CHAPTER 4

Convergence of Methods: Measuring Child Maltreatment and Psychopathology Symptoms in Kenya, Zambia, and The Netherlands
4.0 Introduction

Overall in published research, there is great variation in the measurement of child maltreatment, sampling strategies, statistical methodology and operationalization of outcomes. In our study we used similar methodologies across the three samples drawn from Kenya, Zambia, and The Netherlands. This chapter presents a description of the methodology that we used. We describe the procedure for the study and the sample characteristics, as well as the instruments for data collection. The child maltreatment scales used in this study are presented and the reliability of each of these scales in the three samples is provided. Similarly, the scales used to measure negative psychopathological outcomes are duly described and the reliabilities of each of these measures in the three samples given.

4.1. Procedure for the Study

The study was a retrospective cross-sectional survey in which participants responded to a standard questionnaire in Kenya, Zambia and The Netherlands. Participants were informed of the purpose of the study and assured of their confidentiality. To ensure this, no names were recorded anywhere on the questionnaire. The sensitive and personal nature of the content of the questionnaire was also communicated. Participation was voluntary and those who wished not to answer any questions were free to do so. In addition to informing the participants verbally on the procedure of the study, this information was printed on the cover page of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered during lecture hours in the respective countries. On completion, they were dropped in a designated box placed near the exit door. Those who chose not to participate deposited blank questionnaire in the same box. The relevant authorities in all the three sites approved of the research protocol.

4.2. Participants

Participants were drawn from three universities in Kenya, Zambia and The Netherlands. We therefore describe each of the three samples in this section

4.2.1. The Kenyan sample
The Kenyan sample consisted of 375 university students (male: n = 193, female: n = 182) who were enrolled in the Faculty of Education of a Kenyan university. The students were asked to complete the questionnaires during the academic year 2006/2007. The students ranged in age from 18 to 40 years (42% were < 22 years; 58% were ≥ 22 years but < 30 years; 0.3% were ≥ 30 years). Socioeconomic status was computed using the level of education achieved by the student’s mother and father. The percentages of levels of mother’s (M) and father’s (F) education were as follows: primary education (M: 27%, F: 18%), secondary education (M: 22%, F: 17%), some college (M: 35%, F: 37%), university and other higher education (M: 16%, F: 30%).
4.2.2. The Zambian sample
The Zambian sample consisted of 182 university students (male: n = 96, female: n = 86) who were enrolled in the Faculty of Education and Social Sciences of a Zambian university. The students were asked to complete the questionnaires during the academic year 2005/2006. The students ranged in age from 18 to 40 years (46% were < 22 years; 35% were ≥ 22 years but < 30 years; 16% were ≥ 30 years). Socioeconomic status in the Zambian sample was also assessed using the level of education achieved by the student’s mother and father. The percentages of levels of mother’s (M) and father’s (F) education were as follows: primary education (M: 41%, F: 25%), secondary education (M: 52%, F: 55%), university and other higher education (M: 18%, F: 18%).

4.2.3. The Netherlands sample
The sample consisted of 305 undergraduate female students of a university in The Netherlands who were enrolled in a curriculum focusing on child development. The participants completed the questionnaires during courses in the years 2004 and 2005. The students ranged in age from 18 to 40 years (56% < 22 years, 33% ≥ than 22 years and < 30 years and 11% ≥ 30 years). Socioeconomic status was computed using the number of years of education completed by the student’s mother and father and family income. Percentages of mothers (M) and fathers (F) with various educational levels: elementary school and lower vocational education (M: 18%, F: 17%), secondary education (M: 54%, F: 37%), non-university higher education and university (M: 29%, F: 46%).

4.3. Measurements
A modified version of the Relationship Characteristics Study Questionnaire (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 2005) was used in data collection. This is a composite questionnaire that consists of the Revised Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS2; Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996) and the Personal and Relationships Profile (PRP; Straus et al., 1999). The CTS2 is a series of rating scales on which respondents indicate from a checklist of various acts what responses they have used to resolve conflict situations with their partners over the past 12 months. The PRP is an instrument that measures 22 variables associated with family violence and also includes a scale for measuring social desirability. Apart from the background variables, we drew all the maltreatment scales and all scales on psychopathology with the exception of dating violence from the PRP.

