indigenous groups, which are not being supported by Western style justice institutions (Shearing, 2001). The restorative approach of justice is attractive because it seeks to move away from a "catch-me-if-you-can" sensibility to authorities, which administer justice, and instead strengthen self-regulation and the regulation of civil society through empowering the powerless and rebuilding the relationships between the victim and the wrongdoer (for details, see Braithwaite, 2003; Pranis, 2002).

Applying Restorative Principles to Bullying

Clearly, the relationship between the bully and the victim is damaged upon the occurrence of bullying. Victims are often unhappy at school, and are more likely to develop a school phobia, with higher records of days absent (Reid, 1989; Rigby,

1996). Like victims, bullies can also be unhappy and unpopular at school (Boulton & Smith, 1994), but they can rise to a position of social dominance in the school culture through attracting the support of other children, who essentially fear them (Juvonen, Graham, & Schuster, 2003). The most common policy for dealing with such children in extreme circumstances is suspension and expulsion (Ministry of Education, NSW, Australia, May 2001). Parents, in general, are skeptical about the effectiveness of this approach (Braithwaite, Ahmed, Morrison, & Reinhart, 2003). Parents favor a change of culture in which children are taught to care for each other, to recognize their wrongdoing, and to work at ways of making amends. In short, parents want to see the promotion of respectful and responsible relationships among all the parties involved. This is consistent with the philosophy of restorative justice.

There is some evidence from criminology that restorative justice conferencing can heighten the offender's sense of obligation through making amends (Strang, 2002). Moreover, such conferencing has been associated with the offering of forgiveness by the victim (Strang, 2002). Such steps—acknowledging wrongdoing, forgiveness, reconciliation, and making amends—are postulated as being crucial to promoting self-regulation and creating harmony within the community (Braithwaite & Braithwaite, 2001).

If restorative justice is about restoring relationships through forgiveness and reconciliation, restorative justice should curb bullying. The adaptive function of forgiveness and reconciliation in countering stigmatization and the belief that a person will reoffend has frequently been cited in the restorative justice literature (Braithwaite, 1989, 2002; Umbreit, 1995), but empirical evidence linking them to restraint from wrongdoing is limited. The present study, therefore, begins the task of mapping out the role that three key facets of restorative justice play in reducing school bullying. The facets are: forgiveness (measured in terms of being able to put others' grievances behind you), reconciliation (measured in terms of feeling care and support from those who have been harmed), and shame management (measured in terms of acknowledging the harm that has been done, and making amends).

It is of note that this study focuses on perceptions that forgiveness, reconciliation, and shame acknowledgment have occurred through the eyes of the offender. There is no suggestion that an external observer would see things as offenders do. Both perspectives may be important if we are to have a complete picture of restorative justice processes at work. But past research has shown that offenders' perceptions are of critical importance in strengthening self-regulatory capacities (e.g., Maruna, 2001), and hence, this article focuses on offenders' perceptions.

Forgiveness

Forgiveness is a positive response (Enright & the Human Development Study Group, 1991; North, 1987) from victims toward the offender for the wrongdoing. It represents a benevolent feeling or attitude toward the offender as a person. It

is an expression of mercy in that the victim lets go of any grudge or resentment toward the offender. But it offers the wrongdoer something more. Forgiveness offers a particular form of kindness to the wrongdoer (Galaway & Hudson, 1996) conveying that the victim holds hope that the offender can be trusted again in the future (Tutu, 1999). Through reestablishing a relationship of trust and hope, this article purports that the offender will assume an attitude of responsibility for the well-being of the victim in the future.

In reintegrative shaming theory, Braithwaite (1989) specifies the importance of an expression of forgiveness in accepting the wrongdoer back into the community. By experiencing forgiveness, the wrongdoer is able to feel that others think of him more compassionately and empathically, and that they do not hold resentment against him. A similar notion can be seen in the developmental literature where part of authoritative parenting is forgiving a child for a transgression, and providing support for the child to learn from his mistakes. Research has shown that authoritative parenting, whereby children are listened to and trusted as reasonable actors and are given constructive criticism, is more effective in eliciting internally motivated compliance (Zahn-Waxler, Radke-Yarrow, & King, 1979), empathy (Hetherington & Clingempeel, 1992), and capacity to accept responsibility for one's transgressions (Gunnoe, Hetherington, & Reiss, 1999).

Forgiveness has been regarded as the most powerful weapon available to end the cycle of violence (Tutu, 1999, 2001). Frequently, it has been cited as an effective way of reducing many destructive behaviors including harmful psychological defenses (Harris, 2001; Todd, 1985). Researchers across a number of different domains have focused on offering forgiveness (McCullough, Exline, & Baumeister, 1998; McCullough, Pargament, & Thoresen, 2000; Worthington, 1998), exploring how forgiveness affects their own personal and social life. Relatively little work to date has explored receiving forgiveness (Gassin, 1998), or more precisely, experiencing the feeling of forgiveness, and its role in developing an individual's moral engagement with the community.

It is, therefore, hypothesized that perceived forgiveness will directly affect bullying by reducing its occurrence (forgiveness hypothesis). A mediational link is also expected between forgiveness and bullying via the shame management variables. Perceived forgiveness is expected to foster adaptive shame management skills (high shame acknowledgment but low shame displacement), which in turn, will reduce the risk of engaging in bullying (Mediational hypothesis 1: Forgiveness → adaptive shame management → low bullying hypothesis).

