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Intergenerational Transmission of Domestic Violence in Bangladesh

Nadine Shaanta Murshid

Abstract

There is considerable evidence of the importance of intergenerational transmission of domestic violence. Studies from the United States as well as developing countries suggest that witnessing inter-parental violence during childhood is associated with a greater likelihood of experiencing violence themselves. This hypothesis is based on Bandura's social learning theory which posits that violence is a socially learned behavior. However, there are no studies that look at domestic violence based on this theory in Bangladesh. Thus, this study, uses the Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey (2007) to find an association between domestic violence experienced by women, and witnessing inter-parental violence, justification of wife beating, respondent age, marital education, partner's higher education, and primary education of the respondent in a multivariate model. Significant associations were not found between domestic violence and respondent's primary and higher education, partner's secondary education, partner's age, and, employment.

There is considerable evidence of the importance of intergenerational transmission of domestic violence, with studies from the United States (Doumas, Margolin, & John, 1994, Caesar 1988; Hotaling & Sugarman 1986; Kalmuss 1984; Straus & Gelles 1986, 1990; Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1980) as well as developing countries (Ellsberg et al. 1999; Jewkes, Levin, and Penn-Kekana 2002; Martin et al. 2002) which suggest that witnessing inter-parental violence during childhood is associated with a greater likelihood of their either perpetrating or experiencing violence themselves.

The concept of intergenerational transmission of violence and the effect of witnessing inter-parental violence on life outcomes is evident in the research literature, which explains the etiology of domestic violence perpetration and experience (Egeland, 1993; Hotaling & Sugarman, 1986; Kalmuss, 1984). The basis of this concept comes from Bandura's studies examining aggression used by children, positing that violence is a socially learned behavior (Bandura, 1971, 1973, 1986). Bandura and others suggest that children develop violence as a habitual response to conflict through observational learning (Bandura, 1986; Widom, 1989). As such, violence modeled between parents "provides scripts for violent behaviors" and "teaches the appropriateness and consequences of such behavior in an intimate relationship to children through direct and vicarious reinforcement of rewards and punishments" (Bandura, 1973; Black, Sussman & Unger, 2010, p.1024). However, not all children who witness violence as children use violence in their own relationships as adults (Kaufman & Zigler, 1987). This is because children are able to distinguish between positive and negative outcomes. If they find that violence is an effective way of conflict resolution between intimate partners (Ehrensaft et al., 2003) or a means of gaining control (Black et al., 2010), they are more likely to use violence instead of other methods of conflict resolution such as negotiation, verbal reasoning, self-calming tactics, and active listening (Black et al., 2010, Foshee, Bauman, & Linder, 1999).

Very few studies in Bangladesh have assessed the relationship between history of violence and witnessing domestic violence as a child, and domestic violence either experienced or perpetrated as an adult. One study is that of Naved and Persson (2005) who found a strong correlation between the two in both rural and urban areas. They also found that family structure is associated with domestic violence such that living in a nuclear family increased the risk of violence. They used a population based survey of 2,700 women aged 15 to 49 years, randomly selected via multi-stage sampling from ICCDR, B's (International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh) database to select participants in the rural areas and the Population Census 1991 to select participants in urban areas. They also conducted in-depth interviews with 28 women who had experienced domestic violence. Naved and Persson (2005) operationalized domestic violence using the Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz, 1996). Their findings are not nationally representative. However, it provides a basis for the linkages between inter-parental violence and re-enacting a similar dyadic pattern as adults. As such, the findings of the current nationally representative study have important implications in terms of policies and practice through carefully crafted, contextual interventions.

Other Correlates of Domestic Violence in Bangladesh

The factors that contribute to domestic violence in Bangladesh are not conclusive, and a myriad of variables seems to be working together to lead to domestic violence in Bangladesh such as: early marriage for women, socioeconomic factors, age, education, and family structure. These factors are discussed in greater detail below:

Early Marriage

A number of studies suggest that early marriage for women increases the risk for domestic violence in Bangladesh (Hadi, 2000; Koenig et.al., 2003; Schuler et.al., 1996). Hadi's (2000) study was conducted in 70 villages across 10 regions in which in depth interviews were conducted by ten resident female researchers who lived in the study village for two years (as part of a larger study), while Koenig and colleagues and Schuler and colleagues used large, representative samples, as already described.

The problem of early marriage has origins in the practice of arranged marriages for girls in their teens, and exacerbated by the low status that younger women have as compared to older women. The status differential thus renders younger women at higher risk of being abused than older women (Bates, Schuler, Islam & Islam, 2004; Koenig et.al, 2003; Naved & Persson, 2005; Schuler et al, 1996). Bates and colleagues (2004) further posits that the institution of marriage lays the foundation for domestic violence in the lives of young women who marry men they do not know, wherein "sexual relations are often traumatic and violence is used to establish and maintain gender roles" (Bates et al., 2004).

