Method

This chapter describes the research design used for all three parts of this dissertation. It includes a description of the research approach chosen, its fit with research questions and hypotheses, the participants' backgrounds, the role of the researcher, sampling techniques, methods of generating and handling data, methods of analyzing data and ethical considerations. Specific procedures for seeking informed consent are described with each study. All parts and procedures of this dissertation received approval from the Departmental Research Ethics Committee.

Study 1- Moral Reasoning among Children in India: A Cross-Sectional Study

The present study was a cross-sectional interview study. The aims were to test hypotheses about use of the three Ethics of Autonomy, Community and Divinity, using the cultural-developmental approach; and to gain qualitative insights into the type of moral concepts used in Indian children's moral reasoning.

Research Questions:

1. What are developmental trajectories for the use of Autonomy, Community, and Divinity among children in India?
2. How do Indian children from high- and low- SES backgrounds use Autonomy, Community and Divinity in their moral reasoning?

Hypotheses for Age:

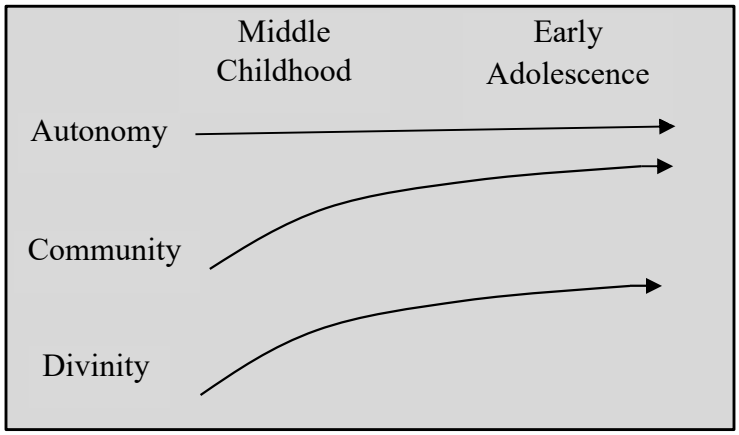
1. The use of Autonomy will be similar among participants in middle childhood and early adolescence.
2. Community and Divinity will be used more by participants in early adolescence compared to those in middle childhood.

Hypothesis for Social Class:

1. Participants belonging to the low SES will show greater use of Community and lower use of Autonomy compared to participants belonging to the high SES.
2. The degree of use of Divinity will be similar among participants from both SES groups.

Figure 3

Hypothesized Expression of the Template among Indian Participants in Middle Childhood and Early Adolescence



Participants

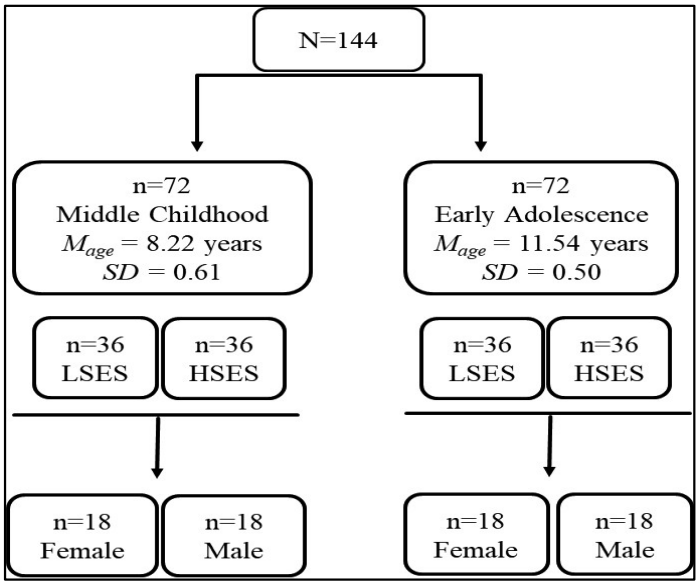
The sample consisted of 144 children in the city of Vadodara, Gujarat, India (Figure 4). It was divided evenly (n = 72) between children in middle childhood (*M* = 8.22 years, *SD* = 0.61) and early adolescence (*M* = 11.54, *SD* = 0.50). Each age group had an equal number of children from high- and low-SES backgrounds (n = 36). There was also an equal distribution of boys and girls within each age and SES group.

