



Developing valid measures of parent-child relationships in Uganda, combining emic and etic constructs

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Introduction

- There is considerable evidence showing that family influences, particularly parenting, have a major influence on young people's lives.
- Parent-child relationships are important. Although many parenting interventions are being delivered in East Africa, few have been rigorously evaluated.
- There is lack of culturally appropriate, well validated measures of parent-child relationships since many interventions have been developed in HICs.

Aim

- To develop valid parental and child self-report measures of generic dimensions of parent-child relationships in SSA in order to:
 - Investigate how these dimensions are related to child outcomes
 - Evaluate parenting interventions robustly

We are trying to clarify:

- Response options suitable for semi-literate populations
- Social desirability biases
- The minimum age for surveying children
- How to interpret inconsistencies between parent and child reports
- Whether etic parenting dimensions from the North are appropriate in SSA

Study setting

- Conducted fieldwork from November 2012 in 2 parishes in Wakiso district, Central Uganda
- Peri-urban and rural populations
- Variety of occupations: formal employment, fishing, subsistence farming, trading
- Mixed ethnicity

Methods: stages of the project

1. Exploratory **semi-structured interviews**

2. **Draft** questions and **cognitive testing**

3. **Pilot first draft** full questionnaires for parents and children

4. **Revise** questionnaires following **checks and factor analyses**

- Cognitive testing of new questions

5. **Pilot second draft** full questionnaires for parents and children

6. **Revise** questionnaires following **checks and factor analyses**

Cognitive testing of new questions

7. **Administer third draft** full questionnaires for parents and children

8. **Test-retest** for reliability: repeat questionnaires with same sample one month later

1. Exploratory semi-structured interviews

- Explored local concepts to describe parent-child relationships
 - 10 parents (5 mothers, 5 fathers) of 10-14 year olds; 3 practitioners implementing parenting programmes

- Main findings:
 - Parenting very pertinent issue for parents
 - Great variation between parents in how treated their children
 - Parenting roles highly gendered
 - fathers seen to play minimal role in child care, mainly providing financial support

 - Caring for children demonstrated through:
 - material provision
 - teaching obedience and respect
 - encouragement at school

 - Many parents attributed bad behaviour of their children to external influences

 - Community/collective parenting valued, though 'competitive' parenting on increase

2. Draft questions and cognitive testing

- Drafted questions for parents and for children aged 10-14
 - Adapted existing measures and wrote new ones
 - Drew on Pianta Scale, Alabama Parenting Questionnaire, WHO Gender Based Violence questionnaire, etc.
 - Trying to capture indigenous constructs of parenting: material provision; developing respectability; encouraging education; collective parenting
- Administered questions to 10 parents and 10 children
- Checked appropriateness, length, translation and comprehension
- A week later, interviewed the same parents and children about their understanding of the questionnaire
 - length of questionnaire, cultural appropriateness, translation, matching questions for parent and child.
- Questionnaire revision

3. Pilot first draft full questionnaires for parents and children

- Random sample of 100 parent-child dyads across 2 villages: parents with child aged 10-14
- Data entered in STATA:
 - Checks for ceiling effects
 - Checks for response consistency
 - Factor analyses for factor loading

4. Revise questionnaires following checks and factor analyses

- Further questionnaire revision based on factor analyses
- Conducted feasibility and cognitive testing of the new questions in another site to check for:
 - Appropriateness
 - Length
 - Translation
 - Comprehension
- After one week interviewed the same parents and children about their understanding of the questions
- Minor adjustments to the questionnaire

5. Pilot second draft full questionnaires

- A random sample of 100 parent-child dyads across 2 new villages: parent with child aged 10-14
- Data entered in STATA:
 - Checks for ceiling effect
 - Checks for response consistency
 - Confirmatory and exploratory factor analyses for factor loading
 - Subscales hidden within larger scales
 - Better results when restrict analyses to mothers

6. Revise questionnaires following checks and factor analyses

- Alpha coefficients of >0.5 considered acceptable, given very small sample size
- Improved alphas by excluding poorly loading items in some scales

Table 1: Final constructs in children's questionnaire

Construct	No. of items	Factor loading
1. Parental connectedness to child	7	0.73
2. Child's emotional relationship with parents	5	0.64
3. Positive parenting/discipline	4	0.53
4. Provision for child's necessities	4	0.68
5. Behavioural control: harsh parenting	5	0.71
6. Behavioural control: parental monitoring	6	0.75
7. Behavioural control: child's obedience and respect	4	0.68
8. Parents' psychological control	4	0.62
9. Parents' respect for child's autonomy	5	0.63
10. Parents modelling good behaviour	3	0.57
11. Parents modelling parental conflict	3	0.68
12. Parent-child communication about sex	3	0.50

Table 2: Final constructs in parents' questionnaire

Construct	No. of items	Factor loading
1. Parental connectedness to child	7	0.74
2. Parent-child conflict	5	0.77
3. Provision for child's necessities	4	0.60
4. Behavioural control: harsh parenting	4	0.75
5. Behavioural control: parental monitoring	4	0.62
6. Behavioural control: establishing obedience and respect	4	0.43
7. Behavioural control: perception of child's obedience and respect	3	0.56
8. Parents' psychological control	3	0.54
9. Parents' respect for autonomy	3	0.53
10. Parents modelling good behaviour	3	0.58
11. Parents modelling parental conflict	4	0.79
12. Parental conflict: communication	5	0.86
13. Parental conflict: violence	4	0.69
14. Parent's attitudes to gender based violence	4	0.53
15. Parent-child communication about sex	3	0.65
16. Parenting self-efficacy	4	0.52

Measures of connectedness that work best for parent and child questionnaires

Table 3: Parents' Questionnaire

Questions on connectedness	Factor loading
How often do you play with your child X?	0.72
How often do you get to know your child X's friends?	0.71
How often do you talk to your child X's friends?	0.71
How often do you hug your child X?	0.65
How often do you show your child X affection/ love?	0.54
How often do you ask your child X about her day?	0.54
How often do you listen to your child X?	0.49

Table 4: Children's Questionnaire

Questions on connectedness	Factor loading
If you are upset, how often does your female parent figure comfort you?	0.71
How often does your female parent figure ask about your day?	0.63
How often do you play games or do other fun things with your female parent figure?	0.56
How often does your female parent figure hug you?	0.67
How often does your female parent figure give you useful advice when you need it?	0.50
How often does your female parent figure have conversations with you?	0.57
When you have a problem, how often does your female parent figure try to find out what is wrong with you?	0.56

7&8. Test-retest for reliability

- Currently administering the 3rd full draft questionnaires with 50 parent-child dyads in the new parish
- After one month, they will be asked to complete exactly the same questionnaire a second time
- Test-retest for reliability will be assessed in terms of the intraclass correlation coefficient

Conclusion

- Validity of measures will be judged by:
 - internal consistency
 - reliability overtime
 - associations between reported parent-child relationships and child outcomes (Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire)
 - Associations between parent and child reports
- Main challenge:
 - very long process to develop suitable measures.

Remaining challenges

- Measuring ‘social distribution of parenting’ (Robert Serpell)
 - go beyond biological parents to ‘Female parent figure’ and ‘Male parent figure’
 - but only scope to collect data on one carer of each sex.

- Not successful in developing measures for indigenous constructs of:
 - collective parenting
 - Establishing obedience and respect (very low alpha 0.43)

- Not successful in developing measures of etic constructs of:
 - positive parental discipline
 - child disclosure to parents
 - gendered socialisation

- Can consistency between parent and child reports of parent-child relationship be used as a measure of validity?

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