

Study Aims

- The primary objective of this project is to examine the measurement of social capital in a new cultural context using qualitative methods, including focus group discussions and cognitive interviewing techniques. Specifically, this study aims to examine the content validity of the measurement of social capital used in the Shortened and Adapted Social Capital Assessment Tool (SASCAT) in an urban and rural setting in Bangladesh.

Motivation

- Despite the growing evidence linking social capital to improvements in health and development, there are differing opinions about the usefulness of social capital as a theoretical construct.
- This is due, in part, to the lack of reliable measures of social capital that have been validated over a number of years in multiple settings.
- Given that the same question about social capital may be interpreted differently in different cultural settings, there is a need to evaluate social capital survey questions in each new setting.
- To date, no social capital survey instrument has been cognitively tested in Bangladesh, a country that has the potential to benefit from social capital due to limited human capital and high economic vulnerability.

Setting

- The study took place in one rural sub-district (Durgapur) and one urban slum (Mirpur) in Bangladesh.



Survey Question Validation Process



Methods

- Four interviewers conducted four focus group discussions and 32 cognitive interviews.
- Cognitive interviews consisted of 18 structured survey questions followed by scripted verbal probes.
- All interviews were conducted in Bangla and lasted between 30 and 60 minutes.
- Interviews were transcribed, translated into English, and analyzed using a formal coding process in NVivo 10.



Cognitive Interviews

Difficulty distinguishing between emotional and financial support

- I: If someone gives you money, is that emotional help?
- R: No, that's not emotional help. But, it can be, in many cases.
- I: How?
- R: If there is any kind of accident and if I do not have money...then, if someone gives me money; that is emotional help...In that situation, this kind of help can reduce my load. It reduces psychological pressure. - 40-year-old urban female

Received support correlated with negative life events

- I: Have you received any economic help from any of these people in the last 12 months?
- R: Economic help...I got in the last twelve months...that is my elder brother. Suppose if I am in trouble, such as I do not have rice or money, then my elder brother gives that.
- I: Has your elder brother given you anything in last few days?
- R: Yes, he always gives. - 33-year-old rural male



Collective action correlated with social problems

- I: In last twelve months, have you sat with local people to solve a problem together?
- R: Of course we do. ...As you know this is a village, not a town, so problems they face include, suppose, someone's goat has eaten the rice paddy of another person. Then they slap the owner of the goat and there is village court to resolve the matter and so on. - 40-year-old rural male

Need more response categories for cognitive social capital questions

- I1: Is the local leader of this area is trustworthy?
- R1: Leaders aren't trustworthy for all types of work. In case of some activities, they are, but not in all cases. - 35-year-old rural female
- I2: Do the villagers here get along with each other?
- R2: Some of them get along while others do not...Suppose, someone is good today and another person is living badly...that means, people can be of two types...they don't get along. - 21-year-old urban male

Conclusions

- This is the first known study to use qualitative survey validation methods to create a contextually appropriate social capital survey instrument for use in Bangladesh.
- Major findings from the cognitive interviews included:
 - Respondents appeared to understand questions about potential support better than questions about actual support received. Questions about potential support may help avoid issues related to reverse causality.
 - Reports of collective action may indicate more problems in a community rather than higher levels of collective efficacy. Reframing these questions to focus on community development, can help overcome this problem.
 - Many respondents could not respond "yes" or "no" to survey questions related to cognitive social capital. These survey items need at least three response categories.

Limitations

- The small sample may not be representative of all rural and urban areas in Bangladesh.
- Cognitive interviews may have uncovered "problems" that would not exist under normal survey conditions.
- Cognitive methods can discriminate against less articulate respondents.

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Contact:

Will Story, PhD, MPH
 Carolina Population Center
 The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
 CB# 8120, University Square
 123 West Franklin Street
 Chapel Hill, NC 27516-2524
 wstory@unc.edu

