

Culturally Responsive Construct of Meta-Parenting : Validation of Korean Meta-Parenting Questionnaire

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메타양육 척도(K-MPQ)의 타당화 연구

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ABSTRACT

본 연구의 목적은 최근 Hawk(2007)이 자녀 및 양육과 관련된 부모의 의도적 사고로 제시한 메타양육(MPQ) 척도를 한국 어머니들을 대상으로 타당화하는 것이다. 연구결과 첫째, 원래 MPQ에는 예상, 평가, 반성적 사고, 문제해결 등 4개의 요인이 있었으나 본 연구에서는 예상 요인과 반성적 사고 요인이 같은 요인으로 추출되었다. 둘째, 한국 어머니들은 미국 어머니보다 메타양육 수준이 높았으나 상대적으로 예상과 반성적 사고 요인에 더 높은 점수를, 그리고 문제해결에 더 낮은 점수를 나타내고 있었다. 그러나 한국 어머니들을 대상으로 한 K-MPQ는 상당히 안정적 구조로 높은 내적 일치도를 보였다. 셋째, 한국 어머니들의 메타양육 요인들은 대체로 양육신념 및 양육실제와 정적 상관이 있었다.

주제어: 메타양육, 어머니, 인지, 양육

I. INTRODUCTION

Parental cognition is a term that can refer to a large number of thought about parenting. It serves multiple purposes: filtering experiences, influencing interpretation of behaviors, setting the stage for actions, and prompting change in behavior (Hawk & Holden 2006). In the past decade or so, several

new cognition constructs have been developed in an effort to understand why some parents are more sensitive and effective care-givers than others. Sometimes these cognitions are referred to as beliefs. Other times, authors are describing values or attributions. Another set of parental cognitions are belief regarding one's own abilities as a parent (Merrifield 2009).

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An important distinction made in parental cognition is whether thoughts are automatic, operating with little awareness, or effortful and event-dependent (Bargh & Chartrand 1999; Bugental & Johnston 2000). To date, much of the attention paid to parental cognition has been directed at implicit and schematic process that operate with little or no awareness (Bugental & Goodnow 1998; Papoušek & Papoušek 2002). Investigations into more deliberate effortful parental cognitions that operate at higher levels of awareness have focused on attributions (Bugental & Happaney 2002) and goals (Dix & Branca, 2003). More recently meta-parenting has emerged as a construct that refers to parents' intentional thoughts about parenting and their child (Tamm et al. 2009).

The prefix 'meta' has two usages in psychology. In one group of terms, 'meta' refers to a 'reflexive loop' as in meta-analyses (i.e., an analysis of analyses) or meta-theories (i.e., theories about theories). Also, the prefix has been used to refer to a level of thought indicating awareness of internal processes and therefore reflecting more comprehensive, higher, or more advanced abilities. For example, the term meta-memory or meta-logic represents knowledge about the process of memory or logic. Along these lines, meta-parenting refers to thinking about or reflecting on parenting practices (Holden & Hawk 2003; Nicholson et al. 2008).

Holden and Hawk (2003) defines meta-parenting as a class of evaluative parental thought concerning the child-rearing domain in that typically occurs before or after parent-child interactions. It is evaluative in that it is not automatic or reflexive but rather intentional. The importance of meta-parenting lies in the very nature of consciousness, intentionality and controllability which enables parents to change or improve parent-child relationship. Also, Borkowski et al (2002) suggest that meta-parenting enhances parenting practices and subsequent child development. Further, Holden and Hawk (2003) mentioned that

meta-parenting appears in various guises. Their interpretation focuses on four categories of cognitions about parenting: anticipating issues that might arise in child-rearing, assessing child's development and surrounding contextual situations, problem-solving in the face of parenting challenges, and reflecting upon parenting and parent-child interactions. These components of meta-parenting are related to social connectedness and support, as well as an individual's transition into parenthood.

The first empirical test of meta-parenting was developed by Hawk and Holden (2006). Their Meta-Parenting Profile Questionnaire(MPPQ) was composed of 24-item self-report instrument to measure four hypothesized component of meta-parenting: anticipating, assessing, reflecting, and problem-solving. Driven by Holden and Hawk's (2003) initial meta-parenting categories, Nicholson et al. (2008) proposed five areas of meta-parenting which are collectively referred to by the acronym RPM3: responding appropriately to children's needs, preventing adverse situations, monitoring influences on development, mentoring children's development, and modeling appropriate behaviors. These areas overlap and expand upon Holden and Hawk's (2003) initial meta-parenting categories.

