Restorative Justice In Relation to Collectivism/Individualism, Shyness, and Conflict Resolution Method Preference

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ABSTRACT

Restorative justice has been widely practiced across countries, but it is still a relatively new concept in Malaysia. Its implementation in the nation is desired, however, there are issues of culture, shyness, and the people's preference of conflict resolution methods that can interfere with its effectiveness. This paper seeks to explore the individual degree of collectivism/individualism and shyness of the Malaysian people and the kinds of conflict resolution practice that they prefer. The findings showed that the sample is collectivistic and individualistic in general, but they are more collectivistic when it comes to decision making relating to criminal cases. Although the sample appears to be shyer, they seem to be less shy in criminal context. Restorative justice programs also seem to be a good fit in Malaysia since authority is a preferred way of resolving conflict, although they also prefer negotiation and mediation; and both are important elements in programs such as victim-offender mediation.

Keywords: Restorative justice, collectivism, individualism, shyness, conflict

INTRODUCTION

Restorative justice is an evolution of criminal justice system in many countries in the world. Rather than letting the court and the distant authorities decide what happens to the person who commits the crime, this practice lets the victims to come forward in the decision making process, and have a face-to-face session with the offenders (Wolhuter, Olley, & Denham, 2009). Hence, the offenders will be directly accountable to the victims. The movements of victims' rights that became the basis of restorative justice were initiated in the United States (Shapland, Willmore, & Duff, 1985; Austin/Travis County Victims' Services Task Force, 2005; Karmen, 2007).

Restorative justice is generally a practice that usually handles cases of minor offences such as mischief, assaults, and theft (Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, 2009). However, lately it has been considered for more serious crimes such as rapes, and violent crimes. Being documented as effective in preventing recidivism (e.g. Umbreit, Coates, & Roberts, 2000; Umbreit, Coates, &Vos, 2004; Bradshaw, Roseborough, &Umbreit, 2006), the practice has gained acceptance worldwide and being utilized in many countries such as New Zealand (Galaway, 1995; Maxwell & Liu, 2006), South Africa (Venter & Rankin, 2006), and in the Europe (Hydle, 2008). In fact, restorative justice was, part of it, inspired by a long-standing tradition in Maori tribe in New Zealand that used to do conferencing between the offenders and the community (Marshall, 1999; Van Ness & Strong, 2010).

ISSUES TO CONSIDER BEFORE IMPLEMENTATION OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Realizing its effectiveness in handling offenders and victims, Malaysia has begun to get acquainted with this concept although it has not been introduced in the country's criminal justice system (Prison Fellowship International, n.d.; Koshy, 2008). This is a great initiative since this might be a stepping stone for Malaysia to recognize the importance of victims' voice in the process of criminal justice. However, one important issue has to be raised. Restorative justice as a form of conflict resolution,

has been practiced in countries that value assertiveness and explicit expression of opinions; a characteristic of some individualist cultures (Triandis, 1991). Several research on this will be discussed which indicate varied findings.

An early research on conflict resolution was conducted to see if different cultures had different preference for conflict resolution (Leung, 1987). Leung presented a conflict scene to a group of Chinese and American respondents and asked them if they preferred the method of resolution to be "bargaining," "mediation," "inquisitorial adjudication," or "adversary adjudication". The Chinese respondents showed a high preference on mediation and bargaining, while the American respondents preferred the conflict to be settled adjudicatorily.

In response to Leung's research, Gire (1997) conducted a research to see if there was any difference in the preference of conflict resolution methods between Nigerian and Canadian respondents who are of collectivist and individualist culture respectively. The researcher presented a conflict scene and asked the respondents to choose a preferred resolution method between "threats," "acceptance of the situation," "negotiation," "mediation," and "arbitration". The conflicts were either between individuals or between groups. Nigerian respondents indicated that they preferred threats for interpersonal conflicts rather than for the intergroup ones, while Canadian respondents preferred willingness to accept the conflict in interpersonal over intergroup conflicts. However, in

the case of preference for arbitration, Nigerian respondents preferred the method to be applied on conflicts between groups rather than between individuals, while the Canadian counterparts did not differ in their answer. While Leung (1987) found a support for collectivist-individualist cultural influence per se, Gire has found that the pattern is inconclusive.

