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ABSTRACT

The Kingdom of Swaziland, made up primarily of people of Swazi ethnicity, has gone through dramatic social, political, and economic changes throughout this century, due in no little part to colonial and post-colonial influences. But because the political state reflects the ethnic homogeneity of its people, traditions have changed more slowly than in other areas of the continent. Consequently, the Swazi culture can serve as a case study for the investigation of basic psychological premises, such as "intelligence," and the universality of such concepts. This paper investigates to what extent the complex nature of continuity and change in the context of this southern African kingdom has also modified deeply rooted societal beliefs regarding cultural ways of knowing and being "intelligent." The paper analyzes the views of individuals from one culture (Swazi) regarding the traits of being "intelligent." Within that culture it compares historical meanings of intelligent behavior and considers how and why perceptions of this term have changed throughout the 20th century and continue to vary today. The paper seeks to contribute to goals put forward by John Berry regarding cross-cultural psychology: generally, by using a more emic outlook of one psychological principle, researchers may come closer to creating a true etic perspective. (Contains 5 notes, 2 tables, and 58 references.) (BT)

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Swazi Concepts of Intelligence: The Universal vs. the Local

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Swazi Concepts of Intelligence: The Universal vs. the Local

What does it mean to be intelligent? We utilize the term "intelligent" constantly in our daily lives; however, academics who study cognitive competence rarely agree on its meaning. Psychologists and anthropologists have studied this concept from various perspectives over the years, and psychometricians have attempted to measure it.

However, is there a universal theory of intelligence? This paper analyzes the views of individuals from one culture (Swazi) regarding the traits of being "intelligent"; and within that culture it compares historical meanings of intelligent behavior, and how and why perceptions of this term have changed throughout the twentieth century and continue to vary today. This endeavor seeks to contribute to two of the goals put forward by John Berry regarding the goals of cross-cultural psychology. First, by discovering "new aspects of the phenomenon" of intelligence within "local cultural terms", we can then contribute to the second goal of generating of a "more nearly universal psychology, one that has pan-human validity" (Berry, 1999. p.166) Consequently, by utilizing a more *emic* outlook of one psychological principle, we may come closer to creating a true *etic* perspective.

The Kingdom of Swaziland, made up primarily of people of Swazi ethnicity, has gone through dramatic social, political and economic changes throughout this century due in no little part to colonial and post-colonial influences. However, unlike the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, because the political state reflects the ethnic homogeneity of its people, the Swazi have in many respects managed to hang on to their traditional ways.

Patriarchal, patrilineal, and monarchical traditions have changed more slowly than in

other areas of the continent. Consequently, the Swazi culture makes for an interesting case study for the investigation of basic psychological premises, such as “intelligence” and the universality of such concepts. This paper will investigate to what extent the complex nature of continuity and change in the context of this southern African kingdom, has also modified deeply rooted societal beliefs regarding cultural ways of knowing and being “intelligent.”

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study of cognitive competence and attempts to define and measure "intelligence" have occurred cross-culturally throughout the twentieth century. While other researchers have summarized the literature in this field better than a paper of this size permits (Anastasi, 1988; Berry, 1984; Cole, 1985; Cole et.al. 1971; Lave, 1988; Serpell, 1983; Serpell, 1993; Super, 1983; Keats, 1995), a few essential points can be made here. Researchers in the fields of anthropology and psychology have examined this topic primarily from two different perspectives. Anthropologists have assumed a cultural relativist perspective, placing a greater emphasis on whole cultural group norms, and relying heavily on ethnographic field methods (Kim and Berry, 1993). As a discipline, anthropology's purpose has been to study the particulars of culture (Lave, 1988). However, psychologists have attempted to “discern laws of internal (mental) organization and the emergence of more abstract categories of knowledge” (Cole, 1985, p. 158). Thus, psychological methodology could rely heavily on experimentation because there

was a "theorem of the indifference of the population" (Anastasi, 1988, p. 208). However, Lave (1988) points out that this dichotomy is often polarizing and has prevented true discourse on the nature of culture and cognition.