Later, Hawk and Holden's (2006) MPPQ was revised as Meta-Parenting Questionnaire (MPQ) by Hawk (2007). In the Hawk's (2007) MPQ, each of the four components of meta-parenting was composed of four items. A description of each component follows. Anticipating refers parents' intentional consideration of something related to child-rearing that has yet to occur. Through anticipation, short-term and long-term parental goals can be organized and activated. For example, a parent may childproof a home before an infant can crawl (Morrongiello & Kiriakou 2004) or start a college fund for a preschooler. Assessing, the second component, involves parental evaluations of the child, parent, and context. An example of assessing includes when

parent think about their child's academic development or monitoring peer social interactions (e.g., Parke et al. 2003). Reflecting, the third component, involves parents' re-assessment of their own behaviors, their child's behaviors, or past parent-child interactions. Reflecting on past experiences affords parents the opportunity to evaluate the factors of child-rearing domain in a reasoned way (e.g., Fonagy et al. 1991; Heath 2000). The final component, Problem-solving, involves multiple aspects of parental thought, including identifying a problem, planning a solution, implementing the solution, and evaluating the result (e.g., Crick & Dodge 1994).

In spite of the importance of meta-parenting, there is a paucity of research investigating this construct. Especially in Korea, researchers (Jung, Lee & Go 2003; Jung & Rho 2006; Rho 2005) have focused on individual factor of meta-parenting (reflecting) rather than considering meta-parenting as an integrated construct composed of diverse factors. Although meta-parenting is a culturally endowed construct and, thus, should be assessed with culturally appropriate tools, there is little research to validate it with diverse population. Validation of Korean meta-parenting scale will provide practical implications for parent education as well as cross-cultural study on parental cognition. Given this, the present study aims to validate factor structures of meta-parenting and provide its psychometric properties with a sample of Korean mothers. The specific purposes of the present study are: 1) identifying the items that form an internally consistent scale and then eliminating the items that do not, 2) investigating construct validity, 3) assessing the reliability, and 4) evaluating the concurrent validity.

II. METHODS

1. Subjects

The subject of this study was 161 mothers

whose child was attending in child-care center in Seoul and Kyunggi-Do. The socio-demographic characteristics of the mothers are shown in Table 1. On average, mothers were 34.57 (sd=3.4) years old (range 26-45) and their family income was 3,620,090 (sd=200.44) won monthly (range 900,000-17,000,000). About seventy percent of mothers were university or above qualified and half of them were employed either full-time or part-time.

Table 1. Background information of subjects

		(N=161)	
		Frequency (%)	M (sd)
Age			34.57(3.4)
Income			362.09 (200.4)
Education	high school and below	30(21.9)	
	college	9(6.6)	
	university	86(62.8)	
	graduate school	12(8.8)	
Occupation	unemployed	56(49.6)	
	employed	57(50.4)	

2. Instruments

1) Meta-parenting

This study employed Korean-translated version of Hawk's (2007) MPQ. This instrument assesses mother's use of deliberate thought including anticipating (4 items), assessing (4 items), reflecting (4 items) and problem-solving (4 items). Mothers were instructed to respond with a particular or focal child in mind. Responses for the 16 items were given on a 5-point Likert scale. The items of this scale were selected and refined from the items of Hawk and Holden's (2006) MPPQ which has 24 items: anticipating (5 items), assessing (6 items), reflecting (6 items) and problem-solving (7 items).

2) Belief on importance of maternal teaching

The subscale of Kinlaw, Kurtz-Costes, and Goldman-Fraser's (2001) Importance of Effort/Ability Scale was used to measure belief on importance of maternal teaching in child's achievement. In this study, the measure had 6 items using 40-point Likert-type scale with higher scores indicating stronger beliefs. Six items assessed the importance of maternal teaching in a child's success in learning math, reading, and English. While Kinlaw et al. (2001) did not report reliability coefficients for this instrument, Cronbach alpha was .91 in the current study.