Reconciliation

Reconciliation (the term is borrowed from Truth and Reconciliation Commissions in Latin America and Africa) is understood as the extension of love, compassion, and care from the victim(s) to the wrongdoer to reaffirm and restore the relationship between them. It reflects an emotional reattachment based on a

"mutual understanding." Mutual understanding means that the wrongdoer makes a commitment (either real or symbolic) to refrain from wrongdoing and to behave as a good citizen under circumstances in which he is reconciled with others. If this mutual understanding between the wrongdoer and the victim is established, the wrongdoer is likely to feel secure and safe, make a commitment about his behavior, and demonstrate self-regulated compliance.

While the context for this use of reconciliation is unique, reconciliation as the extension of emotional warmth has parallels in other more familiar literatures. For example, negative sanctions in response to wrongdoing invariably trigger social exclusion from the mainstream, and increase association with deviant subcultures for reasons related to the individual's need to protect his sense of belonging and self-respect (Cohen, 1955). In contrast, the affirmation of positive bonds with important social institutions (e.g., parents, schools) reduces involvement in criminal activities (Hirschi, 1969). The present work is based on the assumption that human beings are motivated to form stable positive relationships with significant others with whom they can reduce feelings of self-rejection, and affirm self-worth. The argument more generally is that if people have a need to belong and are embraced by significant others, such inclusion should elicit behaviors that conform to the expectation of the group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

The significance of reconciliation between parents and their children is that parents are usually the authority figures who provide a secure and caring learning environment. Parents provide children with the "scaffolding" required for social learning and self-regulation (Bruner, 1966; McGeer, 2004). Children whose parents do not provide adequate "scaffolding" make it more difficult for children to acknowledge shame and learn self-regulation. A similar idea is contained in the concept of receptive compliance (Maccoby & Martin, 1983), which arose out of the attachment literature (Bowlby, 1969).

From this body of research, it is expected that reconciliation (i.e., emotional reattachment) will directly affect bullying by reducing its occurrence (reconciliation hypothesis). A mediational link between reconciliation and bullying through shame management variables is also expected. The specific hypothesis is that perceived reconciliation will foster adaptive shame management skills (high shame acknowledgment but low shame displacement), which in turn, will reduce the risk of engaging in bullying (Mediational hypothesis 2: Reconciliation → adaptive shame management → low bullying hypothesis).

Shame Management

From the restorative justice perspective, individuals who are unable to feel shame for harming others will be at greater risk of engaging in wrongdoing in the future. This idea has been developed through empirical work, which has delineated different styles of shame management: shame acknowledgment and shame displacement (see Ahmed, 2001a; Braithwaite et al., 2003). Shame

acknowledgment is an admission that what has happened is wrong and shameful, and involves expressing remorse, while shame displacement takes the form of blaming others for the wrong and expressing anger toward them. According to the shame management approach (see Ahmed, Harris, Braithwaite, & Braithwaite, 2001), individuals who acknowledge shame and accept personal responsibility over wrongdoing will refrain from further wrongdoing because they have considered the harmful consequences and made amends to avoid them in the future. In contrast, dismissing shame feelings through blaming others will amplify wrongdoing because personal action and consequences are dissociated. This argument has received empirical support from a number of Western studies, which have shown that shame acknowledgment is associated with lower levels of bullying, and shame displacement (anger, blaming and other externalizing reactions) is associated with higher levels of bullying (Ahmed, 2001a; Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2004b; Bessant & Watts, 1995; Braithwaite et al., 2003; Morrison, this issue). Further support has been obtained from a more recent study (Ahmed, 2006) that has demonstrated long-term significance of shame management skills in maintaining bullying status.

Shame management plays a central role in the present study. The goal is to find out whether shame management variables act as mediators in the relationship between forgiveness and reconciliation, and bullying. Because perceptions of forgiveness and reconciliation are regarded as experiences that make it easier for individuals to empathize and reconnect with others, it is expected that they will increase an individual's capacity to acknowledge shame without displacement (mediational hypothesis).

How individuals manage shame is conceptualized as a context-dependent phenomenon (Ahmed, 2001a). In support of this proposition, Shin (2003), for example, has found that shame displacement escalates when social disapproval is not expressed in a respectful manner. Yet shame management capacities among children have been shown to be moderately stable over a 3-year time period (Braithwaite et al., 2003). This finding was surprising given that the children in the study had graduated to high school, where they were mixing with different groups of students in different social contexts. One possibility is that more basic developmental or socializing forces are responsible for stability in shame management capacities. For instance, children's shame management skills may continue to be shaped by the use of forgiveness and reconciliation by their parents. What is happening in the school context may be of secondary importance. Thus, shame management variables are expected to have direct effects on bullying (shame management hypothesis) as well as mediating effects between perceptions of parental forgiveness and reconciliation, and bullying (mediational hypothesis).

The Present Study

The present study investigates three key facets of restorative justice in the context of school bullying, namely forgiveness, reconciliation, and shame management.

The importance of these facets has often been addressed in the restorative justice literature, but has been infrequently translated into an empirically testable model.

   In line with restorative justice philosophy, which allows for direct and indirect victims, this study considers the parent of a bully as a victim, albeit indirect, of their child's behavior. Parental forgiveness and reconciliation were focal points in this study because parents are regarded as the most significant others among children's authority figures. The study rests on the proposition that a parental response of forgiveness and reconciliation will assist children in the painful process of acknowledging shame. The child works through their shame knowing that their parents hold hope and trust in their future. In other words, they can change their behavior in the future; they can self-regulate against bullying.