More recent psychological theories of intelligence which include a strong cultural element and are multifaceted have tremendously impacted the field of cognitive psychology (Sternberg, 1988; Gardner, 1983). In fact, the essence of the controversy regarding research perspective and thus methodology has been examined by Sternberg. "Just what is the relation of intelligence to culture," he asks, "and the range of views regarding it?" (Sternberg, 1988, p. 61). Sternberg analyzes the debate as one between "radical cultural relativism," and "nonrelativism," which regards intelligence as the same thing from one culture to another (Sternberg, 1988, pp. 61-63). However, Sternberg argues that neither extreme is either completely correct or entirely incorrect. His own "triarchic theory of intelligence" includes a heavy "cultural" component. While Sternberg sees a strong link between culture and cognition, his position is by no means a "radical culturally relativistic" one. His theory states that "the contexts of intelligence are culture-specific, although cultures may differ in the amounts of context they share with each other" (Sternberg, 1988, p. 82). However, it is clear from this statement that he presupposes that some aspects of intelligence *are* universal. Furthermore, Sternberg does not disagree with using experimentation in the quest for understanding intelligence; he argues, however, that the "task or situation must be contextually relevant to people's lives" (Sternberg, 1988, p. 82). Consequently, his theory contains the a priori assumption

of the psychological universal concept, intelligence.

However, how do we know if the concept of “intelligence” is even relevant to the lives of those whom we are researching? Sternberg’s supplication also states that the triarchic nature of his theory includes three aspects “dealing with the relation of intelligence (a) to the internal world of the person, (b) to experience, and (c) to the external world” (Sternberg, 1999, p. 489). While all three of these aspects influence, and are influenced, by culture, the theory continues to assume a concept of intelligence which itself has bidirectional, reciprocal effects with these three aspects. This theory is only possible if the assumption of a universal concept of “intelligence” is correct. Academics proposing a more “indigenous psychological” approach view the existence of psychological universals like intelligence as something which cannot be assumed. While they do not deny such a thing as universals, they say that they are “a theoretical and empirical issue that cannot be decided a priori” (Kim and Berry, 1993). If there are universals, they must be discovered. Likewise, Nandita Chaudhary (1999) concludes that “intelligence” is actually a Western notion, because it is a concept which is completely culture-bound. Chaudhary continues to question whether “intelligence” is so culture-bound that “it cannot be studied across cultures” (p.161). However, I contend that we will never completely understand whether the notion of “intelligence” is totally culture-bound and not transferable unless we investigate its presence as a concept or lack thereof across cultures.

This rift in perspective and research methodology (whether all things are either

relevant or universal) is reflective of what has come to be known in the field of cross-cultural psychology as the *emic/etic* distinction in theoretical approaches. As described by Brislin, the *emic* approach takes into account "what the people themselves value as meaningful and important," while the *etic* approach "make[s] generalizations across cultures that take into account all human behavior". "The goal, then," he concludes about the *etic* approach "is theory building" (Brislin, 1976, p. 217). Berry describes these two approaches as the difference between "the local or culturally relative" and the "general or universal" (Berry, 1984, p. 338).¹ Berry describes the two approaches as being not necessarily dichotomous, but rather complementary. Furthermore, he concludes that the majority of research is neither strictly *emic* or *etic* in its theoretic positioning or methodological approach (Berry, 1999). When an individual travels to another culture in order to arrive at a deeper understanding of that culture and attempts to investigate psychological principals from the local perspective, this could be classified as what Berry calls a *derived etic*. While the topic of research is a local perspective, it has been derived by someone from another (*etic*) cultural interpretation. Furthermore, he states that most psychological knowledge which is considered universal is actually from a Western perspective (American and European), making this an example of what he classifies as an *imposed etic* and not a true, universal *etic*.