Socioeconomic Factors

Socioeconomic factors are generally thought to protect against violence, but studies conducted in Bangladesh provide mixed evidence. Some studies show an inverse relationship between socioeconomic status and domestic violence (Ahmed et.al., 2004; Bates et.al., 2004; Koenig et.al.,2003) but a study by Naved and Persson (2007) shows no significant relationship between income both in an urban area and a rural area.

Age

Ahmed (2005) found that the age of the wife, as well as the age of the husband, was significantly associated with domestic violence, conceptualized as physical violence, emotional violence that includes threats of divorce and second marriage, as well as threats to take away her personal property and restrict her from visiting her natal home. Being older than 35 years made women less vulnerable to violence, Ahmed's findings show.

Similarly, a study by Bhuiya and colleagues (2003) indicate that domestic violence is associated with the age of the husband. They found that men under the age of 30 were more likely to physically abuse their wives than men over the age of 50. Dalal (2009), also reports similar findings in a cross-sectional household survey of 4,411 randomly selected married women in two sub-districts (Savar and Dhamrai) in Dhaka. He shows that men in the age group of 30-40 years were four times more likely to abuse their wives than men in their teens and twenties, and twice as likely as men who were older than 40 years old. Hadi (2000), on the other hand, found no significant associations between age and domestic violence in Bangladesh in his qualitative study involving participant observation and in-depth interviews.

Education

Men's education is associated with perpetration of domestic violence for only certain levels of education. In rural Bangladesh, for example, having less than six years of education did not have an effect on perpetration of domestic violence, but in some rural and urban areas, six to eleven years of education was inversely related to perpetration of domestic violence as education diminished the influence of conventional gender roles (Koenig et.al., 2003; Naved & Persson, 2005). Ahmed (2005) also found that low levels of education of the household head and poverty were correlated with higher levels of violence. Ahmed bases his findings on a study in which he compares 622 women who are participants of BRAC microcredit programs with 1,622 non participants in 60 villages in Matlab where 17.5% of the respondents reported to have experienced violence in the past four months.

Wives' education was found to be more consistently associated with lower levels of domestic violence (Bates et.al., 2004; Koenig et.al., 2003; Naved & Persson, 2005). Women with at least six years of

education were found to be significantly less likely to experience violence in their personal lives, found Bates and colleagues (2004).

In the current study, the association between inter-parental physical violence and experiencing domestic violence is examined, while also assessing the role of justification of domestic violence, marital age, age of the respondent, partner's age, education level of the respondent, education level of the partners, and current employment status. It is hypothesized that individuals who witness violence as children, are more likely to experience domestic violence as an adult because they accept it. This is tested in Model 1.

It is further hypothesized that individuals who justify domestic violence are more likely to experience domestic violence because they are more likely to accept violence in their own lives. It cannot be assessed, however, whether women accept violence because they experience it, or whether they experience it because of their acceptance of violence. The acceptance of violence is conceptualized by the notion of justification of domestic violence. It is theorized that justification of domestic violence account for a significant variation in domestic violence experience that indicates that those who justify violence also experience violence. As such, the relationship between inter-parental violence and domestic violence is perhaps mediated by justification of domestic violence. The mediation model, as shown in Diagram 1, is tested in Model 2.

Model 3 presents the multivariate model. In this model, the demographic variables are accounted for as control variables.

Table 1: The Study Population and the Sample

	Sample Size	%	Population Distribution
All	3,986	100.0	100.0
Key Dependent Variable			
Domestic Violence			
No	2,948	75.7	75.1
Yes	948	24.3	24.9
Independent Variables			
Inter-parental Violence			
No	2,896	74.3	73.7
Yes	1,000	25.7	26.3
Justification of Domestic Violence			
No	2,691	69.1	69.6
Yes	1,205	30.9	30.4
Respondent Education			
No education (Ref.)	1,213	31.1	33.8
Primary	1,192	30.6	31.7
Secondary	1,189	30.5	29.7
Higher	302	7.8	5.8
Respondent Partner Education			
No education (Ref.)	1,281	32.9	36.3
Primary	1,076	27.6	27.8
Secondary	980	15.2	24.5
Higher	559	14.3	11.5
Currently Employed			
No	2,749	70.5	67.8
Yes	1,149	29.5	32.2
	Mean	S.D.	Median
Marital Age	15.5	2.8	15
Respondent Age	30.1	8.8	29