With respect to SES, the average monthly family income of the high-SES children was Indian rupees 80,000 (approximately US $1,045). For comparison purposes, a typical (median) urban household in Gujarat earned Indian rupees 56,500 (approximately $738) (Desai et al., 2010). High-SES parents had obtained bachelors or professional degrees and were primarily employed in business and medical professions. The average monthly family income of the low-SES children was Indian rupees 4,000 (approximately US $52) which is below the international

poverty line (World Health Organization, 2021). Among these parents, 54% had no formal education, 30% had attended primary school, 13% had attended high school, and 3% had completed 12th grade. Majority of them were self-employed vegetable vendors and unskilled laborers (e.g., domestic help, sweepers, and workers in grocery shops). Ten percent were unemployed.

Figure 4

Sample Distribution for Study 1



Given the differences in the daily contexts of high- and low-SES children in India, the two groups had to be recruited differently. High-SES children attended school regularly and were recruited through a private, English-medium school. Over the last few decades, private English-medium schools have gained popularity as high- and middle-class urban Indians regard English as the global language and send their children to these schools. The children in middle childhood were in third grade and the early adolescents were in sixth grade. Children who expressed an interest in participating after an orientation about the study received a description of the project and a consent form to show their parents (see Appendix E). Subsequently, the researcher

contacted parents by phone. Children who returned consent forms signed by their parents were interviewed.

Most of the low-SES children did not attend school and none attended regularly, because they assisted their parents at work or did household tasks at home. Consequently, low-SES children were not recruited through school. Instead, peer leaders (39%) were first recruited through a local non-profit organization that provides educational assistance in slum communities. In turn, the peer leaders helped recruit additional participants (61%) from the community. This snowballing approach was crucial because the peer leaders helped establish rapport with low-SES families. Parents or other adults responsible for the children provided oral informed consent.

Procedure

High-SES children were interviewed at school, and low-SES children were interviewed at home. Children decided whether to be interviewed in English, Gujarati, or Hindi. In-depth interviews were employed because they are conducive to the establishment of trust, and they provide detailed insight into participants' reasoning as well as choice of words and expressions. As such, interviews—while time-consuming—are helpful for generating ecologically valid and nuanced knowledge.

Interviews were tape recorded. In the low-SES community, the researcher familiarized children with the recording device before starting the actual interviews in order that they would not be distracted by the unknown technology. The researcher also spent extra time at the outset habituating the low-SES children to the question-answer format of an interview, because the children were not used to being asked their opinions.

Materials

First, a demographic information questionnaire was used to gather information about the participants (see Appendix B). Next, children participated in an interview about five scenarios that involved moral dilemmas (see Appendix C). The scenarios were developed through an extensive process aimed at ensuring that they were: 1) rooted in the everyday experiences of the children in the present Indian context, 2) readily understood by children across age and SES groups, and 3) sufficiently diverse to elicit all or most of the children's different types of reasons.

The scenarios were constructed by the researcher for her master's project on moral reasoning among children in India. This master's project was part of a larger project on morality, funded by the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), New Delhi. Expert validation for all scenarios was also done as part of the project. The scenarios were constructed with the aims of capturing as many of children's different and indigenous moral reasons as possible. The first step in developing the scenarios involved a survey of research in India and elsewhere to identify common moral issues and dilemmas. Next, informal discussions were conducted with children representing the present age and SES groups about their familiarity with these issues and dilemmas, as well as additional moral experiences they wished to describe. Children spoke of real-life experiences and concepts that they deemed as moral in their everyday lives. Therefore, the focus was on emic concepts that were relevant to children's lived cultural experiences rather than a priori etic concepts.