   The hypothesized direct and indirect links between shame management, forgiveness, reconciliation and bullying are represented in Figure 1. Both forgiveness and reconciliation are directly linked with reduced bullying because both variables should strengthen social bonds and thereby social control. Shame management variables are directly linked to bullying: shame acknowledgment will reduce bullying whereas shame displacement will increase bullying. Both forgiveness and reconciliation are linked to adaptive shame management skills—more shame acknowledgment but less shame displacement, and in turn, to bullying.

   These relationships can be expressed as four main hypotheses:

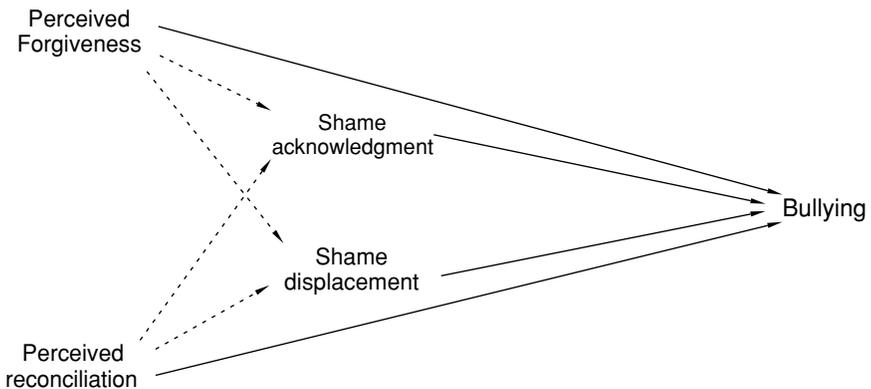*Forgiveness hypothesis*: perceived forgiveness will reduce bullying

Fig. 1. A hypothesized model of forgiveness, reconciliation, shame, and bullying.

Reconciliation hypothesis: perceived reconciliation will reduce bullying

Shame management hypothesis:

1. Shame *acknowledgment* will reduce bullying
2. Shame *displacement* will increase bullying

Mediational hypothesis:

Forgiveness → adaptive shame management → low bullying hypothesis: perceived *forgiveness* will foster adaptive shame management skills (high shame acknowledgment but low shame displacement), which in turn, will reduce bullying

Reconciliation → adaptive shame management → low bullying hypothesis: perceived *reconciliation* will foster adaptive shame management skills (high shame acknowledgment but low shame displacement), which in turn, will reduce bullying

An Alternative Model

There is an alternative perspective on the interrelationships among these key variables that arises from a different theoretical tradition—developmental psychology. Developmental psychologists have demonstrated the ways in which parents and children affect each other's behavior, each adapting and reacting to the demands of the other (Hinde & Stevenson-Hinde, 1988; Kyrios & Prior, 1990). An important insight from this work is that "difficult" children, as opposed to "easy" children, evoke negative reactions from parents, which may worsen the behavioral problems of their children. Parents, in fact, are not without limits on their capacity to either make allowances for or respond constructively to their children's poor behavior.

This study, therefore, tests an alternative mediational model involving the role of shame management in explaining school bullying via perceived forgiveness and reconciliation. The alternative model suggests that adolescents who show maladaptive shame management styles (low acknowledgment but more displacement) may evoke lower levels of parental forgiveness and reconciliation, which in turn, increase the likelihood of bullying peers at school (see Figure 2). Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) will be used with a cross-sectional data set to explore the viability of these models.

Method

Participants

Eighteen hundred and seventy-five students (60% girls) from grades 7 to 10 (mean grade = 8.28) participated in this study. Participants had been recruited from nine coeducational schools, both public and private, located in three school
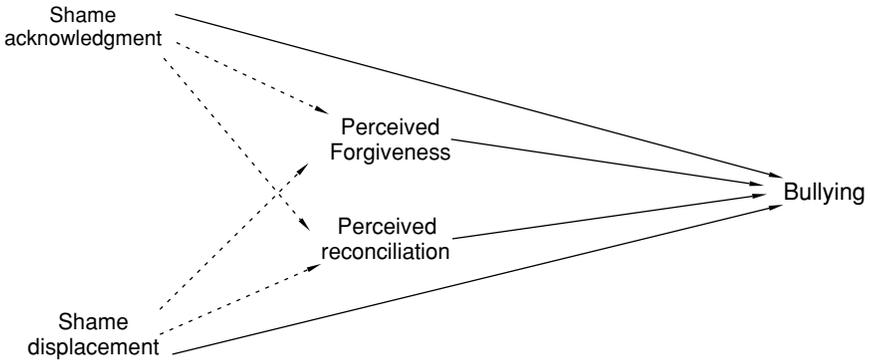
Fig. 2. An alternative model of forgiveness, reconciliation, shame, and bullying.

regions. These regions were targeted on the basis of their representativeness of the socioeconomic diversity of urban and suburban communities.