The Current Study

The overarching research agenda of this study was to understand the antecedents of domestic violence as a way of designing interventions that would prevent, as opposed to treat the problem of domestic violence in Bangladesh; prevention is cost-effective, has positive long terms ramifications, and easier to implement (Mock, Quanash, Krishnan et. al, 2004). As such, the key research questions were:

i. Does witnessing inter-parental domestic violence predict experience of domestic violence?
ii. Does witnessing inter-parental violence predict experience of domestic violence when justification of domestic violence is included as a mediator variable?
iii. Does witnessing inter-parental violence predict experience of domestic violence when justification of domestic violence is included as a mediator variable while controlling for demographic and socio economic variables?

Methods

This study used the BDHS 2007 survey of 10,400 households in which they interviewed 10,996 Ever-married women between the ages of 15 and 49 and ever-married men between the years of 15 and 54. The survey was designed to produce representative estimates as indicators for the entire nation, for urban and rural areas, and for each of the six major divisions of Bangladesh. In the current study, the 'women's questionnaire' was used; that is, the study only include women who were interviewed by BDHS.

Measures

Domestic Violence

Conflict Tactics Scale (modified) was used to measure domestic violence. The response format allowed respondents to choose: never, sometimes, and, often. The Cronbach's alpha for the items was found to be .82, suggesting very good internal consistency. Respondents were asked if any of the following violent acts occurred in the last 12 months.

(Does/did) your (last) husband ever do any of the following things to you:
a) Slap you?
b) Twist your arm or pull your hair?
c) Push you, shake you, or throw something at you?
d) Punch you with his fist or with something that could hurt you?
e) Kick you, drag you or beat you up?
f) Try to choke you or burn you on purpose?
g) Threaten or attack you with a knife, gun, or any other weapon?
h) Physically force you to have sexual intercourse with him even when you did not want to?
i) Force you to perform any sexual acts you did not want to?

Justification of Domestic Violence

A scale created by the Demographic and Health Survey researchers was used to measure justification of domestic violence. The Cronbach's alpha for the scale was found to be .79.

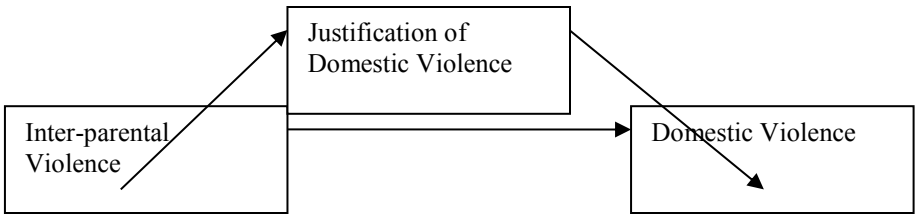
Respondents were asked to respond with yes or no to the following questions:

Wife beating is justified if she goes out without telling him
Wife beating is justified if she neglects the children
Wife beating is justified if she argues with him
Wife beating is justified if she refuses to have sex with him

Witnessing Domestic Violence

The key independent variable was witnessing domestic violence as reported by the response to the question: 'Did father beat mother?' While this one-item measure fails to encompass the different types of inter-personal violence that can take place in a dyad, it is perhaps the only one that reliably characterizes the presence of violence because the reliability of the measure is dependent on the rate of recall of the respondents.

Diagram 1: The mediation model (Model 2)



Other variables

This study controlled for variables that were found to be related to domestic violence in the Bangladeshi literature: age, partner's age, marital age, education, partner's education, and employment. The education variables and employment were used in categorical form. The age variables were used in continuous form.

Analysis

Descriptive statistics were obtained to describe the nature of the demographic variables and model covariates. Correlations between independent and dependent variables were examined to determine cross-sectional bivariate relationships using Chi Square and Generalized Linear Model tests. Logistic regression analyses were conducted to delineate the relationship between inter-parental violence and justification of domestic violence, and experiencing domestic violence. The assumptions of regression and Chi Square analyses such as linearity, homoscedasticity, and normality was determined by plotting residuals against predicted values and by examining the distribution of residuals, prior to running these tests. Because the BDHS used stratified sampling with 179 strata and 361 primary sampling units, Stata 12 was used to analyze the data using survey techniques.