Based on this extensive information, the researcher generated an initial pool of 20 scenarios. Focus groups and individual pilot interviews with children, again representing the age and SES groups, were used to reduce this pool to the five scenarios that best met the above three selection criteria. This rigorous process of formulating and finalizing the scenarios ensured that the scenarios were culturally and developmentally appropriate for participants. The children who

took part in the development of the scenarios did not participate in the interviews for the present study.

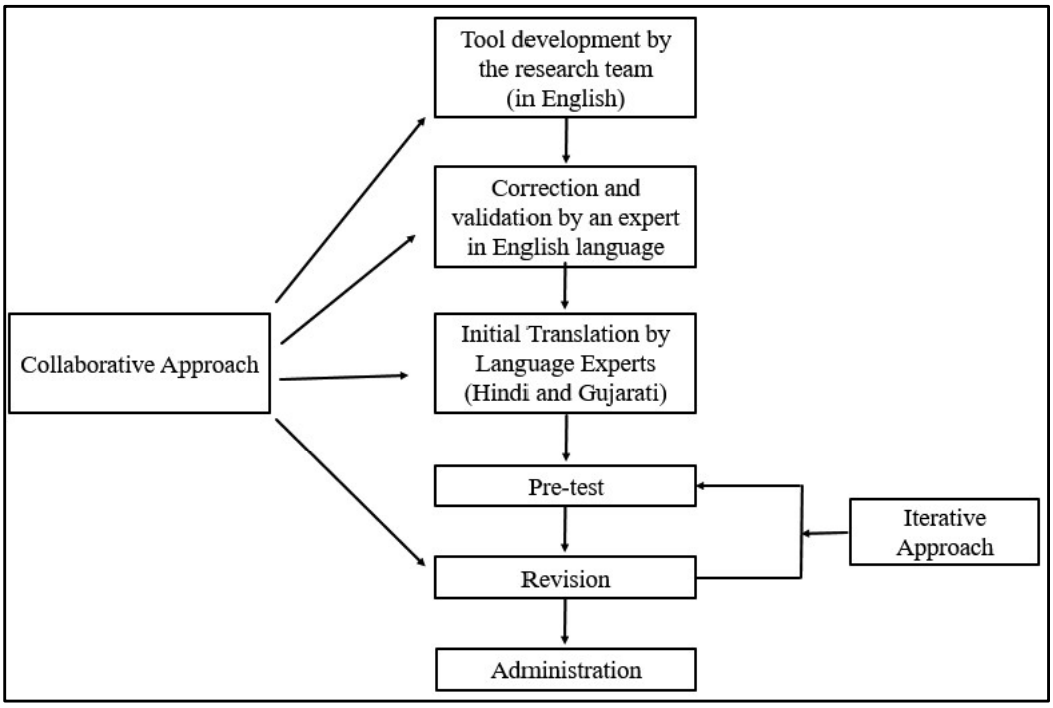
Briefly, one scenario described a child going for an important football match. On the way, the child finds an injured kitten. The dilemma is whether to help the kitten or proceed to the match. In a second scenario, a child stops in the park to play with friends and loses a packet of sweets intended for guests at home. The question is whether the child should take money from a wallet lying in the park to purchase new sweets. A third scenario takes place during the time of an Indian festival- *Ganesh Chaturthi* when a child unintentionally breaks the *Ganesh* idol made for the occasion. The dilemma is whether to tell adults in the neighborhood or remain quiet. In a fourth scenario, a child has to decide whether or not to pass on their homework to a needy friend while the teacher is not looking. In the fifth scenario, a child eats some *prashād* before it is offered to God. *Prashād* is food that is supposed first to be offered to God in order to receive a divine blessing, and only subsequently to be eaten by worshippers. The dilemma is whether to tell the mother or to let her offer previously tasted *prashād* to God. (See Appendix C form complete scenarios)

The scenarios were structured in a narrative form to keep the children's interest. The order of presentation of scenarios and the gender of scenario protagonists were randomized. The scenarios and probe questions were developed first in English and translated to Hindi and Gujarati using a collaborative and iterative approach to translation: First, the tool was developed in English and validated by an expert on the English language. Second, an initial translation was done where independent, parallel translation was done in Hindi and Gujarati by language experts. Third, the Hindi and Gujarati translations were translated back into English. Review meetings were done with the translators to discuss inconsistencies and to decide on a final

version. The main aim was to ensure that the scenarios and probe questions accurately convey and capture the same meaning in all three languages. The next step was to conduct a pre-test for each language version of the tool. Issues identified (mainly problems of comprehension and meaning) in the pre-test were taken back to the team of translators and were resolved through discussion. An updated version of the tool was pretested again to finalize. A flowchart of this process is depicted in Figure 5.