Demographic information was collected from students' parents using the parent questionnaires that were sent home through the students. Data revealed that the sample came from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. Of the entire sample of parents ($n = 1362$), approximately 26% had high-status positions (e.g., employees who hold supervisory and professional positions), 60% had medium-status positions (e.g., school teachers, public servants, who do not hold supervisory roles, support staff), and 12% had lower-status positions (e.g., garment employees, clerical employees). The people of Bangladesh are ethnically and culturally homogeneous (98% of the population are Bengali and 83% are Muslims), and hence, information was not sought on either ethnic or religious affiliation. The average monthly salary of parents was 40,000 taka (US$ 688.00) ranging from 1,000 taka (US$ 17.00) to 380,000 taka (US$ 6535.00) (for details on sample itself, see Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2005).

Procedure

The Bengali version of the modified "Life at School Survey" (Ahmed, 1996; http://crj.anu.edu.au/school.pubs.html) was administered at the nine schools. All students from grades 7 to 10 were invited to participate in the study. The survey took approximately 30 to 40 minutes to complete during class. The students were told that the purpose of the study was to gain a better understanding of factors that facilitate and impede school bullying. The voluntary nature of the study was emphasized, as was the confidentiality of the data to avoid tendencies to underreport bullying involvements for fear of retaliation.

Previous research (Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996; Rigby, 1996) has documented the validity of self-reported bullying surveys in Western cultures. This was the first

time, to the author's knowledge, that such a large-scale survey of school bullying had been conducted in a non-Western culture.

Measures

Perceived forgiveness. This scale comprised two items and measured the extent to which adolescents perceived that their parent (the primary caregiver) had forgiven them for hypothetical wrongdoing depicted through five bullying scenarios (see Appendix). In each scenario, the bully hurts another student (physically or socially). The participants were asked to imagine themselves being the wrongdoer in these scenarios and being caught in the act by their parent. After reading each scenario, they were required to use a 5-point rating scale ranging from "almost never" (1) to "most of the time" (5) to respond to the following items: (1) My parent has forgiven me and given me another chance; and (2) My parent is unforgiving and this does not heal my pain [reverse coded]. These two items were intercorrelated ($r = .87$, $p < .001$), and therefore, were averaged to construct the forgiveness scale ($M = 2.93$; $SD = 1.04$; $\alpha = .93$).

Reconciliation. The reconciliation scale that comprised four items, was formulated to measure the extent to which adolescents feel that their parent (again, the primary caregiver) is willing to reconcile with them following the wrongdoing depicted in the five bullying scenarios. The participants were asked to imagine themselves being caught by their parents as they bully another child. After reading each scenario, they were asked to indicate their responses on a 5-point rating scale ranging from "almost never" (1) to "most of the time" (5) to the following items: (1) I find it difficult to talk warmly with my parent [reverse scored]; (2) My parent wants to cut-off the relationship with me [reverse scored]; (3) My parent seems to be concerned, but easy-going about what I did; and (4) I still feel that I am loved and cared for by my parent. To construct the reconciliation measure, responses of these items were averaged ($M = 3.70$; $SD = 1.01$; $\alpha = .80$).

Shame management. Shame management was measured through the Management Of Shame State—Shame Acknowledgment & Shame Displacement (MOSS-SASD; for details on psychometric properties of the MOSS-SASD, see Ahmed, 2001a). For present purposes, the MOSS-SASD items were translated and back-translated (for details about the method itself, see Guerra & Jagers, 1998) by a bilingual scholar, who was native to the region of Bangladesh where the study was conducted. The translations were then reviewed for accuracy and cultural appropriateness by another bilingual scholar, who was also native to the region. Both these scholars had excellent English knowledge and experiences with psychological terminology. These steps yielded a comparable Bengali translation of the MOSS-SASD with the exception of item 2 "Hiding self". This item presented

some difficulty in the translation process. The translated item, "palie jete chaibe" was interpreted by the scholars as "a positive and also a negative shame response". After discussion, it was retained.

The Bengali version of the MOSS-SASD provides adolescents with the five scenarios each describing a bullying incident as described above for the forgiveness and reconciliation measures. The participants were asked to imagine themselves being the wrongdoer in these scenarios, and caught in the act. After reading each scenario, they were asked to tick the boxes that best represented their answers to 10 shame-related questions. A total of 50 items (five scenarios × ten questions) made up the Bengali version of the MOSS-SASD, using a 4-point response format ranging from "never" (1) to "always" (4).

Examination of the correlation matrix for each of the 10 MOSS-SASD items (see Appendix) across five scenarios (correlation ranging from .46 to .68, $p < .001$) indicates high consistency in responses from one scenario to the next. The obtained positive intercorrelations are strong and considered sufficient to warrant aggregating responses over the scenarios. In this way, 10 MOSS-SASD subscales were constructed. These are: feeling shame ($M = 3.45$; $SD = .72$; $\alpha = .82$), hiding self ($M = 1.43$; $SD = .72$; $\alpha = .78$), taking responsibility ($M = 3.05$; $SD = .83$; $\alpha = .79$), viewing others' rejection ($M = 2.05$; $SD = .86$; $\alpha = .85$), making amends ($M = 3.36$; $SD = .72$; $\alpha = .86$), externalizing blame ($M = 1.22$; $SD = .44$; $\alpha = .72$), unresolved shame ($M = 2.12$; $SD = .93$; $\alpha = .86$), feeling anger ($M = 1.35$; $SD = .55$; $\alpha = .78$), retaliatory anger ($M = 1.13$; $SD = .40$; $\alpha = .82$), and displaced anger ($M = 1.28$; $SD = .58$; $\alpha = .87$).