Findings

Descriptive statistics for experiencing domestic violence, domestic violence between parents, and justification of domestic violence, as well as the demographic variables are presented in Table 1. The descriptive statistic indicated that 24.3 % of the nationally representative sample of women experienced domestic violence in the previous 12-month period. In the absence of cross-country studies that use the same methodologies and measurement variable, it is difficult to assess how that figure compares with that of other nations. However the Demographic and Health Survey provides estimates for the countries in which they conducted the DHS survey, even though DHS data is collected only in the developing world, and not all nations are given the domestic violence module. From available DHS reports, it can be seen that 18.9% of the nationally representative sample in India reported domestic violence in the previous 12 months, while only 9% reported domestic violence in Nepal, as compared to 24.3% in Bangladesh. The descriptive statistics from the current study also showed that 31% of the sample of women justified domestic violence, and 25.7% of the sample reported that their father beat their mother. This is in line with the BDHS Report that indicates that 34% of both men and women justify domestic violence in the total sample of 10,996 individuals (BHDS, 2007). However, in the current study, domestic violence among women was assessed only (N=3,986). Future studies should assess the moderation effect of gender in the relationship between witnessing parental violence and experiences of domestic violence.

The bivariate relationships between the dependent variable, domestic violence, and all independent variables are presented in Table 2. The bivariate analyses showed that: 39% of the respondents who experienced domestic violence witnessed their fathers beating their mothers, while 36.1% of the respondents who reported that their fathers beat their mothers also justified domestic violence. At the same time, 29.4% of those who justified domestic violence reported experiencing domestic violence, while 22.9% of those who did not justify domestic violence also reported experiencing domestic violence. The other variables that were found to be significantly associated with domestic violence were: marital age, age, partner's age, education, and partners' education. Current employment was marginally

Table 2: Bivariate Associations between the Dependent and Independent Variable (Based on population estimates)

Independent Variables	**Domestic Violence (n=3,186)**
	Chi Square
Inter-parental Violence	
No	19.9*
Yes	38.9
Justification of Domestic Violence	
No	22.9*
Yes	29.4
Respondent Education	
No education (Ref.)	34.7*
Primary	33.0
Secondary	29.9
Higher	3.2
Respondent Partner Education	
No education (Ref.)	42.1*
Primary	29.2
Secondary	22.4
Higher	6.3
Currently Employed	
No	64.7
Yes	35.3
	GLM
Marital Age	β = -0.014*
Respondent Age	B = -0.009*
Respondent Partner Age	B = -0.006*

associated with domestic violence in the bivariate analyses. See Table 2 for details.

In the multivariate analyses, the overall model reported a significant F (12,171) = 22.22.The findings from the logistic regression analyses showed that individuals with fathers who beat their mothers had higher odds of experiencing domestic violence (β=0.87, p<.001, OR=2.4, CI=2.01, 2.88). This relationship was partially mediated by justification of domestic violence by women (β=.32, p=.08, OR=1.4, CI=.96, 1.98, p<.09), suggesting that the direct effect diminished slightly when women justified domestic violence. Justification of domestic violence was found to be significantly associated with domestic violence (p<.05). The finds indicated that as more covariates were included in the model, the β coefficient was reduced from .94 to .86 (OR=2.4). The other variables that contributed to domestic violence in the model were: marital age (β = -0.05, OR=0.95, p<.05), age (β = -.05, OR=0.95, p<.001) and higher education of partner (β = -0.5, OR=0.61, p<.05). Secondary education of the respondent and that of the respondents' partners were marginally associated with domestic violence in this model.

Thus, the magnitude of the effect of inter-parental violence decreased slightly when justification of domestic violence was included as a mediator variable. The magnitude of the effect was further reduced, as covariates were included in the model, as seen in Table 3. The significant effect of justification of domestic violence reduced in magnitude from β =.28 in Model 2 and .23 in Model 3. As such, the significant negative association found between partner's age and domestic violence in the bivariate analyses was lost in the multivariate model, but the significant negative association between marital age and domestic violence, as well as respondent's age and domestic violence found in the bivariate analyses remained in the logistic model.

Discussion

This study contributes to the literature on both the etiology of domestic violence, and domestic violence in Bangladesh by providing further evidence of the rates of domestic violence in Bangladesh. According to the descriptive statistics, approximately 24.3% of the sample experienced at least one form of domestic violence in the past 12 months, which is in line with the literature that suggests that domestic violence is a pervasive problem in Bangladesh. As can be seen in Chart 1, adapted from the WHO multi-country study by Moreno and colleagues (1996), one of the few studies that account for prevalence rates using similar methodologies in multiple countries, domestic violence rates are around 20% in a 12-month period in both rural and urban areas. Data from UN Statistics indicate that prevalence of domestic violence was 19% in Bangladesh (in 2001), which is lower than that of Ethiopia (29%), Zambia (27%) and Peru (25%) only (see Table 4), suggesting the severity of the problem of domestic violence in Bangladesh. The increase in domestic violence from 20% (Moreno et.al.,1996) to 24% (as found in this study), suggests that between 1996 and 2007, domestic violence has either risen, or the reporting of domestic violence has risen.