This brings us to a theoretical question regarding the perspective of this research in Swaziland. At first glance, one might assume that this topic is from an *emic*, *indigenous psychological* perspective. However, being an American researcher and not

ethnically Swazi would negate that possibility, according to Berry, thus suggesting a *derived etic* perspective. Furthermore, if I have presumed the concept of intelligence as one which is researchable across cultures, then the perspective is more *cross-cultural* than one of *indigenous psychology*. If this research and others like it find characteristics to “intelligence” which are in fact “intersecting between pairs of cultures” then with further cross-cultural research, Sternberg believes, “it will be possible to specify just what aspects of intelligence are specific to a given culture and what aspects are shared with at least one other culture” (Sternberg, 1988, p. 82). Furthermore, since culture is not static, in order to truly gain an understanding of the local perspective and how the individual interacts with the collective culture, an historical analysis of the conceptualization of the phenomenon (intelligence in this case) is necessary. According to Berry, “it is essential to understand the context in which development took place, and in which it now occurs” (Berry, 1999, p. 168). Furthermore that context must include, according to Anastasi, a charting of those changes and the composition of intelligence “over time” (Anastasi, 1988, p. 208).

Other African Research

“There is no one African view of intelligence, any more than there is any one North American view. Perhaps there is no one African intelligence, or North American intelligence, for that matter” (Sternberg, 1988, p.60-61). Sternberg comes to this conclusion after briefly recounting some of the various and opposing views researchers

have found throughout the continent of Africa.² During the twentieth century, research within the realm of "indigenous concepts of intelligence" or "local perceptions of intelligent behavior" has revealed trends in the literature. Meyer Fortes (1938) was one of the first anthropologists to spend significant energy focusing ethnographic research on African children as an independent worthwhile investigation. His late 1930's study of the Tale people of Northern Ghana reveals interesting insights which have been revisited throughout the century by anthropologists and psychologists. Three themes emerge from his research: a developmental theoretical perspective of intelligence; how children learn and become "intelligent"; and what an "intelligent" child "knows".

According to Fortes, the Tale view of "intelligence" from a developmental perspective includes the concept that children "know nothing" when they are born, while as they age and listen to adults, they learn (Fortes, 1938, p.12-13). According to Fortes, the Tale believe that learning simply comes naturally as children grow up. Fortes quotes a Tale informant saying, "Heaven teaches them." Likewise, Super found that the Kipsigis in Kenya believed in a natural maturational aspect to the development of "intelligence." The term *ngom*, the closest translation to "intelligent," contains a "developmental universal" according to Super. Kipsigi mothers expressed a different attitude regarding their children's intelligence when the child reached the age of about six years: "The child is now ngom" (Super, 1983, p. 209). The same phenomenon has been found in Tanzania, where mothers place heavy emphasis on natural biological maturation for children's development of knowledge (McGillicuddy-DeLisi and Subramanian, 1996).

Furthermore, among the Chewa in Zambia "the behaviour indicative of growing *nzelu* [intelligence] is an important index of general maturation" (Serpell: 1993, p. 57).

The second trend in the literature, *how* children learn and become intelligent, reflects the debate between direct instruction and imitation and mimicry. Fortes reports the Tale relying primarily on imitation for children's learning. Play focuses on mimicry of parental behaviors, and a child who imitates well is said to have good eyes. "This conception of cleverness is intelligible in a society where learning by looking and copying is the commonest manner of achieving dexterity both in crafts and in the everyday manual activities" (Fortes, 1938, p.13). In addition to imitation the Tale also believed that children learn through identification and cooperation. In all manners of learning, play forms an important process in the development of intelligence. Likewise, Tanzanian mothers have also placed a higher priority on "absorption" and imitation rather than direct instruction or experimentation (McGillicuddy-DeLisi and Subramanian, 1996). Serpell (1993) also found among Chewa parents a belief that mimicry, repetition and rehearsal were needed in order for a child to develop "expertise" in a subject area.