This led to the discussion of a more specific classification of types of cultures which are broken down to horizontal and vertical type of collectivism and individualism. In relation to this, Aizawa and Whatley (2006) hypothesized that there was a difference in shyness degree between cultures, and their level of collectivism and individualism, in relation to the horizontal and vertical types. Respondents from Japan, Chile, and the United States were involved to test this hypothesis. The respondents were given two sets of scales, being shyness scales and individualism-collectivism scales. While Japanese and Chileans were generally collectivist cultures, Japanese people were found to report a lesser level of horizontal, and vertical collectivism and horizontal individualism. It was also found that despite the cultural difference, Japanese respondents were the shyest among the three groups of participants, with their American counterparts being the least shy. This finding showed that being a collectivist group of people (as shown by the Japanese and Chilean respondents in this research) might be an indication of the people's level of shyness.

The members of collectivistic cultures believe that a society or group is the basic unit of survival (Triandis, Brislin, &Hui, 1988; Hui&Villareal, 1989). They believe in living in societies; protecting and being loyal to their society (Hofstede, 1991). These promote maintaining harmony and concern about others. Malaysia, according to Hofstede (n.d.), is a collectivist country. Therefore, Malaysians are more characterized in ways that are difficult for them to voice their opinions or feelings as it might not be healthy for the relationship with their groups. Consequently, most of the people will more likely hold their opinions back. It may also be attributed to the influence of religion as each religion is concerned with the values of its adherence, especially in sensitive matters that could lead to clashes.

Thus, Malaysians become more confined, especially in cases where expressiveness is concerned. According to Triandis (1991), people in collectivist cultures spend much of their time building relationships because the members of the groups they belong to matter to them. They believe in life long relationships (Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai, & Lucca, 1988). As a result, they are concerned more about others' needs, views, and goals rather thanexpressing their own opinion. They are afraid to voice out their feelings because they do not want to be excluded from the society.

Therefore, it is expected that Malaysians in this paper will exhibit behaviors that

are consistent to the characteristics of people in collectivist culture, such as depending on groups and seeking for group harmony. If Malaysian people are similar in terms of their level of shyness with that of other people of the same type of culture (Aizawa & Whatley, 2006), then this characteristic can have huge impacts on the practice of restorative justice in this country. Restorative justice requires the participants to be expressive and participative in the sessions. Thus, one would ask, "Will Malaysians be able to be as assertive as people in the individualist countries?

Furthermore there are various aspects of restorative justice programs that are relevant to the culture and shyness of the victims (O'Brien, Buttcane, & Seward, 2008). Although the author did not mention the applicability of these components in terms of the issue of culture and shyness of the victims, the implication is overwhelmingly alerting. Alongside with the need to involvethe community, the process is expected to involve issues like 1) encounter, 2) amends, 3) reintegration, and 4) inclusion. The emotions involved in the encounter should help the process of the program, rather than impede it. Therefore, a victim's willingness and confidence level should be something that the program handler should be aware of beforehand. Other than that, an issue that the program handler needs to understand is how the victim sees the offender: Is he someone who lacks integration, or someone who needs help? In a restorative justice program, all parties are expected to participate and do

their share of roles in the process, including the victim, the offender and the community. Communication (or another important component, the dialogue) is the key to a successful implementation of restorative justice program.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

This paper seeks to understand and investigate Malaysians' level of shyness and collectivism-individualism, and their general perception of restorative justice and its possible implementation in this country. It is hypothesized that shyness level and collectivist culture of Malaysia will positively correlate with the perception of Malaysians on the implementation of restorative justice. Perception of the practice of restorative justice will be analyzed from the respondents' opinion of certain procedures of restorative justice programs.

The importance of this research includes providing conceptual support for the restorative justice practice to be implemented in this country. Although the effectiveness of this practice has been supported in literature, we still need to be cautious of blind implementation which could lead to complications. This research aims to examine whether certain aspects of restorative justice programs can be adjusted to fit the culture of a collectivist country like Malaysia. Thus, the objectives of this paper are to,

1. Examine the levels of shyness and collectivism-individualism, the general perception of a sample of Malaysians on restoratice justice and if they think that

it will be a good practice in this country

2. Explore if Malaysians will prefer restorative justice as a way of dealingwith crimes and offenders in this country, and

3. Provide the basis of further research if any amendments of restorative justice programs need to be made in order to be applicable to the people in this country.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

This research targeted Malaysians in general, and any Malaysian is a potential respondent. However, the researchers specified that the respondents should at least be ofthe age of 18 to qualify as a respondent. In total, 85 respondents who consisted of Malaysians ranging from 18 to 62 years old successfully completed the questionnaires. The researchers employed convenience sampling method; where Malaysians in various places (e.g. café, restaurant, hospital, university classrooms, etc.) were approached and asked if they were

willing to participate. The consent form was given before survey and they were free to refuse the survey if they decided so.The demographic data of the sample was as shown in Table 1.