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used to test the hypothesized fit of the Australian two-factor model to the Bengali version of the MOSS-SASD. The two-step procedure recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1988) was used. One-factor congeneric models (one for shame acknowledgment, the other for shame displacement) were estimated to develop measurement models with an acceptable fit to the data. These measurement models were then entered into a structural equation model for the purpose of CFA. All these analyses were conducted using the AMOS (analysis of moment structures) 4.0 program (Arbuckle & Wothke, 1999) with a maximum likelihood estimation procedure.

As found from these two one-factor congeneric models, three subscales loaded significantly on the shame acknowledgment factor and four subscales loaded significantly on the shame displacement factor. Because of low-squared multiple correlations (that is the amount of explained variance was less than .30), two subscales ("hiding self" and "viewing others' rejection") were excluded from the shame acknowledgment factor, and one subscale ("unresolved shame") from the shame displacement factor. The final standardized regression weight estimates demonstrate excellent convergent validity for the two factors.

In the next, a CFA was conducted to evaluate the factor structure of the MOSS-SASD. Because the chi-square value is oversensitive to sample size, alternative indices to assess overall model fit were suggested (Byrne, 1989). To evaluate

the factor structure, therefore, five additional indices of model fit were utilized. These are: goodness-of-fit index (GFI), adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), and root mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA). Values greater than .95 for GFI, AGFI, CFI, and TLI are considered to indicate good model fit (Byrne, 1994; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Loehlin, 1998). An RMSEA of .05 or less is suggested as an indicator of acceptable fit (Arbuckle & Wothke, 1999; Bollen, 1989). As found in the current analysis ($\chi^2 = 35.69$; $df = 10$; $p < .001$), the GFI was .994, the AGFI was .984, the CFI was .994, and the TLI was .988 indicating an excellent fit of the data to the MOSS-SASD. The RMSEA was .038, which is also within the acceptable range.

Following this final CFA, the shame acknowledgment measure consists of three scales: (1) feeling shame; (2) taking responsibility; and (3) making amends. These scales were positively intercorrelated, and therefore, were averaged to construct the shame acknowledgment variable ($M = 3.30$; $SD = .66$; $\alpha = .89$), a high score indicating greater shame acknowledgment.

The shame displacement measure includes four scales specifically related to projecting shame and blame on others: (1) externalizing blame; (2) felt anger; (3) retaliatory anger; and (4) displaced anger. These scales were positively intercorrelated, and therefore, were averaged to construct the shame displacement variable ($M = 1.25$; $SD = .39$; $\alpha = .90$), a high score indicating greater shame displacement.

Bullying. The dependent variable measured in this study was self-initiated bullying. Previous work has drawn a distinction between children who bully others in a one-to-one situation and children who join in to bully in groups (Ahmed, 2001a; Rigby, 1996). From the perspective of understanding triggers for bullying, there is merit in focusing on the children who take the initiative and bully of their own accord, rather than those who follow others for reasons that may be totally unrelated to the bullying action itself. Furthermore, self-initiated bullying is likely to involve hard-core bullies, who are possibly at a higher risk for future delinquency, crime, and psychopathology.

Self-initiated bullying was measured by a single item (Rigby & Slee, 1993): "How often have you, on your own, bullied someone during the last year?" ($M = 1.47$; $SD = .82$). There were five response categories: (1) "I haven't, on my own, bullied anyone during the last year"; (2) "it has happened once or twice"; (3) "sometimes"; (4) "about once a week"; and (5) "several times a week." The majority of the students (70%) reported not being involved in bullying in a one-to-one situation.

Results

Data were analyzed in two steps. First, correlational analyses were used to examine relations among all of the primary variables: perceived forgiveness, perceived reconciliation, shame acknowledgment, shame displacement, and

Table 1. Zero-Order Correlations among Forgiveness, Reconciliation, Shame Acknowledgment, Shame Displacement, and Self-Initiated Bullying (minimum $n = 1816$)

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. Perceived forgiveness	–			
2. Perceived reconciliation	.39***	–		
3. Shame acknowledgment	.05 (ns)	.18***	–	
4. Shame displacement	−.12***	−.25***	−.32***	–
5. Self-initiated bullying	−.40***	−.65***	−.18***	.27***

*Note.****p < .001

self-initiated bullying. Second, a path analysis was used to inquire more fully into the correlational structure among the variables and to provide a parsimony test of the proposed mediational linkages of forgiveness, and reconciliation to shame management, and then from shame management to bullying.

Zero-Order Correlational Analyses

As apparent from Table 1, forgiveness was negatively related to shame displacement ($r = −.12$, $p < .001$) as we hypothesized (Mediational hypothesis: Forgiveness → adaptive shame management → low bullying hypothesis). Forgiveness was not significantly related to shame acknowledgment, however.

Also as hypothesized (Mediational hypothesis: Reconciliation → adaptive shame management → low bullying hypothesis), reconciliation was positively related to shame acknowledgment ($r = .18$, $p < .001$) and negatively related to shame displacement ($r = −.25$, $p < .001$).

Both forgiveness and reconciliation were inversely related to self-initiated bullying ($r = −.40$, $p < .001$; $r = −.65$, $p < .001$, respectively), as predicted (forgiveness hypothesis and reconciliation hypothesis).