Figure 5

Process of Collaborative and Iterative Translation



Compared to a single back translation in isolation, collaborative and iterative processes are recommended (Douglas & Craig, 2007), especially to assess whether the questions have equivalent meaning or are devoid of cultural bias, and to ensure not much is dependent on one translator's understanding of a question and its purpose. Additionally, a mechanical translation without adjustments retains the literal meaning of the original language but is unlikely to produce valid and reliable results.

Although time consuming, collaborative and iterative translation ensures the highest level of accuracy to develop a valid and effective data collection instrument, especially when the sample is multilingual, as is in the present study, and when the same data collection instrument is to be used over a period of time (like in longitudinal studies).

For every scenario, children were asked to indicate the right moral action for the protagonist (moral judgment), and to explain why (moral reasoning). Follow-up questions encouraged children to discuss all their moral reasons and to elaborate. For example, if participants spoke of duty, they were asked to explain who had a duty to whom, and the nature of the duty. As much as possible, the researcher used children's words when asking follow-up questions about moral reasons in order to gain insight into their terminology and ways of thinking, as well as to avoid imposing terminology and new ideas. For example, when children used the indigenous concept of *paap*, which pertains to divine consequences of bad actions, the researcher would use the word when asking children to describe what they meant by it.

Coding

All interviews were transcribed verbatim, and interviews in Gujarati and Hindi were subsequently translated into English. Some Gujarati and Hindi terms and phrases were retained in the English transcripts to preserve notable indigenous concepts.

Moral reasons were coded with the manual for the three Ethics of Autonomy, Community, and Divinity (Jensen, 2008, 2015). The original development of the coding manual was based on a comprehensive review of cross-cultural literature on moral reasoning that included research in India. The manual consists of the three major codes or ethics (See Appendix A). It also contains 44 "subcodes:" 15 for Autonomy, 13 for Community, and 16 for Divinity. Subcodes are the equivalent of specific *types* of moral reasons.

The coding manual provides a definition for each ethic and type of reason. Additionally, examples are provided for each type of reason. Classifying every moral reason both in terms of an ethic and a type aids in: 1) ensuring that all stated reasons are coded, 2) differentiating among reasons, and 3) determining that a reason is sufficiently well-elaborated to decide which one of the three ethics is invoked.

For study 1, the transcribed interviews amounted to an average of 10 pages per participant, for a total of 1,140 pages of text to code. A total of 1,104 reasons were coded. Inter-rater reliability was assessed for two independent coders on 20% of randomly selected interviews. For the three ethics, Cohen's Kappa was .97. Differences between the coders were resolved through discussion. Results of study 1 are in section 1 of the results chapter.

Study 2- Moral Reasoning in Childhood and Adolescence: A Longitudinal Study

Compared to cross-sectional design, a longitudinal design is more definitive in examining developmental change over time. Additionally, as mentioned in the review of literature, there have not been enough longitudinal examinations of moral reasoning in India, and the world. Therefore, the aim for Study 2 was to conduct longitudinal analysis to determine developmental trends in the use of the Ethics of Autonomy, Community and Divinity in childhood and adolescence. Participants for the longitudinal study were interviewed at two age points separated by approximately 4.5 years (more details are in the following section).