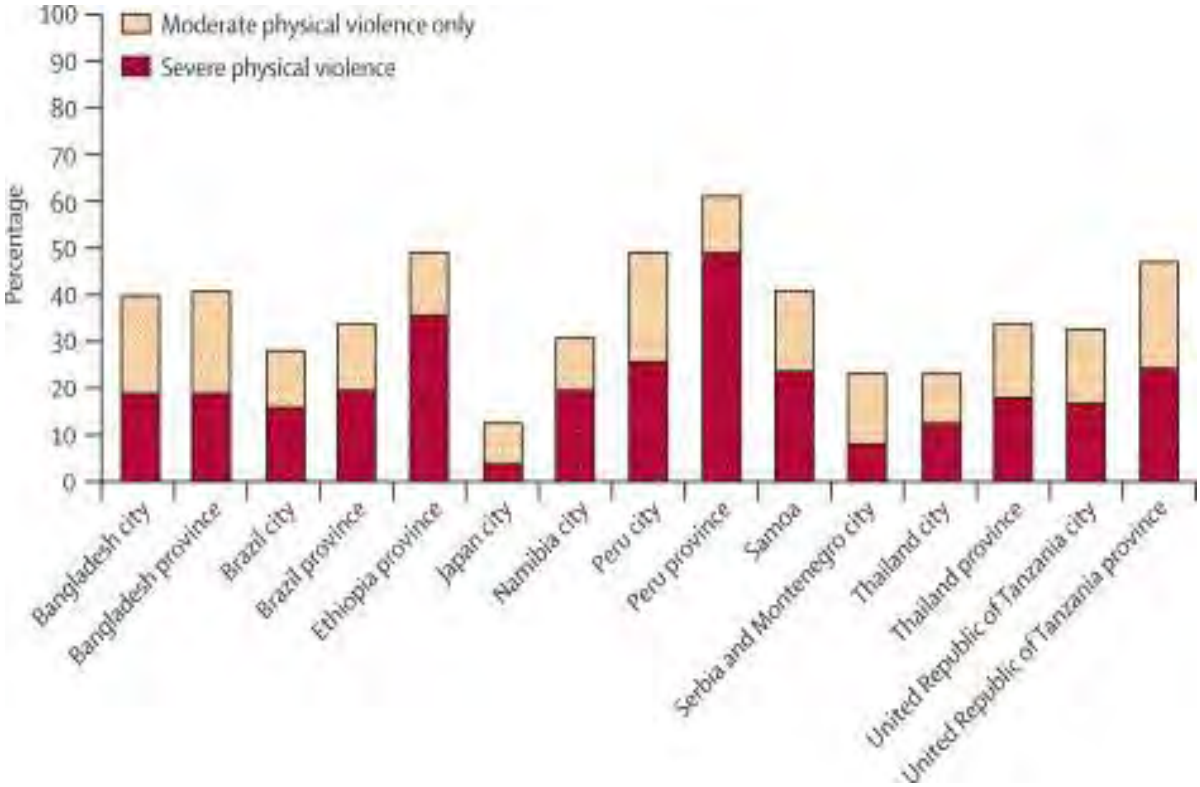
The study also identified the percentage of women who have information on whether there was inter-parental physical violence in a nationally representative sample and provided statistical evidence for the associations between witnessing domestic violence, justification of domestic violence, and experiencing domestic violence perpetrated against them. As such, the descriptive statistics showed that a slighter larger percentage of women (25.7%) reported that their fathers beat their mothers, a relatively high percentage of people given these numbers are susceptible to the problem of self-reporting, recall bias, and social desirability bias

This study also showed that only 6% of those who reported that their fathers beat their mothers justified domestic violence, suggesting that there was perhaps no cognition related to justification between inter-parental violence and the replication of violence in their own lives. This generated the hypothesis that witnessing violence allows individuals to model that behavior in a similar dyadic relationship in the future even when they cognitively do not justify the use of violence. The bivariate tests also indicated that 32% of those who justified domestic violence reported experiencing domestic violence, while 24.5% of those who did not justify domestic violence experienced violence as well; that is, a higher percentage of people who reported domestic violence justified it, providing an insight into to why women sometimes remain in violent relationships. It may be that if women already justify domestic violence, they are more likely to accept it in their own lives, and thus experience more of it because they remain in that violent relationship. However, it is also likely that, those who experience domestic violence and remain in the violent relationship are more likely to justify it. The causal mechanism or the direction of the relationship cannot be ascertained in this study, but this provides a rationale for qualitative studies that aim to provide an understanding of the context of these linkages, and longitudinal studies that can account for the direction of the relationship between these constructs.

