Development of Gender-based Child Rearing Practices Scale

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to construct a survey instrument that evaluates attitudes pertaining to gender-based child-rearing practices. Firstly, items of the scale were determined through literature review and then judged by 5 experts. Based on experts' judgment, the Content Validity Index was computed. The scores indicated excellent content validity. Based on I-CVI, only 25 items were retained. Then this scale was administered via Google form to 135 general people of Bangladesh and Nepal (77 female & 58 male) aged between eighteen and fifty-five years, with a mean age of 28.16 years. The process of data analysis was initiated by conducting item analyses, which led to the retention of 22 items. Subsequently, a factor analysis was performed on the retained items. The outcome of the exploratory factor analysis indicated the presence of five factors: cross-gender activities, methods of discipline, expression of emotion, play, expected behavior. The present study found that the combination of these factors accounted for 58.22% of the total variance. Additionally, all inter-factor correlations were found to be statistically significant, providing evidence for the construct validity of the scale. The overall reliability of the scale was determined to be high, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .86. Furthermore, the reliabilities of each individual factor were deemed acceptable. The t-test result suggested that married, Bangladeshi, male's attitude about child rearing practices were more based on gender. The findings suggest that this tool exhibits a high degree of reliability and validity for measuring the intended construct. This tool will help researchers better understand about gender-based child rearing practices.

Keywords: Child rearing practices, socialization practices, attitudes.

Introduction

Gender serves as a social indicator and a significant personal distinction that potentially explains the variation in cognitive and behavioral patterns, including children's play (Johnson et al., 2005). Gender's impact on society is linked to self-perception, social interactions, occupational opportunities, family roles, and gender-

specific expectations. These elements determine the acceptable roles for both genders. One cognitive process that appears to be practically inescapable in humans, according to psychologists such as Bem (1983), is the division of people into groups. These groups can be divided based on ethnicity, age, religion, and other factors. However, we frequently divide humankind along gender lines i.e. male/female (Oakley, 2015).

The process of socialization involves the development of an individual who conforms to the norms, conventions, and rules of their surroundings (Beal, 1994). Gender socialization is a distinct type of socialization that concentrates on the instruction of children regarding their gender roles, educating them on the characteristics and behaviors associated with being male or female (Macrae, Stangor, & Hewstone, 1996). The process of gender socialization commences with the basic inquiry of whether an individual is male or female at birth (Gleitma, Fridlund, & Reisberg, 2000). Gender differences emerge as a result of our socialization, particularly during childhood and adolescence (Beal, 1994). According to Golombok and Fivush (1994), at the age of two, children typically begin categorizing themselves and others based on gender.

Miller (1987) posited that parents exert the most significant impact on the formation of gender roles in children during their early years of life. The construction of gender in queer theory is performative and socially constructed, lacking permanence. It recognizes the fluidity, multiplicity, and diverse expressions of gender beyond the traditional binary framework, challenging societal norms and encouraging self-determination and exploration of individual gender identities (Rudy, 2001). On the other hand, gender analysts and feminist theory approach gender from a critical perspective, focusing on the power dynamics and social structures that shape gender roles and inequalities. Many studies on children's gender socialization are now guided by social cognitive theory (Bandura & Bussey, 2004) and ecological models (McHale, Crouter & Whiteman, 2003), which place the family at the center of the process. Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory has been considered in this study. According to Unger and Crawford's (1993), gender typing is not predetermined by biology, but rather emerges from the daily communications between a developing child and their social environment. Children learn appropriate behaviors for their gender through social learning, including observing same-sex parents and media messages. The influence of parents on gender socialization is a key concern for developmental psychologists. Parent-child interactions shape gender identities and expectations, which are now more varied than in the past (Muncie, 1995).

The role of families in shaping children's gender-related behavior has been a topic of increasing interest among researchers (Crouter, Head, Bumpus, & McHale, 2001), although it is acknowledged that other factors also play a role. Parents tend to interact differently with boys and girls, with language, emotional expression, and social ties

being more emphasized in interactions with girls (Chaplin, Cole, & Zahn-Waxler, 2005; Eisenberg, Fabes, & Murphy, 1996). In South Asia, parents and communities often reinforce societal prejudices and discrimination based on gender, age, socio-economic status, language, disability, religion, and ethnicity, which can have long-term effects on children's access to education, age at marriage, and physical and psychological health (Choudhary & Jabeen, 2008). Researchers have developed tools to quantify parents' attitudes toward children's gender roles, including two scales found in the literature (Lee Burge, 1981; O'Donnel & Swim, 1993).