3) Frequencies of maternal teaching practices

Frequencies of maternal teaching practices were measured by Stipek et al. (1992) Activities scales. This consists of 10-items that assess the frequencies of various learning related activities parents engage in with their young children at home. In the original scales, mothers respond on a scale of 1 to 5 from "never" to "almost every day." For the present study, the responses were scored on a scale of 1 to 5 ranging from 1 (0 time a week) to 5 (6-7 times a week). The changes were made to promote clearer understanding of frequencies of activities. While Cronbach alpha was .78-.84 in Stipek et al.'s (1992) study, the present study generated .84.

3. Procedure

All of the instruments were translated into Korean using back-translation techniques. The researcher translated English version of the questionnaire into Korean. Korean-English bilingual who has Ph. D. in Child Studies blindly translated the Korean version back into English.

Four child-care centers in Seoul and Kyunggi-Do in South Korea participated as research site. South Korea has 16 administrative districts, two of which were selected for the present study. Seoul, the

capital of Korea, is highly urbanized districts, and Kyunggi-Do has characteristics of both urban and rural areas. Using purposive sampling, two child-care centers were sampled from each district respectively. Questionnaires were delivered to mothers and then collected one week after. A total of 250 questionnaires were distributed and 193 were returned. Among the 193 returned questionnaires, 32 were excluded from data analysis due to poor completion.

4. Data analysis

SPSS Win 17.0 was executed for analysing the data. First, as a preliminary procedure, mean, standard deviation, kurtosis, skewness, Q-Q plot and item-total correlation were employed. Second, exploratory factor analysis (principal component with varimax) was conducted after Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Barlett's test. Third, Cronbach alpha and split-half reliability (Brown-Spearman) were employed to assess the reliability. Fourth, Pearson correlation was chosen to establish the concurrent validity.

Table 2. Kurtosis, Skewness and item-total coefficients of MPQ

(N=161)			
Item	Kurtosis	Skewness	Item-total coefficient
Item 1	3.86	-2.12	.42
Item 2	-.66	-.41	.60
Item 3	-.72	-.28	.69
Item 4	-.96	.27	.45
Item 5	-.79	-.47	.64
Item 6	-.20	-.87	.66
Item 7	-.66	-.46	.68
Item 8	-.75	-.40	.55
Item 9	-.49	-.49	.68
Item 10	-.98	-.14	.61
Item 11	-.35	-.59	.63
Item 12	-.78	-.04	.54
Item 13	-.44	.31	.48
Item 14	-.60	.12	.48
Item 15	-.52	-.05	.55
Item 16	-.57	-.44	.57

III. RESULTS

1. Item analysis

The purpose of an item analysis is to identify the items that form an internally consistent scale and to eliminate the items that do not. First, mean, standard deviation, kurtosis, and skewness were used to check the adequacy of the item as shown in Table 2. Item 1 was deleted because this item did not meet the assumption for normal distribution

that the absolute value of kurtosis (3.86) and skewness (-2.12) should be less than ± 2 respectively. Also, instead of Kolomogorov-Smimov test or Shapiro-Wilk test, Q-Q plots were utilized to investigate the normality assumption since the sample size is relatively large (You, 2008). No item was detected violating the normality assumption. Finally, item-total correlation coefficients were computed to see how each individual item related to the other items. Each item had at least

Table 3. Factor loadings in three-factor solution (15 items)

Item	(N=161)		
	FactorI (M=3.85, sd=.74)	FactorII (M=3.61, sd=.81)	FactorIII (M=3.30, sd=.69)
4. How often do you think about your child's safety when you and your child are away from home in a public place?	.77	.00	-.02
2. To what extent do you plan ahead for situations in which your child might get bored?	.71	.09	.25
6. How often do you consider the extent to which activities away from home influence your?	.67	.36	.12
7. How often do you think about how well your parenting meets your child's needs?	.62	.36	.31
3. In general, how often do you think ahead about things related to our child or your parenting?	.62	.23	.32
5. How often do you consider whether your child's friends may be a positive or negative influence?	.52	.38	.08
12. How often do you have concerns about your parenting behaviors, or the decisions you've made as a parent?	.13	.82	.01
8. How often do you think about how your child is developing compared with her/his peers?	.20	.75	.15
10. In general, how often do you have concerns, worry, or think about things that have already happened with your child?	.09	.72	.20
11. How often do you have concerns about why your child behaves the way s/he does?	.35	.56	.31
9. In general, how often do you consider, or think about what is occurring with you and your child?	.42	.56	.35
13. How often do you think your problem solving strategies are effective?	.18	.06	.79
15. When you're having a problem with your child, how often do you develop a strategy to deal with the problem?	.29	.14	.70
14. How often do you stick with a problem solving strategy you planned?	-.01	.18	.68
16. In general, how often have you identified and attempted to solve a problem you're having with your child or with your parenting?	.37	.30	.45
Eigen value	6.11	1.33	1.25
Variance	40.75	8.86	8.308
Added variance	40.75	49.61	57.91

Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

.40 of item-total correlation coefficient. Since there was no item which significantly increased or decreased the reliability after being deleted, all of the remaining 15 items were used for further analysis.