The multivariate analysis suggested that there was a significant association between witnessing inter-parental violence and experiencing violence in their own lives. This is in line with Naved and Person's (2005) study that suggests that exposure to inter-parental violence is associated with experiences of violence as adults. Studies by Cummings and colleagues (2000) take into account the differences in responses by boys and girls to conclude that the moderating effect of age and gender is not clear, even though it may be that boys and girls respond differently to witnessing violence. The literature suggests that boys tends to externalize problems resulting in outcomes such as exerting violence and bullying, while girls internalize problems and exhibit signs of depression and anxiety (Leadbeater, Kuperminc, Blatt & Herzog, 1999). However, it is beyond the scope of the current study to draw such inferences, but future studies can aim to do so.

We had expected that justification of domestic violence would mediate the relationship between the two variables, and it did do that, but only marginally; the direct effect between witnessing violence and experiencing violence remained strong. The relationship between justification of domestic violence and experiencing domestic violence was also as expected, because individuals who justify violence are more likely to accept and contribute to the maintenance of domestic violence in their own lives (Dobash & Dobash, 1978).

Chart 1: Comparing domestic violence rates across nations
Source: WHO multi country study (Moreno, Jansen, Ellgberg and colleagues, 2006)



In this study, we looked at witnessing and experiencing *physical* violence, and the findings suggested that there was a strong positive association between the two. It would be interesting to see whether the same effect holds for other types of violence including *psychological* violence. Thus, further studies should assess whether women model their mothers by remaining in violent relationships or not. As a proxy for that, in the absence of that specific information, we assessed whether justification of domestic violence was related to witnessing violence, which in turn had an effect on experiencing domestic violence, but the association between justification and experience of domestic violence was found to be too weak to make that case. In addition, it does not necessarily hold that those who justify domestic violence will also remain in violent relationships, even though the validity of that notion seems strong.

It should also be noted that there is strong evidence in the literature suggesting that physical violence is highly correlated with psychological violence, such that those who experience physical abuse are also likely to be experiencing psychological abuse (Postmus, Plummer, McMachon, Murshid, & Kim, 2012). Even though this study did not take into account the effect of experiencing or witnessing psychological abuse, because respondents were not asked about that in the BDHS, it can perhaps be assumed that those who witnessed physical violence also witnessed psychological violence. At the same time, there may have been respondents who responded negatively to 'Did your father beat your mother' but witnessed verbal and psychological abuse, but did not report that because they were not asked to do so. This may mean that there were respondents who witnessed other types of violence that was associated with experiencing domestic violence as adults. That may be why a quarter of those who said there were no inter-parental violence reported violence in their own lives.

Table 3: Logistic Regression: Associations between Domestic Violence and Independent Variables (n=3,186)

	Domestic Violence F(12, 171) = 22.22; p<.001			
	β Coefficients			**OR, 95% CI**
Independent Variables	Model1	Model2	Model3	
Inter-parental Violence	0.94*	0.92*	0.86*	2.4 (2.01, 2.88)*
Justification of Domestic Violence		0.28*	0.23*	1.4 (.96, 1.98)*
Marital Age			-0.05*	0.95 (.91, .99)*
Respondent Age			-0.05*	0.95 (.93, .97)*
Respondent Partner Age			-0.006	0.99 (.98, 1.0)
Respondent Education				
No education (Ref.)				
Primary			-0.12	0.89 (.70, 1.1)
Secondary			-0.28^	0.76 (.56, 1.0)^
Higher			-0.30	0.74 (.42,1.29)
Respondent Partner Education				
No education (Ref.)				
Primary			-0.17^	0.84 (.69, 1.03)^
Secondary			-0.19	0.83 (.64, 1.05)
Higher			-0.50*	0.61 (.38, .96)*
Currently Employed			0.14	1.15(.93, 1.4)
Constant			1.4*	4.1 (1.8, 9.4)*

*p<.05, ^p <.09

The extant literature shows that children's exposure to inter-parental violence is related to not just aggressive behavior in children, but also emotional problems such as anxiety and depression, social competence, and lower academic functioning (Frantuzzo & Mohr, 1999). The linkages between inter-parental violence and experience of domestic violence found in this study are important for service providers and policymakers alike as they can think about ways in which domestic violence can be tackled in a global but efficient way.