Rationale of the Study

Parental child-rearing practices significantly contribute to socialization, with gender-based expectations varying between daughters and sons. Daughters are often expected to visit other households, which is influenced by cultural, religious, and biological beliefs. These beliefs include the complementary nature of genders in Hinduism and Taoism, the natural connection between men and women in Islam and Christianity, and the biological imperative for genetic diversity. These beliefs contribute to the expectations placed on daughters to facilitate social interactions and promote growth. There is a need for a validated instrument to measure the links between people's opinions about gender roles and child rearing practices. Fagot and Leinbach (1995) utilized the Attitudes toward Women Scale to evaluate adult attitudes towards gender roles. They hypothesized that parental views on adult gender roles would be reflected in their attitudes towards their children. In contrast, other researchers such as Blakemore (1998) and Katz and Kofkin (1997) have used tools that focus on children's gender-related behavior, however, these measures were not validated. Therefore, no validated measure of attitudes towards gender-related behaviors in children has been employed.

However, other researchers, such as Blakemore (1998) and Katz and Kofkin (1997), have utilized tools that focus on children's gender-related behavior, but these instruments were not validated or publicly available. As a result, neither of these approaches has utilized a validated measure of attitudes towards gender-related behaviors in children.Therefore, the aim of this study is to create a questionnaire that assesses people's attitudes toward gendered child rearing practices. This study is the first to develop a questionnaire for Bangladesh and Nepal that includes items in line with South Asian culture and demonstrates gender differences. This tool will provide researchers with a better understanding of gender-based child rearing practices.

Objectives of the Study

General Objective

To estimate the psychometric properties of the gender-related children rearing practices for application with the general population in Bangladesh and Nepal.

Specific Objective

1. To develop a reliable and valid scale to assess the multidimensional aspects of general people's attitudes about gender-related children rearing practices.
2. To see the differences of male and female people's attitudes about gender-related children rearing practices.
3. To see the differences of married and unmarried people's attitudes about gender-related children rearing practices.
4. To see the differences of Bangladesh and Nepal people's attitudes about gender-related children rearing practices.

Method

Study Site and Study Population

We recruited 135 participants via voluntary online Google form (e.g., https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1FWp2bZalADP57yuKg-dnNdid0ZLPoKeK0e5NplxJJ7s/).

Most participants were resident in Bangladesh (73.3%) and 26.7% were Nepali. All adults living in Bangladesh and Nepal were considered as a study population.

Sample Size Determination

Respondent-to-item criteria vary from 5:1 (i.e., one hundred twenty-five respondents for a 25-item questionnaire) to 10:1 (Kock & Hadaya, 2018). Because of the variations in the form of the questionnaire used, there are no absolute guidelines for the sample size required to validate a questionnaire (Tsang, Royse, & Terkawi, 2017). As larger samples are always better than smaller samples, this study decided to recruit 125 general population (five respondents for the 25-item questionnaire). However, we got 135 samples which were way more than our expected sample size.

Study Design

The study employed a cross-sectional survey design.

Study Duration

This study was conducted in July 2021 for one month.

Sampling Technique

All the available and willing adults of selected study sites were approached for data collection. A convenient sampling technique was administered for the data collection.

Selection Criteria

An adult between18-60 year of age who could use technology and had access to the internet during the time period, data was collected from them. Adults who hadn't accessed the internet during the time period data and above 60 years were excluded from the study.

Tool Development Process

The development process of gender-related children rearing practices scale for general population was completed by the following steps:

The first step was to identify and define the construct, which involved conducting a thorough literature search for documented strategies in five domains. The second step involved creating a pool of items based on the identified constructs. In the third step, experts were consulted to assess the suitability of the items, and items with low content validity were excluded. Finally, response options were designed using a five-point Likert-like scale for the 25 remaining questions. This study was conducted using a scale administered via Google Form to collect data from 135 adults in Bangladesh and Nepal, including 77 females and 58 males aged between eighteen and fifty-five years. Prior to completing the questionnaire, participants voluntarily chose to participate and were provided with an informed consent document. The questionnaire consisted of five-point response options and participants were encouraged to ask for clarification on any difficult concepts. Demographic information was also collected and participants were assured of confidentiality.

Data Analysis

The Likert scale was employed to rate participant responses and data was inputted into the IBM SPSS. Discrepancies and inappropriate data were removed and missing values were manually filled. Responses were reverse-scored as necessary and internal consistency was calculated using Cronbach's α. Construct validity was assessed through EFA and inter-factor correlations using principal component analysis with varimax rotation. Group validity was established via an independent sample t-test, using SPSS version 20 with $p<0.05$ significance.