Materials and Measurements

The research employed survey as the design, where only basic stationery and a tape recorder was utilized in the session. However, there were four measurements used for the purpose of measuring the variables which included,

1. Shyness scale was adapted from Cheek and Buss (1981). This scale has been reported to have an internal consistency of .82 (Aizawa & Whatley, 2006).

2. The individualism-collectivism scale was adapted from Singelis, Triandis, Bhawuk, and Gelfand (1995). In the original research, the questions consist of four main divisions namely horizontal collectivism, horizontal individualism, vertical collectivism, and vertical individualism. The internal consistency of each division was .74, .67, .68, and .74 respectively (Aizawa & Whatley, 2006).

3. A questionnaire on the preference of conflict resolution method was employed from Gire (1997). The questionnaire featured a story of two neighbors having a conflict about their lawn. The respondents would be presented with five possible kinds of conflict resolution methods: Threat, negotiation, acceptance, mediation, and authority.

TABLE 1
Demographic characteristics of respondents

Demographic characteristic	n
Gender	male = 32
	female = 52
	missing = 1
Race	Malay = 64
	Chinese = 11
	Indians = 8
	Others = 1
	missing = 1

4. A set of questions pertaining to the respondents' perception on the applicability of restoratice justice practice in this country was developed by the researchers themselves.

The questions were built upon the basis of the three previous concepts, namely collectivism-individualism, shyness, and conflict resolution method. These concepts were made into similar questions, in addition to a crime situation presented. Only some items were adapted and some were changed significantly. Four most common offences (as stated in Umbreit, Coates, & Roberts, 2000) were used, which are vandalism, assault, theft, and burglary. Table 2 shows some of the items developed for the perception scale while Table 3 shows the result of Pearson correlation analysis between Shyness Scale, Collectivism/Individualism Scale, and their respective adaptations in the perception scale.

The questions asked the respondents the various aspects of restorative justice programs – especially victim-offender mediation – in relation to the components from O'Brien, Buttcane, and Seward's account (2008). These various aspects include the involvement of community and others in the decision making process within the criminal justice system, the victims' willingness and confidence issues in actively participating, the preferred method of mediation in resolving conflict, and if Malaysians prefer to act alone in making a decision.

Five questions were made for each of the three components – namely individualism/collectivism, shyness, and conflict resolution method preference – with a total of 15 questions. The points assigned were the same as the rest of the questionnaires to avoid confusion, with 1 representing "mostly disagree," 2 for "disagree," 3 for "neutral," 4 for "agree," ans 5 for "mostly agree." Therefore, the highest score a respondent could yield for a certain component would be 25 points, and the lowest would be 5 points. The higher the score, the higher the respondent possessed the measured characteristic.

Before the administration of the sets of questionnaires, the participants were first asked to provide their consent in participating in this research. After obtaining their informed consent, in order to ensure that the participants answer the questions correctly, the researchers handed out the first three questionnaires, which were the collectivism-individualism scale, the shyness scale, and the preference of the conflict resolution method. Next, the researchers described and explained what restorative justice was. The description was offered in Malay or English language as follows:

> *"Restorative Justice is a practice of criminal justice system where the crime victims are given a chance to participate in the justice process. The victims of crime will be given an opportunity to talk about it and express their feelings or dissatisfactions, and the power to contribute to the decision that can be sanctionedonto the offenders.*

The offenders will be given a chance to apologize and make amends. Usually this practice is done with offenders who committed minor offences such as theft, bullying, and snatching. This second set of questionnaire will evaluate your perception on the practice of Restorative Justice in Malaysia".

After this explanation, the respondents were given an opportunity to voice out any concerns should there be any. Then,

the fourth questionnaire was administered. Once completed, the participants were debriefed with necessary information about the research should there be any.