2. Factor analysis

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measures of sampling adequacy and Barlett's test of sphericity confirmed that 15-item MPQ were adequate for factor analysis (KMO=.88; Barlett, $\chi^2=984.15$, $p<.001$). Exploratory factor analysis (Principal component with varimax) was chosen to investigate construct validity. First, initial extraction by principal axis factoring method indicated that three factors have eigen values greater than 1.0. Second, changes of the slopes shown in the scree plot suggested existence of three factors. Third, each factor demonstrated adequate internal consistency, with $\alpha >.70$.

Through explanatory factor analysis, three factor solution were found without items of high loading on more than one factor and non-loading items. Table 3 presents the item content and factor loading for each of these factors. There was a strong first factor accounting for 40% of the variance, and all of three factors together accounted for 58% of the variance. Factor I, anticipating & assessing, included 6 items. Half of them (item 2, 3, 4) came from Hawk's (2007) anticipating factor and another half (item 5, 6, 7) from Hawk's (2007) assessing factor. Factor II consisted of 5 items and accounted for 9% of total variance. With one exception, factor II was identical to Hawk's (2007) original MPQ. Item 8 (How often do you think about how your child is developing compared with her/his peers?) was loaded in assessing factor in Hawk's (2007) study but classified into reflecting factor in the present study. Factor III was exactly the same as Hawk's (2007) problem-solving factor (4 items) and explained 8% of total variance. Each of 15 items had at least .40 of factor loading and

was belong to only one factor.

3. Reliability

As presented in Table 4, the highest mean among these three factors was factor I, anticipating & assessing ($M=3.85$). The lowest mean was factor III, problem-solving ($M=3.61$). Total K-MPQ and its factors show adequate level of internal consistency estimates: .89 (total), .82 (factor I), .83 (factor II), .71 (factor III). In addition, split-half reliability estimates of K-MPQ and its three factors were as follows: .85 (total), .77 (factor I), .65 (factor II), .83 (factor III).

Table 4. Internal consistency and split-half reliability of K-MPQ

(N=161)				
	Factor I	Factor II	Factor III	Total
Cronbach alpha	.82	.83	.71	.89
Split-half reliability (Brown-Spearman)	.77	.65	.83	.85

4. Concurrent validity

To investigate the concurrent validity, three factors of K-MPQ were compared with mothers' cognitions on parenting and their parenting practices. Cognitions on parenting were measured by one dimension (maternal teaching) of Kinlaw et al's (2001) importance of effort/ability scale which assesses the degree of mothers' belief on maternal

Table 5. Correlations among MPQ, parental cognitions and parenting practices

(N=161)				
	Factor I	Factor II	Factor III	Total
Belief on importance of maternal teaching	.16	.18*	.18*	.20*
Frequencies of maternal teaching practices	.36**	.22*	.19*	.30**

* $p<.05$, ** $p<.001$

teaching in child's achievement. As described in Table 5, except factor I, K-MPQ were positively correlated with Kinlaw et al. (2001) belief on importance of maternal teaching. Parenting practices were assessed by Stipek et al. (1992) activities scales on the frequencies mothers interacted with their child at home. All of the three K-MPQ factors were significantly correlated with Stipek et al. (1992) activities scales.

IV. DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

This study introduced Hawk's (2007) MPQ and investigated its structure with a sample of Korean mothers. Also, it analyzed the reliability of the factors of K-MPQ and, then, compared K-MPQ with existing scales of parental cognition and parenting practices in order to prove concurrent validity. The discussions of major results are as follows.