The findings related to the other construct in the study strengthen the literature in many ways; it is suggested that marital age, age of respondents, and partner's higher education are all negatively associated with domestic violence. This is in line with the body of literature that propagates that younger women are more likely to experience domestic violence than older women, and that early marriage exacerbates domestic violence in Bangladesh. Even though the legal age of marriage in Bangladesh is 18 years for women, many parents marry off their female children well before they reach 18 years. In this study, the average marital age of the women was found to be 15.5 years, suggesting that even in 2007, under aged marriage was, on average, very common.

The role of education, including partner's education in domestic violence has been discussed as a protective factor of domestic violence, which was found to be a significant protector in this study as well. Specifically, this study showed that with primary education, the incidence of experiencing domestic violence falls, albeit marginally. This could be because women are better able to assert themselves (Amin, 1998) or because they have more leverage in the household. Men's education was important in preventing domestic violence, as well, perhaps because education allowed them to learn skills to negotiate conflict in non-violent ways. However, that is not always the case, as domestic violence cuts across educational barriers in Bangladesh (Schuler et al, 1996).

Table 4. Prevalence of violence against women

		Prevalence of physical violence against women (%)								Prevalence of sexual violence against women (%)			
		All perpetrators		By intimate partner						All perpetrators		By intimate partner	
				Lifetime			Last 12 months						
					Severity of violence			Severity of violence					
Country or area	Year	Lifetime	Last 12 months	Total	Moderate	Severe	Total	Moderate	Severe	Lifetime	Last 12 months	Lifetime	Last 12 months
Africa													
Egypt	1995/96	35	..	34	..	..	13	..	..	..	..	..	..
Ethiopia – province	2002	..	..	49	13	35	29	7	22	..	..	59	44
Mozambique	2004	48	17	36	..	..	15	..	..	24	9	12	6
Namibia – city	2001	..	..	31	11	20	16	5	11	..	..	17	9
United Republic of Tanzania – city	2001/02	..	..	33	16	17	15	6	8	..	..	23	13
United Republic of Tanzania – province	2001/02	..	..	47	22	25	19	8	11	..	..	31	18
Zambia	2001/02	59	..	48	..	..	27	..	..	..	..	..	..
Asia													
Azerbaijan	2006	13	8	13	..	..	10	..	..	4	..	3	2
Bangladesh – city	2001	..	..	40	21	19	19	9	10	..	..	37	20
Bangladesh – province	2001	..	..	42	22	19	16	7	9	..	..	50	24
Cambodia[a]	2000	23	..	18	..	..	15	..	..	..	..	..	..
China, Hong Kong SAR	2005	12	2	6	..	..	1	..	..	14	3	5	1
India[a]	1998/2000	21	..	19	..	..	10	..	..	..	..	..	..
Maldives	2006	..	..	18	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	7	..
Philippines	2005	15	5	10	..	..	3	..	..	6	2	3	1
Republic of Korea	2004	..	..	16	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	7	..
Thailand – city	2000	..	..	23	10	13	8	3	5	..	..	30	17
Thailand – province	2000	..	..	34	16	18	13	5	8	..	..	29	16
Turkey	2008	..	..	39	21	18	10	..	..	..	..	15	7
Latin America and the Caribbean													
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)[b]	2003	..	..	36	..	..	7	..	..	..	..	12	3
Brazil – city	2000/01	..	..	27	12	16	8	5	3	..	..	29	9
Brazil – province	2000/01	..	..	34	14	20	13	5	8	..	..	14	6
Colombia	2000	41	..	44	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Costa Rica	2003	47	11	33	..	..	7	..	..	41	7	15	3
Dominican Republic	2002	24	..	22	..	..	11	..	..	..	..	..	..
Ecuador	2004	..	..	31	..	..	10	..	..	..	..	12	4
Haiti	2000	35	..	29	..	..	21	..	..	..	..	..	..
Mexico	2006	40	..	23	..	..	..	..	..	44	..	11	..
Nicaragua	1997/98	33	..	30	..	..	13	..	..	..	..	..	..
Paraguay	2004	..	..	19	..	..	7	..	..	..	..	8	3
Peru	2000	47	..	42	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Peru – city	2000	..	..	49	23	26	17	7	10	..	..	23	7
Peru – province	2000	..	..	61	12	49	25	4	21	..	..	47	23
Oceania													
Samoa	2000	..	..	41	17	24	18	6	12	..	..	20	12
Solomon Islands	2008	..	..	46	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	55	..
More developed regions													
Albania	2002	..	..	8	..	..	5	..	..	..	..	3	2
Australia	2002/03	48	8	25	..	..	4	..	..	34	4	8	1
Canada[c]	2004	..	..	7	..	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	..
Czech Republic	2003	51	12	35	..	..	8	..	..	35	5	11	2
Denmark	2003	38	4	20	..	..	1	..	..	28	2	6	—
Finland	2005/06	44 [d]	12 [d]	18 [e]	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	4 [f]	..
France	2003	17	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	5	..		..
Germany	2003	37	..	28	..	..	..	..	..	13	..	7	..
Italy	2006	19	3	12	..	..	2	..	..	24	4	6	1
Japan – city	2000/01	..	..	13	9	4	3	3	1	..	..	6	1
Lithuania	2000	..	..	33	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	8	..
New Zealand – city	2003	..	..	30	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	14	..
New Zealand – province	2003	..	..	38	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	22	..
Poland	2004	30	5	15	..	..	3	..	..	17	2	5	—
Republic of Moldova	2005	27	13	24	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	4	..
Serbia – city	2003	..	..	23	15	8	3	2	2	..	..	6	1
Switzerland	2003	27	1	9	..	..	1	..	..	25 [g]	1	3	—
United Kingdom[h]	2006/07	..	..	19	15	14	3	2	2	..	..	24	3