RESULTS

The scales of shyness and individualism/ collectivism were analyzed using means whereas the conflict resolution survey was analyzed using descriptive frequencies. Meanwhile, the restorative justice applicability perception scale was analyzed item-by-item and also by

TABLE 2
Adapted items in the self-built questionnaires

Scale	Items	Their respective adapted items from perception scale
Individualism item from Collectivism/Individualism Scale	I rather depend on myself than on others	I can decide the fate of the person who does wrong to me without anyone's help
Collectivism item from Collectivism/Individualism Scale	It is important to consult close friends and get their ideas before making a decision	If there's someone who breaks into my house, the community should also participate with me to decide what to do to the person
Shyness Scale	I feel tense when I'm with people I don't know well	I do not feel comfortable if I have to confront the person who steals my money
Conflict resolution survey	Arbitration by authority	The person who damages my valuables should be judged by an authority

TABLE 3
Correlation coefficients for the original questionnaires and the perception scale

Scales	Correlation coefficient	Scales
Shyness scale/shyness items in perception scale	r = .688, n = 83 (missing = 2), p = .001	Shyness scale/shyness items in perception scale
Individualism items/ Individualism items in perception scale	r = .401, n = 84 (missing = 1), p = .001	Individualism items/ Individualism items in perception scale
Collectivism items/collectivism items in perception scale	r = .009, n = 84 (missing = 1), p = .936	Collectivism items/collectivism items in perception scale

descriptive frequencies. The individualism and collectivism were analyzed according to individual basis. Although Triandis (personal communication, November 23, 2010) insisted that the scale should yield a mean of score that should explain whether a culture is individualistic or collectivistic in nature, this current research is concerned with the assumption that the score belongs to some of the respondents, which could result in the high – or low – score of both individualism and collectivism. Since the ratios between races werealso imbalanced, the analysis was only performed on Malaysians in general and between genders.

Average Scores

Shyness scale

In general, the Malaysian sample yielded a mean of 53.6 scores in the shyness scale. Although not significant, this is higher than the mean of scores from the scale developer's sample, which was 51.8 (Cheek, n.d.). Female respondents appeared to be shyer than male respondents, with means of 55.2 and 50 scores respectively.

Collectivism/Individualism scale

The means of scores for vertical and horizontal individualism and collectivism showed that male respondents scored higher, except for vertical collectivism. Male respondents scored a mean of 23.2, 28.2, and 30.9 on vertical individualism, horizontal individualism, and horizontal individualism respectively, with the female counterparts scoring 21.1, 25.5, and 28.7.

Male respondents only scored slightly lesser than female respondents for vertical collectivism, with a mean of 24.4, while the female respondents had an average of 24.6 for the division.

Conflict resolution method preference

The Malaysian sample showed the highest preference for negotiation as a conflict resolution method, with a mean of 4.3 scores, while the lowest score with a mean of 1.8 for the use of threat. For other methods, which are acceptance, mediation, and the use of authority, the sample scored a mean of 2.1, 3.6, and 3.5 respectively. It is interesting to note that male and female respondents scored similarly for threat (1.8), negotiation (4.35 and 4.36), and acceptance (2.1). Male respondents preferred mediation (3.78) and the use of authority (3.78) more than their female counterparts (3.67 and 3.48 respectively).

Perception of Restorative Justice Programs Implementation

For the perception scale, each component is analyzed separately. Generally, the Malaysian sample yielded a mean of 12.2 scores for possible shyness in the practice. The means for collectivism and individualism in the perception scale were considerably low, with a score mean of 5.98 and 8.8 respectively. For the conflict resolution method component, the item is analyzed separately. Acceptance was preferred the least (2.8) and threat slightly higher (2.4), and the use of authority was preferred the most (3.7). There were

preferences for negotiation (3.5) and mediation (3.2).

On the comparison between genders, male respondents appeared to be more individualistic (10.0) than their female counterparts (8.2). On the other hand, female respondents scored higher in collectivism (a mean of 6.1) than their male counterparts (a mean of 5.9). Female respondents appeared to be shyer with a mean of 12.6 and male respondents scored a mean of 11.5. On the conflict resolution method, male respondents preferred the use of authority, acceptance, and the use of threat (3.8, 2.0, and 2.8 respectively) than female respondents (3.6, 1.9, and 2.3). On the other hands, female respondents preferred to use negotiation (3.63) and mediation (3.4) than their male counterparts (3.46 and 3.0).

Some of the correlational analyses that show the relationships between some of the measures are worth mentioning. The correlational coefficients can be seen in Table 4. From this Table, we can see that each of the components in the perception scale is significantly related to their respective original scales, except for the collectivism and negotiation component in the perception scale. Each of the items in the conflict resolution method is also significantly related to their corresponding items in the perception scale, except for negotiation.