4.3.1. Background variables
The background variables in this study were age and family income. The participants were asked to respond to questions regarding their age and annual family income by ticking the appropriate answers from a checklist.
4.3.2. Social Desirability
Research that uses self-report data needs to take into account defensiveness or minimization of socially undesirable behaviour by the respondents and the tendency to project favourable images of themselves. To control for this possible source of error we used the Social Desirability scale of the PRP as adapted by Reynolds (1982) from the Malowe-Crowne social desirability scale. This is a 13-item scale that measures the degree to which respondents tend to avoid disclosing socially undesirable behaviour. Participants were expected to indicate the extent with which they agree to items such as; “No matter who I am talking to, I am always a good listener,” and “I am always courteous even to people who are disagreeable”. The four-point Likert scale of this questionnaire ranges from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). The reliability figures for this scale were \( \alpha = 0.61 \) (\( N = 375 \)) for the Kenyan sample; \( \alpha = 0.67 \) (\( N = 182 \)) for the Zambian sample and \( \alpha = 0.73 \) (\( N = 305 \)) for the Dutch sample.

4.3.3. Childhood Physical Abuse
The Childhood Physical Abuse scale measured the extent to which respondents experienced physical violence in their childhood. Childhood physical abuse was measured by two items: “when I was less than 12 years old, I was spanked or hit a lot by my father or mother,” and “when I was a teenager I was hit a lot by my mother or father.” These items were drawn from the violent socialization scale of the PRP and respondents were to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the items. The four-point Likert scale for Childhood Physical Abuse ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). The scale was developed by Straus, Mouradian, and De Voe (1999) and the reliabilities for the scale were as follows; \( \alpha = 0.64 \) (\( N = 375 \)) for the Kenyan sample; \( \alpha = 0.59 \) (\( N = 182 \)) for the Zambian sample and \( \alpha = 0.86 \) (\( N = 305 \)) for the Dutch sample.

4.3.4. Childhood Sexual Abuse
Childhood Sexual Abuse was measured using four items derived from the Sexual Abuse History scale of the PRP. This scale was developed by Straus, Mouradian, and De Voe (1999) to measure sexual abuse experiences among individuals. The four items we selected for this study measured the extent to which individuals experienced sexually abusive experiences perpetrated by either an adult member of the family or an adult who was not a member of the family. Respondents were to choose from responses that ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree) in order to indicate the extent to which they agreed with items such as; “Before I was 18 an adult in my family had sex with me (vaginal, anal, or oral)” and “Before I was 18, an adult who was not part of my family made me look at or touch their private parts (sex organs) or looked at or touched mine.” The reliability for this scale was as follows: \( \alpha = 0.71 \) (\( N = 375 \)) for the Kenyan sample; \( \alpha = 0.71 \) (\( N = 182 \)) for the Zambian sample and \( \alpha = 0.40 \) (\( N = 305 \)) for the Dutch sample. The low alpha for the Dutch sample is due to the low variance in this sample.
4.3.5. History of Neglect
The Neglect History scale was developed by Straus, Kinard, and Williams (1999) and it measures the extent to which individuals emotional and physical needs were unfulfilled in their family of origin during their childhood. The scale consists of eight items that measure physical, cognitive, emotional, and educational neglect. Respondents were asked to indicate on a four-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree) the extent to which they agreed with items such as: “My parents did not comfort me when I was upset” and “My parents did not care if I got into trouble in school.” The reliabilities for this scale were as follows: $\alpha = .64 \ (N = 375)$ for the Kenyan sample and $\alpha = .59 \ (N = 182)$ for the Zambian sample and $\alpha = .60 \ (N = 300)$ for the Dutch sample.

4.3.6. Witnessing Interparental Violence
The Witnessing Interparental Violence scale consisted of one item which measured the extent to which respondents were exposed to physical violence between their parents. The item, “When I was a kid, I saw my mother or father kick, punch, or beat up her/his partner” was derived from the Violent Socialization scale (Straus, Mouradian, & De Voe, 1999) of the PRP. Using a four-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree), respondents were to indicate the extent to which they agreed with this statement.

4.3.7. Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms
The Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms scale of the PRP consists of eight items that measure the extent to which the respondents have re-experiencing, hyperarousal, and avoidance symptoms associated with trauma. This scale was developed by De Voe, Mouradian, and Straus (1999). Respondents were asked to indicate on a four-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree) the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the scale items that asked about their experience of avoidance, hyperarousal and re-experiencing symptoms associated with traumatic experiences. Examples of these items include; “I have been terrified by things that have happened to me” and “Terrible things have happened to me that I remember over and over.” The reliabilities for this scale were as follows: $\alpha = .64 \ (N = 375)$ for the Kenyan sample; $\alpha = .60 \ (N = 182)$ for the Zambian sample and $\alpha = .77 \ (N = 305)$ for the Dutch sample.