Research Question:

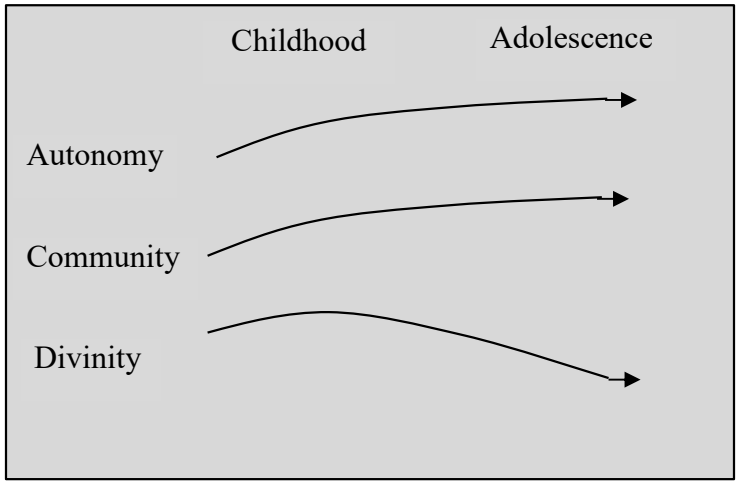
1. What are developmental trajectories for the use of Autonomy, Community and Divinity through childhood and adolescence in India?

Hypotheses:

1. The use of Autonomy will increase from childhood to adolescence.
2. The use of Community will be low in childhood and will increase with age during the course of adolescence.
3. The use of Divinity will begin early in development however its use in moral discourse will recede during adolescence.

Figure 6

Hypothesized Expression of the Template among Indian Participants in Childhood and Adolescence



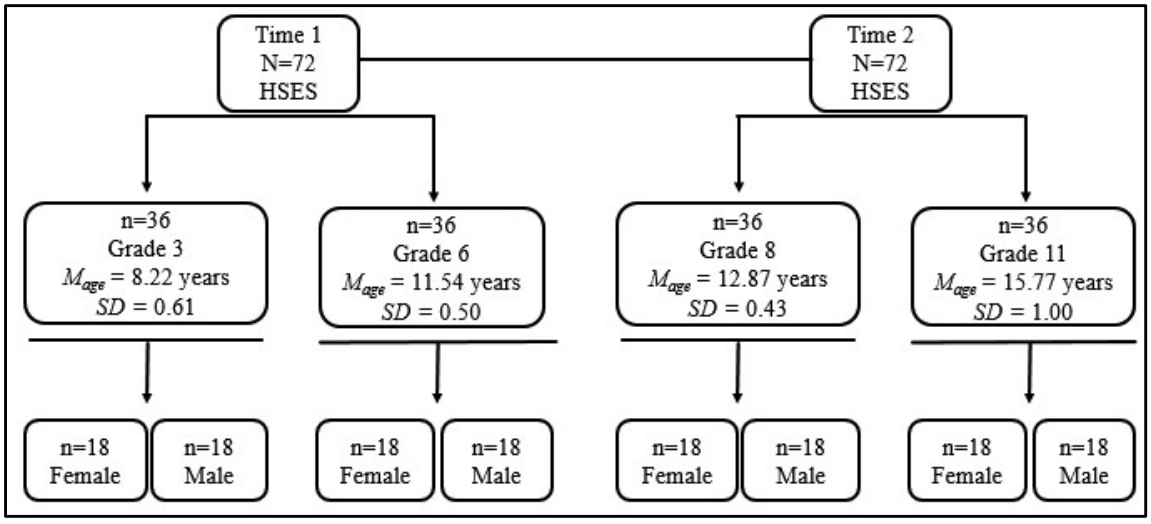
Participants

First, attempts were made to locate participants from the low SES who had participated in Study 1. However, none could be located for pilot interviews. As described in the Method for Study 1, a majority of the low-SES participants belonged to families who were daily wage workers, vendors or unskilled laborers (10% were unemployed). These families lived in rented homes in slums of Vadodara and perhaps moved often, in search of employment opportunities or more affordable living conditions (such as lower rent for a home). For these reasons, it was not possible to locate and conduct follow up interviews with them for Study 2. A decision to interview only high- SES participants for Study 2 had to be made.