Results

Socio-Demographic Features of the Participants

Table 1 :

Demographic Features of Samples (N=135)

Features		N	%
Gender	Male	58	43
	Female	77	57
Marital Status	Married	55	40.7
	Separated/divorced	2	1.5
	Unmarried	78	57.8
Country of Origin	Nepal	36	26.7
	Bangladesh	99	73.3
	Secondary	6	4.4
Education Level	Bachelor	77	57
	Masters	52	38.5
Socio-economic Status	Lower	6	4.4
	Middle	127	94.1
	Upper	2	1.5

Source: Online study, 2021

This study had 135 participants, with 58 males and 77 females. Most of the participants were from the middle class, while a small number were from the lower or upper class. Most participants were unmarried and had completed a bachelor's degree. The majority of participants were from Bangladesh, with a lesser from Nepal.

Item Analysis

This study examined the relationship between individual items and the total score of the Gender-based Child Rearing Practices Scale (GCRPS). Corrected item-to-total correlations were computed for 25 items, revealing a range of values from r = -.047 (item no. 2) to r = .626 (item no. 25). Items with corrected item-to-total correlation values below .30 were excluded, resulting in the removal of items 2, 16, and 19. Following this, the analysis was re-run, and it was determined that the deletion of any additional items would not improve the reliability of the scale. These findings align with Field's (2013) assertion that item-total correlation values above .3 are considered adequate.

Factor Analysis

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of 0.826 exceeded the desired threshold of 0.50, indicating that the sample was suitable for factor analysis. Additionally, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity demonstrated that the correlation matrix was not an identity matrix

($\chi 2$ (231) =1116.75, p< 0.01), meeting the necessary criteria for factor analysis. Principal Component Analysis with varimax rotation was employed, and factor loadings <.40 were suppressed. The analysis yielded a five-factor solution for the 22 items (Table 1), explaining 58.52% of the total variance. Factor 1 (14.77%) was labeled 'cross-gender activities,' Factor 2 (12.55%) 'methods of discipline,' Factor 3 (12.32%) 'expression of emotion,' Factor 4 (9.66%) 'play,' and Factor 5 (9.23%) 'expected behavior.'

Table 2 :
Factor Matrix of 22 Items

Items	Factor				
	1	2	3	4	5
Item 25	.827				
Item 24	.806				
Item 23	.640				
Item 15	.498	.495			
Item 1	.473	.442			
Item 10		.749			
Item 3		.570			
Item 9		.535			
Item 4	.437	.491			
Item 11			.684		
Item 12			.657		
Item 13			.546		
Item 17		.419	.525		
Item 22			.510		
Item 14		.433	.447		
Item 8				.803	
Item18				.662	
Item 20			.407	.577	
Item 7					.743
Item 6					.684
Item 21	.423				.576
Item 5	.434				.506

Note. Values less than <.40 were excluded.

Psychometric Properties

Reliability

The internal consistency reliability which was computed by Cronbach alpha is found to be acceptable for all factors. Cronbach's alpha values for the factors of GCRPS, namely 'cross-gender activities', 'methods of discipline', 'expression of emotion', 'play', and 'expected behavior', were .80, .63, .76, .68, and .69, respectively. The overall reliability of this scale was 0.86 which is also found to be good.

Validity

Table 3 :

Correlations between the GCRPS Factors

Dimensions	1	2	3	4	5	6
Cross-gender activities	-	-	-	-	-	-
Methods of discipline	.56**	-	-	-	-	-
Expression of emotion	.44**	.56**	-	-	-	-
Play	.25**	.34**	.53**	-	-	-
Expected behavior	.51**	.30**	.40**	.35**	-	-
Total	.79**	.74**	.81**	.63**	.69**	-

*Note. ** $p < .01$*

The computation of construct validity involved the estimation of inter-factor correlations and factor-total GCRS correlations. The findings, as presented in Table 3, indicate that the scale possesses significant construct validity.

Finally, to investigate the major factors in domains and total score, independent sample t tests were calculated.

Table 4 :

T- test Results of Major Factors Among Male and Female Participants (N=135)

Variables	Female (n = 77)		Male (n = 58)		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Cross-gender activities	11.93	5.13	14.98	4.71	3.538	.001
Methods of discipline	8.17	3.24	9.63	3.23	2.608	.01
Expression of emotion	11.94	4.70	14.10	5.24	2.508	.013
Play	7.50	2.98	8.37	3.19	1.633	.105
Expected behavior	13.34	4.03	15.05	3.23	2.658	.009
Total	52.89	14.48	62.15	14.53	-3.673	.000

Table 4 reveals that there was no significant difference in attitudes between males and females in the context of play. However, significant differences were observed between genders in relation to other factors and the total score. Male attitudes about child rearing practices are more based on gender than female.