Finally, the shame management variables also showed expected relationships (shame management hypothesis) with bullying; negative in the case of shame acknowledgment ($r = −.18, p < .001$) and positive in the case of shame displacement ($r = .27, p < .001$). This replicates prior results using Australian data and supports the basic proposition that adaptive shame management is a vital factor that lessens the likelihood of bullying among Bangladeshi adolescents.

Path Analysis

Tests of model fit were undertaken again through the use of the maximum likelihood estimation procedures of version 4.0 of AMOS. Model A and Model B were evaluated using the goodness-of-fit criteria developed by researchers working in the field of structural equation modeling (Byrne, 2001; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Loehlin, 1998). To evaluate these two models, therefore, six indices of model fit

Table 2. Paths in Model A (Hypothesized model) and in Model B (Alternative Model) with their Standardized Beta Coefficients including the Overall Fit Indices for Models

	Standardized Beta Coefficients
Paths in Model A (hypothesized model)	
Perceived forgiveness → Bullying	−.29***
Perceived reconciliation → Bullying	−.21***
Perceived forgiveness → Shame displacement	−.07**
Perceived reconciliation → Shame acknowledgment	.07**
Perceived reconciliation → Shame displacement	−.10***
Shame acknowledgment → Bullying	−.09***
Shame displacement → Bullying	.19***
Paths in Model B (alternative model)	
Shame acknowledgment → Bullying	−.09***
Shame acknowledgment → Perceived reconciliation	.10***
Shame displacement → Bullying	.19***
Shame displacement → Perceived forgiveness	−.10***
Shame displacement → Perceived reconciliation	−.12***
Perceived forgiveness → Bullying	−.24***
Perceived reconciliation → Bullying	−.21***

Goodness-of-fit indices	Model A	Model B
Chi-square (χ^2)	1.03 ($df = 1; p < .31$)	2.88 ($df = 2; p < .24$)
GFI (goodness-of-fit index)	1.00	.999
AGFI (adjusted goodness-of-fit index)	.997	.995
CFI (comparative fit index)	1.00	.999
TLI (Tucker-Lewis index)	1.00	.994
RMSEA (root mean-square error of approximation)	.004	.015

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

were utilized as was done before for the measurement models. These are: chi-square, GFI, AGFI, CFI, TLI, and RMSEA.

Table 2 presents the significant paths in Model A and Model B with their standardized parameter estimates (beta coefficients) including the overall fit indices.

Figure 3 showed the standardized parameter estimates for the paths in Model A. Significant direct paths were evident from forgiveness to bullying ($\beta = −.24$; $p < .001$) and from reconciliation to bullying ($\beta = −.21$; $p < .001$).

Significant indirect paths were found from reconciliation to bullying through shame management variables. Reconciliation increased shame acknowledgment ($\beta = .07$; $p < .01$), which, in turn, reduced the prospect of bullying. Again, perceived reconciliation decreased shame displacement ($\beta = −.10$; $p < .001$), which, in turn, increased the prospect of bullying. Forgiveness behaved in similar way with bullying via shame displacement. Perceived forgiveness decreased shame displacement ($\beta = −.07$; $p < .01$), which, in turn, increased bullying.

The hypothesized indirect paths from forgiveness through shame acknowledgment and shame displacement to bullying were partially supported. Perceived forgiveness decreased shame displacement ($\beta = −.10$; $p < .001$), which, in turn, increased the prospect of bullying.
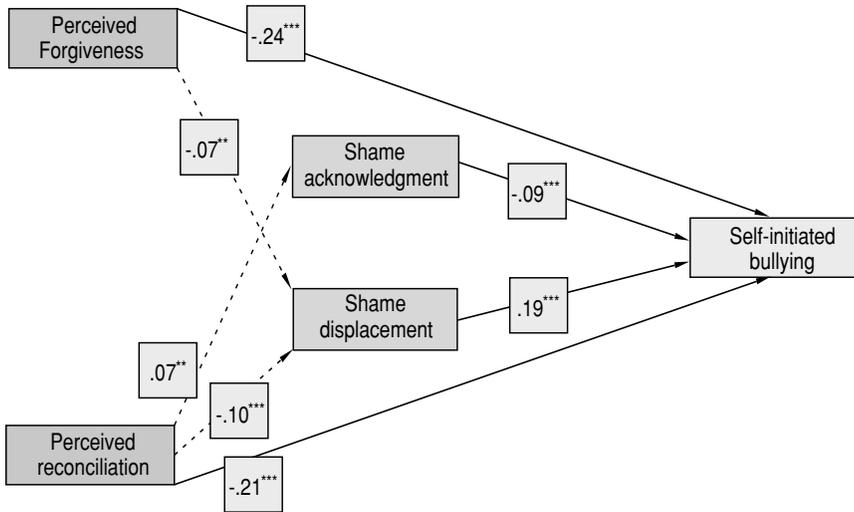
Fig. 3. Results of a path analysis (Model A) showing the relationships among forgiveness, reconciliation, shame management variables, and bullying (solid lines represent direct paths whereas dotted lines represent indirect paths; **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$).

The direct paths from shame acknowledgment and shame displacement to bullying were significant ($\beta = -.09$; $p < .001$; $\beta = .19$; $p < .001$, respectively) and as predicted.

Model B was based on the argument that an adolescent's adaptive shame management skills may be responsible for perceiving forgiveness and reconciliation from parents rather than vice versa. As found from the alternative analysis with Model B (Figure 4), adolescents' shame management capacities influenced their perceptions of forgiveness and reconciliation from parents, which in turn, affected bullying at school.