As shown in Figure 7, the sample for Study 2 consisted of the same 72 participants from study 1 who belonged to the high SES. These participants responded to the same five hypothetical scenarios from Study 1 at two different age points (Time 1 and Time 2), separated by approximately 4.5 years.

Figure 7

Sample Distribution for Study 2



Adolescents were approached through the same private, English-medium school that was contacted to recruit child participants for Study 1. At Time 1, participants were in grade three

(M_{age}= 8.22 years, *SD* = 0.61) and grade six (M_{age}=11.54 years, *SD* = 0.50). At retest all 72 children from the high SES were able to participate in the follow-up study (Time 2) and by then they were adolescents in grades eight (M_{age}= 12.87 years, *SD* = 0.43) and eleven (M_{age}= 15.77 years, *SD* = 1.00). Twelve participants from Time1 had moved to other schools within Vadodara but could be located. Their participation was crucial for the longitudinal study. These participants were located using their contact information gathered at Time 1 and with some help from the school/past classmates, when needed. There was equal distribution of boys and girls in the final sample. Participants from Time 1 were given a letter describing the study and a consent form to show their parents (see Appendix E). Subsequently, the researcher contacted parents by phone. Children were interviewed in school after they returned consent forms signed by their parents.

Procedure

Individual pilot interviews were conducted with adolescents before the final interviews for the study. A majority of (84%) participants were interviewed in school. The remaining (16%) who had changed schools were interviewed in their homes. Children decided whether to be interviewed in English, Gujarati, or Hindi. Interviews were tape recorded and later transcribed verbatim. Interviews in Gujarati and Hindi were subsequently translated into English. Some Gujarati and Hindi terms and phrases were retained in the English transcripts to preserve indigenous concepts.

Materials

First, a demographic information questionnaire was used to gather information about the participants (see Appendix B). Adolescents participated in in-depth interviews about the same five scenarios with moral dilemmas that were used in Study 1 (see Appendix C for the

scenarios). The procedure for data collection was retained from Study 1. Like for Study 1, for every scenario, children were asked to indicate the right moral action for the protagonist (moral judgment), and to explain why (moral reasoning). Follow-up questions encouraged dolescents to discuss all their moral reasons and to elaborate. The researcher used participants' words to ask follow-up questions to ensure that they had the opportunity to fully explain and describe their reasons and ways of thinking.

Coding

Moral reasons were coded with the manual for the three Ethics of Autonomy, Community, and Divinity (Jensen, 2008, 2015; see Appendix A). The coding procedure used at Time 1 was retained at Time 2. The transcribed interviews amounted to an average of nine pages per participant, for a total of 581 pages of text to code. A total of 923 reasons were coded. Inter-rater reliability was assessed for two independent coders on 20% of randomly selected interviews. For the three ethics, Cohen's Kappa was .80. Differences between the coders were resolved through discussion before coding the complete set of interviews. Results for study two are detailed in section two of the results chapter.

Study 3- Moral Reasoning among Adults in India: A Qualitative Study

Over the last two decades, the department has engaged in a series of research projects examining moral reasoning in India (Bhangaokar & Kapadia, 2009; Kulkarni, 2007), particularly research using the cultural-developmental approach (Kapadia & Bhangaokar, 2010, 2015; Pandya, 2009; Pandya & Bhangaokar, 2015), emphasizing the usefulness of cultural approaches to study moral development. These studies have brought to light several indigenous concepts in moral reasoning including *karma* and *dharma.*

Evidence from these studies corroborates well with the rising interest in indigenous psychology and its contributions to global psychology (Bhawuk, 2011), thereby providing the main impetus for Study 3. The aim of this study was to examine Indian moral discourse using a qualitative lens, from the standpoint of the Indian moral worldview, and without the use of the Big Three Ethics framework. While Study 1 & 2 included children and adolescents as participants, we approached adults for participation in Study 3. This was mainly to have the opportunity to examine developmentally mature moral discourse wherein cultural worldviews were better articulated (compared to children and adolescents) and grounded in personal experiences.

Research Objective:

To examine indigenous concepts and elements of the Indian moral worldview in moral discourse among adults in India.