First, while Hawk's (2007) MPQ has four-factor (anticipating, assessing, reflecting, problem-solving), K-MPQ seemed to have three-factor (anticipating & assessing, reflecting, problem-solving) with one item of anticipating (item 1) deleted based on item analysis. Anticipating factor and assessing factor of Hawk's (2007) MPQ were incorporated into a single factor with item 8 transferred into reflecting factor. This might be, in part, attributed to the difference of language or problem of translation. While items of anticipating factor in Hawk's (2007) MPQ were explicitly expressed in future tense using English, the sentences of translated anticipating items in the Korean version were less explicit. Ambiguity of future tense in Korean language might result in integration of anticipating factor and assessing factor. Therefore, the first factor of K-MPQ was labeled as anticipating & assessing in this study. The second factor of K-MPQ, reflecting, was very similar to Hawk's (2007) original MPQ with one exception item 8 (How often do you

think about how your child is developing compared with his/her peers?) which had belonged to assessing factor in Hawk (2007)'s MPQ. Transition of this item from assessing factor into reflecting factor implies that, to Korean mothers, comparing their child's development with his/her peers (item 8) has different meaning from assessing the influences of parent (item 7), friends (item 5) and environment (item 6). It is reflected in the fact that child's development or achievement has been regarded as the single most important meaning to Korean parents. The third factor identified in the current study was identical to the problem-solving factor in Hawk's (2007) MPQ. All of these three factors have consistently been found in Korean mothers with high factor loading and explained 58% of variance. This finding implies that K-MPQ is valid and that the construct in K-MPQ are stable for Korean mothers of preschool children.

Second, patterns of the three K-MPQ factors identified in this study were different from those reported in the previous studies with American mothers (Hawk & Holden 2006; Hawk 2007). In general, the subjects in this study showed higher level of meta-parenting than American mothers. Relatively, Korean mothers had highest score on anticipating & assessing factor followed by reflecting factor. They scored lowest on problem-solving factor while all of the American samples (Hawk & Holden 2006; Hawk 2007) got lowest score on reflecting. This suggests the weakness of problem-solving in Korean mothers. Also, it implies that reflecting on past experiences might be interpreted more negatively to American mothers who are more future-oriented than Korean counterparts. A study with a tri-ethnic group (Hawk et al. 2007) reported similar findings. African-American parents and Mexican-American parents were similar in which components of meta-parenting are most (or least) frequently engaged while European-American parents were relatively weak in reflecting factor. It

is assumed that cultural differences in child-centeredness and expectations of parental influence on child outcomes are expected to affect the amount of meta-parenting engaged by parent as well as the focus of meta-parenting forms of thought. Since meta-parenting is a culturally endowed construct, it should be assessed with culturally appropriate tool.

Apart from this discrepancy, the three K-MPQ factors had considerably stable structure. The levels of internal consistency indicated that the factors and total K-MPQ can be considered to form quite acceptable levels of internal agreement providing support for them as separate construct. Future studies are needed to examine in more detail the efficacy of the K-MPQ factors and their potential usefulness.

Finally, the three empirically derived K-MPQ factors were congruent with parental cognitions and parenting practices. Two factors of K-MPQ were associated with belief on maternal teaching in child's achievement. This implies the more intentionally mothers think about parenting and their child, the more they perceive the importance of their own teaching in their child's achievement. However, one factor of K-MPQ, anticipating & assessing, was not related with belief on the importance of maternal teaching in child's achievement. Future study is needed to address the reason of this result. All of three K-MPQ factors were positively correlated with the frequencies that mothers provide teaching activities to their child at home. This confirms that parent's meta-parenting facilitates their parenting behavior.

Taken all together, it can be concluded that the three factors of K-MPQ are valid and reliable instrument for assessing Korean mothers' intentional thoughts about parenting and their child: 1) anticipating or evaluating the child and child-rearing at present or in future, 2) reflecting on past experiences on the behavior of child, parent and

parent-child interaction, 3) identifying a problem and planning and implementing a solution and evaluating the result. Although limitation pertaining to the study using questionnaire should be noted, this study has a theoretical contribution in that it introduced the construct of meta-parenting, more deliberate effortful parental cognitions, while much of the attention paid to parental cognition has been directed at the more implicit and schematic process that operate with little or no parental awareness (e.g., Bugental & Goodnow 1998; Papoušek & Papoušek 2002). Also, the validation of the K-MPQ has practical implications for parents or counselors who work with the parents in the clinical setting. The K-MPQ could be readily applied as a tool to examine the quality of parenting and provide basic information for developing parent education.

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