Component-by-component analysis

For the perception scale, each component was analyzed individually since they represent various issue that can occur in a restorative justice program as shown in Table 5. For items on shyness component (item 1, 4, 7, 10, and 12), it was found that the respondents feel bold (42.4%) and less shy (67.1%) if meeting with the offender face-to-face. They are also less nervous (42.4%) and 49.4% agreed that they feel confident meeting the offender. However, there are mixed responses when it comes to feeling comfortable, with 29.4% disagreed and 31.8% agreed that they would feel comfortable meeting.

All in all, 54.1% agreed that community should be involved in decision making process involving criminal justice system, and a considerable cluster of the respondents showed that they would not let race be an influencing factor (28.2%). On the component of individualism, although 31.8% agreed that they would feel annoyed if others try to get involved in deciding what to do to the offender, but they agreed that they could not decide without anyone's help (29.4%) and that they disagree that they do not need others' opinions (42.4%).

For the component of conflict resolution method, the use of authority was rated as the most preferred method when it comes to dealing with a crime (mean of 3.7). Acceptance was deemed as the least preferred method (mean of 2.0), followed by the use of threat (mean of 2.4). Additionally, negotiation and mediation were also reported as preference (with a mean of 3.5 and 3.2 respectively).

TABLE 4
Correlation coefficients between the original scales and the components in the perception scale

Scale/Item	Shyness component	Individualism component	Collectivism component	Threat item	Negotiation item	Acceptance item	Mediation item	Authority item
Shyness scale	R=0.688, p<.001							
Individualism		R=0.401, p<.001						
Collectivism			R=0.009, p>.936					
Threat				R=0.313, p<.004				
Negotiation					r=0.041, p>.406			
Acceptance						r=0.373, p<.001		
Mediation							r=0.327, p<.042	
The use of authority								r=0.231, p<0.33

TABLE 5
Scores obtained by the respondents in the perception scale

No.	Item	1 = Strongly disagree	2 = Disagree	3 = Neutral	4 = Agree	5 = Strongly agree
1	I feel shy to see face-to-face with the person who wrongs me	**27.1**	**40.0**	17.6	12.9	2.4
2	I believe if we talk to the person who wrongs us face-to-face, we can achieve a peaceful agreement.	2.4	10.6	**24.7**	**50.6**	11.8
3	If there's someone who breaks into my house, the community should also participate with me to decide what to do to the person.	5.9	7.1	**18.8**	**54.1**	14.1
4	I feel bold when it comes to confronting the person who bullies me.	0.0	17.6	**21.2**	**42.4**	18.8
5	If there's a person who steals my vehicle, there should be a third-party to decide what the best action between me and the person is.	9.4	**18.8**	15.3	**47.1**	9.4
6	If the person who does wrong to me is the same race as me, I can be quick to forgive him.	18.8	**28.2**	**29.4**	17.6	5.9
7	I do not feel comfortable if I have to confront the person who steals my money.	18.8	**29.4**	15.3	**31.8**	4.7
8	The person who damages my valuables should be judged by an authority.	2.4	10.6	**20.0**	**47.1**	**20.0**
9	I feel annoyed if others get involved in my way deciding the fate of the person who wrongs me.	3.5	28.2	**29.4**	**31.8**	7.1
10	I feel nervous when I have to face with the person who bullies me.	17.6	**42.4**	**22.4**	17.6	0.0
11	I should just accept it if someone steals my things.	**36.5**	**37.6**	17.6	3.5	4.7
12	I am confident to confront the person who breaks into my house.	3.5	12.9	**17.6**	**49.4**	16.5
13	I feel that threat is the best way to deal with the person who tries to inflict injury on me.	17.6	**37.6**	**25.9**	16.5	2.4
14	I can decide the fate of the person who does wrong to me without anyone's help.	7.1	**29.4**	**27.1**	23.5	12.9
15	I don't need others' opinions to decide what should happen to the person who wrongs me.	8.2	**42.4**	**24.7**	17.6	7.1

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The findings indicate the exploration of Malaysians' perception on the various aspects of the implementation of restorative justice programs in this country. On the overall, the sample shows that they can individually be collectivistic and individualistic perceptions. Although it has been stated in the literature that Malaysia consists of collectivistic cultures, (and it has been shown so in the results), they can also be individualistic in nature, depending on the context where it requires them to be so (Triandis, personal communication, November 23, 2010). According to the findings, in a context where they have to make a decision in regards to a criminal situation (e.g. whether or not to report, whether or not to tell the family), the Malaysian sample shows that they are collectivistic. They need to seek other people's opinions, and they need to ask their significant others, such as their family or friends, when making a decision. Since restorative justice programs have a strong element of the community, this characteristic of collectivism can be a helpful aspect in the implementation.