Participants

The sample consisted of 30 married adults in the city of Vadodara, Gujarat, India. It was divided evenly (n=15) between women (M =42.66, SD = 4.27) and men (M = 44.40, SD = 4.37). The sample represented the upper socio-economic class (Kuppuswamy, 2019), with an average

monthly family income of Indian ₹ 2, 2,000 (approximately US $2,953). A majority (73%) had nuclear families, while the rest (27%) had extended families.

All adults were university educated. Women held bachelors (44%), masters (46%), or higher degrees (10%). Forty seven percent of women were employed and 33% were full-time home makers. Of the women who were employed, 20% owned business (self-employed) and 27% were employed in full time or part time service (teachers, doctors, architects and such). Men held bachelor's (33%), master's (53%) or higher degrees (13%) too. While 27% were self-employed, the majority (73%) were employed in full time service (doctors, engineers, scientists, chartered accountants or teachers).

Materials

First, a demographic information questionnaire was used to gather information about the age, sex, highest level of education, family structure/type, work status and family income of the participants (see Appendix B). Next, an open-ended interview schedule was used to ask questions about worldviews held by participants, particularly about personhood, God and suffering (see Appendix D for list of questions and probes). The first part of the interview on worldviews entailed probes and questions about human nature and personhood. More specifically, they explored whether humans, by nature were conceptualized as good or bad; and whether men and women were perceived as similar or different. Probes were administered to elicit reasoning regarding the same. The second part looked at God-concepts, including beliefs about the existence of God, God's characteristics, power, and whether there is an antithesis to God such as a devil or an evil force. Lastly, we explored the idea of suffering—what is suffering, why people suffer, the meaning of suffering in life, and whether it is possible to eliminate suffering.

Procedure

Pilot interviews were conducted with 20% of the sample size to ensure clarity and relevance of the questions and their formulations. Minor corrective changes and adjustments were made in the final interview protocol before proceeding with in-depth interviews for the study.

Participants were recruited in two ways- First, a description of the study and a consent form (see Appendix E) was sent to parents of children attending the same private English-medium school in Vadodara that was approached for high-SES participants of Study 1 and 2. The sample for the present study (Study 3) did not include any parents of participants from Study 1 or 2. Subsequently researcher contacted adults through phone. Parents who returned signed consent forms were approached for the final interview. Second, parents who participated in the final interview were requested to suggest other adults in their social and familial networks who may be willing to participate in the study. Only adults who met the age requirements of the study and belonged to the upper socioeconomic class were interviewed for Study 3.

Adults were interviewed at home (73%) or their work (27%), depending on their preference. They had the choice to respond in English, Gujarati or Hindi. The latter two are the common local languages. Interviews were tape recorded and later transcribed verbatim. Inter-rater reliability was assessed on 20% of randomly selected interviews and a Cohen's Kappa values of .95 was achieved. Differences between the two independent coders were resolved through discussion.

Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative research is gaining popularity in several disciplines. Creswell (2007) and Maxwell (2012) outline distinct advantages of qualitative research. Compared to quantitative

research, which views the world in terms of variables and numbers, qualitative research employs a process-oriented approach that views the world in terms of people, contexts, events and processes that connect these. The strengths of qualitative research, are attributed to this process-oriented, inductive, open-ended strategy to generate results and theories that are experientially credible. Qualitative research is especially useful to examine phenomena that are relatively less explored, including emic perspectives that may not fit into standardized tools and measures.

For the present study, a two-step process was used to understand participant responses using a qualitative approach. First, thematic analysis was done using Dedoose-- a qualitative data analysis software. Thematic analysis is a foundational method of qualitative analysis that has the potential to provide a rich account of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Using open coding, ideas and concepts that emerged in participant responses were categorized. Related themes were first formed, followed by codes and sub codes to determine key findings for the study. Lastly, verbatim responses for all major codes and sub codes were culled from the interviews and representative excerpts are presented. These excerpts are used to explain how adults spoke about worldviews related to personhood, God and suffering. Results for study three are presented in section three of the results chapter.