Interestingly, the estimation of this alternative model to the empirical data also produced an excellent fit as shown by all the different goodness-of-fit indices (see Table 2). Significant direct paths were evident from shame acknowledgment to bullying ($\beta = -.09$; $p < .001$) and from shame displacement to bullying ($\beta = .19$; $p < .001$). Significant indirect paths were found from shame displacement to bullying through forgiveness and reconciliation. Shame displacement decreased both perceived forgiveness ($\beta = -.10$; $p < .001$) and perceived reconciliation ($\beta = -.12$; $p < .001$), which, in turn, increased the prospect of bullying. The other indirect path was from shame acknowledgement to perceived reconciliation ($\beta = .10$; $p < .001$). The direct paths from perceived forgiveness and reconciliation to bullying were also significant ($\beta = -.29$; $p < .001$; $\beta = -.21$; $p < .001$, respectively).

Both these models generated excellent fit indices, but the question remains, which model provided the better fit to the data? Because Model B (alternative
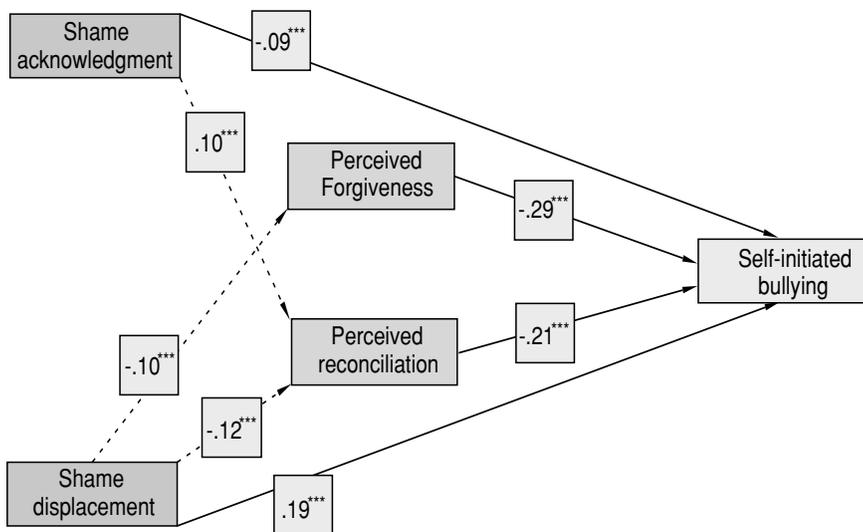
Fig. 4. Results of a path analysis (Model B) showing the relationships among shame management variables, forgiveness, reconciliation, and bullying (solid lines represent direct paths whereas dotted lines represent indirect paths; *** $p < .001$).

model) can be considered a nested model of Model A (for details, see Arbuckle & Wothke, 1999; Kline, 1998), we conducted a chi-square test to compare the models. In this way, we could examine whether Model B would provide a significantly improved fit to the data than Model A. The result of the chi-square test was not statistically significant, chi-square ($df = 1, N = 1843$) = 1.85, indicating that these two models were not significantly different from one another, and both models are viable.

The results of these model comparisons have some interesting theoretical implications that will be dealt in the next section.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to examine the relationships among forgiveness, reconciliation, and adaptive shame management, and investigate their roles in reducing school bullying. The results highlight the direct links between forgiveness, reconciliation and reduced bullying (forgiveness hypothesis and reconciliation hypothesis), and on one reading of the data, are consistent with the premise of restorative justice work that relationships of support, concern, and care are important for the prevention of offending. The findings also revealed the central part played by adaptive shame management in preventing bullying (shame management hypothesis and mediational hypothesis)—a finding, which complements the

restorative justice argument that shame in offenders deters crime when managed in a reintegrative rather than stigmatized way.

To say that positive and supportive social relationships protect individuals from antisocial behavior (e.g., Bowlby, 1969; Hirschi, 1969) is not a novel position to take within the psychological, sociological, or criminological literature. What is new is measuring these ideas through constructs that have a place in formal institutionalized settings. Forgiveness and reconciliation were institutionalized principles for the operation of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (Tutu, 1999). Shame management has been at the core of healing circles by indigenous peoples for centuries (see Braithwaite, 2002), and has now become the interest of restorative justice conferencing. If forgiveness, reconciliation, and shame management are to be institutionalized in justice settings, what are the risks? How can they work in ways that are counter to the restorative justice model? An important finding of this study is that these constructs need to work together in a particular way to correct offending behavior.

After many years of demonstrating that parents shape their children's behavior (e.g., Baumrind, 1978), developmental psychologists have come up with a reverse hypothesis (e.g., Hinde & Stevenson-Hinde, 1988) that children with behavior problems trigger social withdrawal, punitive, and overly dominant behavior from parents. In accordance with this literature, this study therefore tested an alternative model: poor shame management frustrates parents, and evokes denial of parental forgiveness and reconciliation, which, in turn, increases bullying behavior in children.