However, it is interesting to note that although Malaysians appeared to be collectivistic, the results for collectivism in the perception scale were mixed. They tended to be more collectivistic when the question item asked "if they needed an opinion" (item 15), but they appeared to be more individualistic in item 9, when they were asked if they would "be annoyed" if others get in their way of making decision. This might account to different definition of "collectivism" in Triandis' scale and the one that was implied in the perception scale. Collectivism as purported in the literature is a characteristic of a culture whose members value the relationships with the community and the influence the community has in their life. However, in face value, "to get in their way of decision making" might not be inclusive with the definition offered by the literature (e.g. Triandis 1991). In face value, the item suggested that while members of collectivistic culture value the opinions of other members, but the fact that victimization is a very personal experience, to be stripped off of their decision making ability might challenge their personal individualism.

It is similar with the negotiation item in the original scale that does not really correlate with then negotiation component in the perception scale. This might show us that the setting of the original scale is different than the setting intended in the perception scale. The original scale deals with two neighbors who are in conflict, while the perception scale asks the respondents if they would negotiate if they are victimized. Although the average scores and the sum of score do not really tell this, Looking at the response individually can give us a perspective. For example, two respondents gave a "5" for negotiation in the original scale, but "1" for negotiation in the perception scale, and three respondents who gave a "5" negotiation in the original scale, but "2" for negotiation in the perception scale.

The purpose of comparing the average scores between male and female respondents was conducted because it can give us additional perspective of Malaysian population in terms of their collectivism-individualism, shyness, and preference of conflict resolution methods. Different genders are known to have their own psychological ways of dealing with the events around their life – and this includes victimization. The findings that show male respondents to be more individualistic and female respondents were more collectivistic give insight about their openness towards other's involvement in their decision making. Female respondents' higher average score of shyness is an early indication of what to do and not to do should restorative justice be really implemented in this country. However, this paper only provides the basic picture and it is suggested that in future studies, higher cohort of sample can be obtained to give more accurate description of collectivism-individualism and shyness between genders.

However, since restorative justice programs rely very scarcely on the involvement of the local authority, education is important to inform on the processes and structures of the programs. This is because the findings show that they still have a strong dependence on the authority when/if they are victimized and that there are no agencies or institutions that specialize in and are concerned about the victims' welfare where they can go to (Aziz, 2010). The victims in the current system are very passive, and very few decisions actually involve their participation. Fortunately, since one of the programs of restorative justice involves mediation (i.e. Victim-Offender Mediation), the sample shows that they also prefer mediation and negotiation as a way to resolve a conflict. By highlighting the benefits of mediation in the program as an educational effort, Malaysians can understand on how this program can satisfy the victims through their participation; and help the offender lessens the likelihood that he or she repeats the offence.

On the issue of shyness, generally Malaysian respondents, although not statistically significant, scored a higher mean of shyness than the original sample in the research of the scale developer. Female respondents showed even a higher mean. This might affect how restorative justice, which will need more of their participation, is implemented in the country. A future research can be conducted to further identify the level of shyness Malaysians would have when it comes to standing up for their right and how some adjustments to the programs can be done so Malaysians can fully benefit from it.

Another issue worth mentioning in the aspect of shyness is although the respondents were generally shyer than their western counterpart, they seemed to have a different shyness-related personality in the perception scale. People in collectivistic culture tend to be concerned about the feelings of the members of their same group, but in criminal cases, there may be another explanation; one that is particularly related to the concept of ingroups and

outgroups (Tajfel, 1974). In criminal cases, the offenders are considered as the victims' outgroup, which explains their attitudes and behaviors toward the former. There are various stakes involved when a crime is committed, and the shyness of the victims as individuals in general might be outranked by the victims' feeling about the need to restitute the society's norms, and also uphold justice for themselves. By restituting the norms, the discussion of conflict resolution method comes to place.

Many victims choose to involve the authority, but it is undeniable that it is possible for them to channel their feeling about what is right by meeting the offender and having a dialogue. And this can be achieved only if there is proper education that addresses the possibilities and benefits of restorative justice programs in this country. An agency that handles victims' welfare needs to be established in order to be the platform for restorative justice programs to exist. This might take a while, but the first steps need to be taken. The Government of Malaysia needs to realize the potentials that these programs have on the advancement of the criminal justice system in the nation.

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