4.3.8. Antisocial Personality Symptoms
The Antisocial Personality Symptoms scale consists of personality features derived from the DSM-IV (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). It measures personality characteristics such as irresponsibility, general hostility, impulsivity and poor social relationships that are characterized by lack of closeness. The scale was developed by Mouradian, Straus, and De Voe (1999) and it consists of nine items. Examples of these items include; “I don’t think about how what I do will affect other people” and “I have trouble following rules at work or at school.” Using a four-point Likert that ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree), the respondents were expected to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the items. The reliability figures for this scale were as follows:
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α = .61 (N = 375) for the Kenyan sample; α = .63 (N = 182) for the Zambian sample and α = .57 (N = 305) for the Dutch sample.

4.3.9. Criminal Tendencies
This scale measures the extent to which the respondent has committed criminal acts during childhood and adolescence. The scale consists of eight items developed by Straus, De Voe, and Mouradian (1999). Respondents were asked to indicate on a four-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree) the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the scale items that asked about their involvement in violent and property crime during childhood and adolescence. Examples of these items include; “Since age 15, I have stolen money from any one, including family” and “Before age 15, I physically attacked someone with the idea of seriously hurting them”. The reliabilities for this scale were as follows: α = .76 (N = 375) for the Kenyan sample; α = .70 (N = 182) for the Zambian sample and α = .64 (N = 301) for the Dutch sample.

4.3.10. Dating Violence
Dating violence was measured using the CTS2 (Straus et al., 1996). This scale measured the extent to which the respondents had been psychologically, physically and sexually violent to their partners. For this study, we selected 27 items that measured dating violence perpetration. Respondents were asked to indicate the number of times they had used violent tactics in resolving conflicts with their partners. Responses ranged from 1 (once in the past year) to 6 (more than 20 times in the last year). Additional responses included 7 (not in the past year but it did happen before) and 8 (this has never happened before). For purposes of our study, we recoded dating violence items into a dichotomy. Thus responses 1 (once in the past year) to 7 (not in the past year but it did happen before) were recoded as 2 (violence against dating partner). Response 8 was recoded as 1 (no violence against dating partner). Some participants did not respond to certain items of the dating violence scale and the reliabilities for the scale were as follows; α = .94 (N = 293) for the Kenyan sample; α = .86 (N = 119) for the Zambian sample and α = .84 (N = 254) for the Dutch sample.

4.3.11. Externalizing Behaviour Problems
In order to determine the extent to which the respondents reported overall externalizing behaviour, we developed an externalizing behaviour problems score by computing the mean value of the standardized scores for antisocial personality, criminal tendencies and dating violence for each of the participants. The reliabilities for the scale were as follows α = .64 (N = 375) for the Kenyan sample, α = .57 (N = 134) for the Zambian sample, and α = .60 (N = 305) for the Dutch sample.

4.3.12. Depressive Symptoms
The Depressive Symptoms scale measures disturbances in mood, dysphoric cognitions and somatic disturbances in individuals. The scale consists of nine items and was developed by Boney-McCoy, Hamby, Straus, and Sugarman
Respondents were expected to indicate on a four-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 \textit{(strongly disagree)} to 4 \textit{(strongly agree)} the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the scale items. Examples of these items include; “I feel sad quite often” and “I have thought about killing myself.” The reliabilities for this scale were as follows: $\alpha = .67$ (N = 375) for the Kenyan sample; $\alpha = .62$ (N = 182) for the Zambian sample and $\alpha = .82$ (N = 305) for the Dutch sample.

4.3.13. Borderline Personality Symptoms

The Borderline Personality Symptoms scale consists of personality features derived from the DSM-IV (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). It measures personality characteristics such as instability, impulsivity emotional liability, and poor social relationships. This 9-item scale was developed by De Voe, Straus, & Mouradian (1999). Using a four-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 \textit{(strongly disagree)} to 4 \textit{(strongly agree)}, respondents were expected to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the scale items. Examples of these items include; “I have told others that I will kill myself” and “I change suddenly from being one kind of a person to another.” The reliability for this scale was as follows: $\alpha = .64$ (N = 375) for the Kenyan sample; $\alpha = .67$ (N = 182) for the Zambian sample and $\alpha = .72$ (N = 305) for the Dutch sample.

4.3.14. Internalizing Behaviour Problems

We also developed an internalizing behaviour problems score by computing the mean of the depressive symptoms score and the borderline personality symptoms score for each of the participants. This scale measured the extent to which an individual reported overall internalizing behaviour problems. The reliabilities for the scale were as follows; $\alpha = .71$ (N = 375) for the Kenyan sample, $\alpha = .66$ (N = 182) for the Zambian sample, and $\alpha = .83$ (N = 305) for the Dutch sample.