The analyses provide support for both these competing models, what might be thought of, for the purposes of the present discussion, as the restorative justice model and the antirestorative justice model. First, children's shame management capacities were more adaptive if they experienced reconciliation with their parents. Reconciliation appears to play a vital role in providing adequate emotional scaffolding for acknowledging shame over mistakes and for learning self-regulation. Second, it is also the case that maladaptive shame management—blaming others, being angry at the world—predicts less forgiveness and less reconciliation. If we find evidence of some (difficult) children challenging parents through displacing shame, and if this spills over into negative parenting, which can be characterized as "no forgiveness and no reconciliation and more bullying," what hope is there that in a restorative justice setting with victims, strangers, and authority figures, the positive social dynamics of restorative justice theory will prevail?

In one important respect, restorative justice theorists have preempted these findings. This study has focused on a simple dyad—parent and child—to tease out restorative justice principles at work in a naturalistic setting. Within restorative justice conferencing settings, however, the nuclear family (defined as a family unit consisting of parents and their dependent children) is not alone to manage its problems. Restorative justice explicitly brings other members of the community—the direct victim, the victim's family and support group, and other

indirect victims (e.g., police)—to work through the problems created by the offender's behavior. Because restorative justice places such emphasis on community and social support, no assumptions are made that the first steps toward forgiveness and reconciliation will be taken by members of the nuclear family. Any member of the conferencing community can be the one to first extend the hand of forgiveness and reconciliation to the offender (Moore & O'Connell, 1994).

The extent to which formal restorative justice contexts, where offenders come face to face with their victims, offer opportunity to promote the restorative justice model and suppress the antirestorative justice model awaits future investigation. Most critical is collecting data over time, which allows researchers to tease out the causal directions between forgiveness, reconciliation and shame management, and find out the institutional arrangements responsible for the optimal causal linkages that reintegrate rather than stigmatize. All that can be said on the basis of these data is that in informal settings involving a child and parent, both models are equally plausible. Forgiveness and reconciliation decrease bullying with shame management playing a mediational role, and shame management that is maladaptive reduces forgiveness and reconciliation and increases bullying. Managing the affective ambience created in a conference setting is clearly important as to which social dynamic will dominate.

Conclusion

This study advances our knowledge of the phenomenon of school bullying through focusing on social relationships and their implications for shame management in family settings. Social relationships and shame management are central to the process of restorative justice. These data allow an important first step to be taken in outlining the conditions of restorative justice that need to apply to provide an effective way of resolving the growing bullying problem in Bangladeshi schools; and at the same time, promote synergy between formal (school, law) and informal (e.g., family) settings of regulation.

An interesting yet unexpected finding arose from the way in which these data exposed the question of where can children with problem behavior turn when reconciliation in the informal setting of their family is not an option. We should bear in mind that restorative justice theory sets, as a premise, that there is someone somewhere who can provide the right kind of emotional support for the child who is having problems. In this way, it is a normative and hopeful theory of crime prevention. In restorative justice practice, for instance, reconciliation, "backed-up" by an extended network of aunts, uncles, and even grandparents, is advanced as a highly effective way of helping a child adopt good behavior in the future. In this way, the child does not lose social ties through stigmatization, but rather is enmeshed in web of positive social influence, and through social ties the child is reconciled with significant others who can help them change their behavior.

In conclusion, the three key principles of restorative justice are inherently important in the dynamics of interpersonal relationships more generally, and need to be explicitly accommodated in a formal restorative justice setting. These data suggest that an absence of forgiveness and reconciliation destroys the chance to build the emotional scaffolding that is needed to boost self-regulation. Restorative justice practitioners need to focus attention on the formal institutional conditions that enable forgiveness, reconciliation, and adaptive shame management to take place.

While there can be no doubt about the need for further research, the data that are currently available dislodge complacency about the present system. When the primary means of dealing with severe bullying behavior is the expulsion and suspension of students, as is the case in many schools across the world, we can be sure that formal institutions of reconciliation are either nonoperational or nonexistent. Until such institutions are strengthened with the formal and informal mutually constituting the other (Giddens, 1984), the prospects of bullies learning to self-regulate and live in peaceful coexistence with others are not high. They may improve, however, if restorative justice principles operating in an informal setting like the family can be effectively reinforced in more formal settings such as restorative justice conferencing in schools.

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APPENDIX

Bullying scenarios (texts in parenthesis were used for the MOSS-SASD):

1. Imagine that you are walking along the corridor at school and you see another student. You put your foot out and trip the student. [*Then you realize that your teacher has just come into the corridor and saw what you did*.]

2. Imagine that you are on the way home from school and see a younger student carrying something important that he/she has made at school. You knock the thing out of the student's hands. [*Then you realize that your teacher saw what you did*.]

3. Imagine that a younger student is going to the canteen to buy something. You grab his/her money. You warn the student not to tell or else. [*Then you realize that your teacher has just walked in and seen/heard what you said/did*.]

4. Imagine that you started an argument in class with another student. Then you excluded the student from doing a class project with you. [*Then you realize that your teacher has just been told about what you did*.]

5. Imagine that you made a nasty comment about another student without any good reason. [*Then you realize that your teacher has just heard what you said*.]

MOSS-SASD items:

a) Would you *feel ashamed* of yourself?

b) Would you wish you could *just hide?*

c) Would you feel like *blaming yourself* for what happened?

d) Do you think others would *reject* you?

e) Would you feel like *making the situation better*?

f) Would you feel like *blaming others* for what happened?

g) Would you be *unable to decide* if you were to blame?

h) Would you *feel angry* in this situation?

i) Would you feel like *getting back* at that student?

j) Would you feel like *doing something else*, for example, throwing or kicking something?