Table 5 :
T- test Results of Major Factors Among Married and Unmarried Participants (N=135)

Variables	Unmarried (*n* = 78)		Married (*n* = 55)		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Cross-gender activities	11.26	3.55	15.94	5.89	-5.69	.000
Methods of discipline	8.28	3.09	9.49	3.54	-2.08	.039
Expression of emotion	12.26	2.95	14.10	5.24	-1.60	.110
Play	7.55	2.98	8.34	3.15	-1.48	.140
Expected behavior	13.15	3.84	15.40	3.29	-3.51	.001
Total	52.52	13.19	62.85	15.66	-4.11	.000

Table 5 reveals significant differences in attitudes towards cross-gender activities, methods of discipline, expected behavior, and total score between married and unmarried individuals. However, no significant differences were observed in relation to other factors. It was observed that married individuals' attitudes towards child rearing practices were more influenced by gender compared to unmarried participants.

Table 6 :
T- test Results of Major Factors by Country of Origin (N=135)

Variables	Bangladesh (*n* = 99)		Nepal (*n* = 36)		*t*	*p*
	M	SD	M	SD		
Cross-gender activities	14.38	5.09	10.11	3.94	4.54	.000
Methods of discipline	8.98	3.31	8.27	3.29	1.10	.270
Expression of emotion	13.46	5.16	11.25	4.35	2.29	.023
Play	8.31	3.05	6.69	2.90	2.75	.007
Expected behavior	14.83	3.50	11.97	3.81	4.10	.000
Total	59.98	14.86	48.30	12.56	4.19	.000

Table 6 reveals that disciplinary methods did not significantly differ based on country of origin. Nevertheless, notable variations were observed between Bangladesh and Nepal concerning other factors and the overall score. Bangladesh participants exhibited more gendered attitudes towards child rearing practices than Nepali participants.

Discussion

This study aimed to create a reliable and valid scale to assess gender-related child-rearing practices in Bangladesh and Nepal. The study revealed that the scale demonstrated reliability when administered by parents, exhibiting strong internal consistency and reasonable test-retest reliability. Gender differences were observed in parental completion, with five distinct factors identified: discipline methods, expected behavior, emotional expression, play, and cross-gender activities. Overall, the Gender-based Child Rearing Practices Scale was proven to be a reliable and valid tool.

With respect to participant gender, male, married and Bangladeshi people's attitude about child rearing practices were more based on gender than females which provide clear indication that people have different attitudes towards child rearing practices. The literature has extensively documented the phenomenon of women being more accepting of deviations from traditional gender roles in children and in general (McHugh & Frieze, 1997; Spence & Hahn, 1997; Twenge, 1997). Parents are crucial in shaping their children's gender-stereotypical behavior and preferences through the home environment. Differential treatment of boys and girls, such as encouragement of certain activities, assignment of different chores, and presentation of different attitudes, can significantly impact children's behavior. Gender roles can influence children's behavior even before they comprehend the concept of gender. Johnson et al. (2005) suggest that parents may inadvertently perpetuate gender stereotypes by selecting toys, clothing, and room colors, which can result in the adoption of gendered attitudes and actions.

This research is subject to constraints as it was carried out amidst the COVID-19 outbreak and solely collected information from technology consumers, thereby potentially lacking generalizability to the wider populace. A bigger sample group would have been better for measuring traditional vs. non-traditional gender socialization. In the future, researchers could compare gender differences across various cultures using a similar gender socialization tool. Despite these constraints, the study is useful for comprehending gender-based child-rearing methods.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The aim of this study was to validate a new tool for evaluating effective gender-based child rearing practices. By analyzing EFA, five distinct categories of child rearing were identified: discipline, behavior expectations, emotional expression, play, and cross-gender activities. These categories differed significantly in terms of child rearing and family practices, supporting the validity and reliability of the method. Additionally, differences were found among parents based on their country of origin, marital status, and gender. Overall, this study developed a reliable and valid scale for assessing attitudes towards gender-related child rearing practices.

As, the sample of the study was the general population of Bangladesh and Nepal, but this study was unable to assess people's attitude that don't use technology. The presence of limitations may impede the generalization of findings. To enhance the generalizability of the population under study, future researchers should consider the aforementioned limitations. Additionally, future research should investigate the impact of social-structural elements, media, instructors, schools, and cultural factors on gender-typed cognitive-motivational processes and behaviors in both parental and peer contexts for children and adolescents receiving counseling.

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