



Tools for Assessing Community Needs: A Critical Review

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Overview

- **Introduction and Rationale**
- **Aims and Objectives**
- **Research Questions**
- **Structure of Paper**
- **Theoretical Considerations**
- **Psychometric Considerations**
- **Preliminary Identifications of Tools**
- **Methods**
- **Timeline**
- **Outputs**

Introduction and Rationale

- **South Africa is characterised by a number of disadvantaged communities**
- **Needs assessment allows for the identification of primary problems in these communities**
- **Identifying the problem will allow for the use of the 4 step model offered by the Public Health Approach**
 1. **Define problem**
 2. **Identify risk factors**
 3. **Develop and evaluate interventions**
 4. **Implement Interventions**
- **Primary purpose: Community development**

Aims and Objectives

- **To provide a meta-review and meta-analysis of available tools to assess community needs**
- **To assess the theoretical and practical advantages and disadvantages of these tools**
- **To assess the applicability of these tools to a South African context**

Research Questions

- **What are the available tools to assess community needs?**
- **What are the theoretical and practical advantages and disadvantages of these tools?**
- **Do these tools apply to a South African context?**
- **Do these tools relate to issues of violence and safety?**

Structure of Paper

- **Contesting definitions of ‘community’**
 - **What constitutes community?**
 - **Theories of community**
- **What is needs assessment and why is it important to a South African context**
- **Identifications of tools**
 - ❑ **Theoretical considerations**
 - ❑ **Psychometric considerations**
 - ❑ **Advantages and disadvantages**
 - ❑ **Applicability to South Africa (Have they been used in Africa? Was it effective? Eurocentricism?)**
 - ❑ **Relationship to violence and safety**
- **Conclusion: overlapping of different instruments and applicability to SA especially in terms of violence and safety**

Theoretical Considerations

- **Underlying assumptions about the meaning of ‘community’**
- **Underlying theory that these indices are based on**
- **Underlying discourse and ideology that these indices promote (social constructions)**
- **What these indices imply about community agency**
- **What these indices imply about the relationship between the community and the state**
- **How do these assumptions affect the process of assessment? (Power, status and knowledge assumptions)**
- **Cross-cultural applicability**

Psychometric Considerations

- **Reliability of instruments**
- **Validity of instruments**
 - **Face, content, construct, criterion/predictive validity**
- **Item analysis**
- **Cultural bias (language, cultural assumptions, Eurocentricism, WHO administers tools)**

Preliminary Identification of Concepts and Tools

- **Social Capital: the system of networks, norms and trust relationships that enable communities to address common concerns (Pronyk et al, 2008)**
 - **Contested definitions, lack of conceptual clarity, issues with causality and measurement**
 - **Originally conceived by Hanifan (1916)**
 - **Bonding (internal) and bridging (external)**
 - **Cognitive social capital (values, trust, solidarity, reciprocity, social norms, social behaviour, social attitudes)**
 - **Structural social capital (social structure, accountability of leaders, collective action)**
 - **Social Capital Assessment Tool (SCAT)**
 - **Qualitative and quantitative**
 - **Community, household and organisational profiles**

- **Sense of Community**: people's perception of interconnection and interdependence, shared responsibility, and common goals (Ahern et al, 1996)
 - **Sense of community index (SCI): most widely used measure of the construct**
 - Developed in 1985
 - Quantitative surveys
- **Community Sustainability**: a community model consisting of 4 dimensions: economic, social, environmental and institutional (Valentin & Spangenberg, 2000)
 - **Prism of Sustainable Development Model: develop sustainability indicators according to the 4 dimensions (community-specific)**
 - Working groups
 - Public participation

- **Planning for Real:** process of community consultation (NIF, 2009)
 - **3-D map of community in order to locate areas of need**
 - **Participatory model: community members place cards delineating needs onto map**
 - **Needs are prioritised into low, high, medium → develop Action Plan**
- **Community Attitudes:** citizen's attitudes towards community life areas such as education, employment and health (Fitzsimmons & Ferb, 1977)
 - **Community Attitude Assessment Scale (CAAS)**
 - **4 dimensional quantitative scale: Importance, Influence, Equality of Opportunity and Satisfaction in terms of community life areas**

- **Social/Neighbourhood Cohesion:** The willingness of members of a society/community/neighbourhood to cooperate with each other in order to survive and prosper (Stanley, 2003)
- **Gutman scaling techniques:** measures neighbourhood activities and resources
- **Neighbourhood Effects:** social processes related to problem behaviours and health related outcomes (Sampson et al, 2002)
- **Community-based surveys to measure neighbourhood, social and institutional processes**

Methods

- **Meta-analysis of available tools to assess community needs**
 - **Takes place at the level of theory and psychometry**
 - **Takes place in relationship to a South African context**
 - **Takes place with regard to issues of violence and safety**

Timeline

Date and Phase	Activity
25 January	Present outline of paper at the Ukuphepha meeting
Phase 1: 26 January-31 January	Review the literature
Phase 2: 1 February-7 February	Analysis of identified tools
Phase 3: 8 February-14 February	Write- up of paper
Phase 4: 15 February-17 February	Prepare seminar series presentation
18 February	Present at seminar series and receive feedback
Phase 5: 19 February-21 February	Revise first draft
22 February	Submit to reviewers
2 March-3 March	Present at Authorship Workshop

Outputs

- **Theoretical and practical considerations for community assessment**
- **Presentation and paper for the Ukuphepha Project and Authorship Workshop**
- **Publication**

Thank you for your attention