Predictors that have a correlation with domestic violence in Bangladesh, but have not been included in the full model of the current study, are pregnancy (Campbell, 2002; Garcia-Moreno et.al., 2006) and dowry (Bates et.al., 2004; Blanchet et.al.,2008; Naved et.al., 2007; Suran et.al., 2004). Ten per cent of ever-pregnant women in an urban area and 12% of ever pregnant women in rural area experienced violence while they were pregnant (Garcia-Moreno et. al., 2005). Of all the women who reported violence, 99% said that the biological father of the baby inflicted the violence. These constructs have significant import in the domestic violence literature pertaining to Bangladesh, but led to issues of multicolinearity in the current study, leading to the exclusion of those variables.

Specific Policy Implications

What is needed is a change in norms and beliefs about domestic violence in Bangladesh, in addition to an understanding of the negative ramifications of domestic violence on a mass scale. New parents need to be educated and be made aware of the effect of their actions on their children for actual change to take place so as to stop the intergenerational transmission of domestic violence. There are behavioral, emotional, and cognitive-functioning problems among children who are exposed to domestic violence (Edleson, 1999), and such information needs to be made widely available. As such, education programs for parents and social marketing campaigns for the masses need to be launched with the aim of sending two important messages: not to abuse significant others, and, not to do it in front of children as it has mental health effects, including normalization of violence, and desensitization of violence, which makes them more likely to abuse, as well as, remain in abusive relationships as adults. At the same time, education initiatives need to be bolstered so that more men and women receive an education, while enforcing marriage laws that forbid child marriage.

Thus, in order to bring about global and environmental changes in addition to family-level changes in terms of domestic violence, three major pieces of legislation need to be modified. One, witnessing inter-parental violence has to be included as part of the child abuse laws given the extent to which children are affected by such violence. Two, those who marry their adolescent children off need to be penalized harshly, given the significant inverse correlation between marital age and domestic violence. Three, legislature should mandate schools to identify children who witness such violence at home by keeping in-house psychotherapists, and to put in place a mechanism via which violence can be reported and mediated in an informal setting, before legal action is taken. Relatedly, schools should be mandated to include a course on ethics that would teach basic ideas about domestic violence, so that even if children learn violent behavior at home, they learn that such behavior is wrong from an early age. A multi-pronged effort to reduce domestic violence in a culture where such violence is normalized is the way forward. This combination of legislative change and campaigns to create awareness about domestic violence will affect not only current domestic violence, but domestic violence among future generations, while also addressing the short-term mental health effects and trauma that children endure as they witness such violence. For children who have already witnessed domestic violence, there is a need for programs to ameliorate the existing trauma. As such, parents need to take accountability and utilize existing mental health facilities to help their children, and the government needs to take responsibility of making sure that there are treatment centers that can provide competent services to those who need them. A needs-assessment should be conducted to decide whether new institutions need to be set up to address this problem, or whether current institutions can be expanded to do so.

Limitations

The study is constrained by the measures of the dataset, as well as the cross-sectional design of the study. It is also susceptible to problems that come with self-reports in that, respondents may under or over-report. In terms of generalizability, since the study only uses information gathered from a nationally representative sample of women, not men, the findings can be generalized to women in Bangladesh only.

The findings have support from the extant literature, and the new findings have theoretical merit, which makes the findings of this study important for policymakers in Bangladesh, as well as researchers who can continue to test and falsify the theory presented. Future researchers could also elucidate the context of the linkages found in this study by conducting qualitative interviews using ethnographic methods to gain a deeper understanding of the nature of the linkage.

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