The third theme, "what does an intelligent child know" or "what constitutes intelligence," has been perhaps the most difficult question for anthropologists and psychologists to investigate. This is partly due to the problem of direct translation of the term "intelligent" to the local African language. Denotative translations of the word do not always encompass all aspects of the connotative meaning given to "intelligence" within a specific culture. Serpell (1993) presents the best summary of this problem and

historical interpretations on the meaning and use of the term. Throughout the century, researchers have discovered varying degrees of: wisdom, cleverness, responsibility, obedience, and cooperativeness as part of the meaning of "intelligent" (Dasen, 1984; Fortes, 1938; Kingsley, 1985; Serpell, 1993; Super, 1983; and Wober, 1974). Serpell (1993) also discovers an occasional connotative meaning which takes on a more negative tone to the word, as in "sly" or "clever at talking only"(Serpell,1993 p.41; as quoted from Kingsley, 1985, p.285). These various interpretations of the term present a methodological problem for the researcher who might not be able to justify simply asking parents or teachers what an "intelligent" child should know, or what behaviors such a child might exhibit. In fact, the interviewer and informant may be unwittingly discussing two different concepts.

One method of trying to get around misinterpretations has been for researchers to ask parents what are the most desired traits for children to have. Much of this research has revealed "social traits" as being more desirable rather than "cognitive traits." For example, the Tale value highly "rules of conduct," moral observances and obedience (Fortes, 1938). Kingsley also found in both Zambia and Swaziland that parents leaned toward social behavior as the most desirable characteristic for their children. For the Bemba in Zambia, it was "obedience," and for the Swazi "respectfulness to older people," which were of primary importance (Kingsley, 1985, 1987). Both Kingsley and Serpell note that outsiders may be tempted to assume that the Bemba and Chewa prefer "social" traits over "cognitive" ones. However, Kingsley's linguistic analysis of the term

"respectfulness" seems to contain a meaning of "the *knowledge of how* to pay respect properly," thus including a strong cognitive element to this social trait (Kingsley, 1985, p. 286). Consequently, many researchers in Africa have come to conclusions similar to those of Kingsley, who notes that "in Bemba and other African societies, 'intelligence' may be, as Mundy-Castle has suggested, best thought of as 'social intelligence'; and a particular culturally defined kind of social competence may be its *primary* component" (as quoted in Kingsley, 1985, p. 293).

This review of what other researches have found elsewhere in Africa does not automatically presume that the same results will be found in Swaziland. However, it gives us a starting point for the investigation of three aspects of intelligence: a developmental nature; *how* children become "intelligent"; and "what does an intelligent child 'know.'" In addition, it provides similar information from which to compare and contrast a Swazi example. Furthermore, because the cultural context of the development of any psychological principle is tied to its historical context, an attempt will first be made to investigate the historical nature of Swazi beliefs regarding intelligence and competent behaviors. Because culture is not static, traditional beliefs regarding intelligent behavior may also have modified over time as influenced by cultural change. However, we may also wonder whether cultural change occurs as traditional beliefs regarding desirable and "intelligent" traits change.

THE PRESENT STUDY

Methodology

In order to measure change in a culture's attitudes, beliefs, and concepts of itself, a researcher must have information from that culture over an extended period of time. Unfortunately, a researcher cannot go back in time and interview individuals over a lifetime regarding their perceptions of intelligent behavior and cognitive competence. Furthermore, to interview older members of the population today and ask them to remember how they would have defined a concept, or how their culture in general would have conceptualized "intelligence" long ago, opens one up to methodological scrutiny. Studies on memory throughout the 20th century have revealed how closely memory is tied to one's own interpretations of the memory in addition to time decay and the hazards of reconstructing of those memories over time (Hunt, 1993). Furthermore, the remembering of long-held knowledge has been found to be stronger and more accurate with episodic memory and information which we have previously discussed with others (Shweder, 1984). Probes regarding one's early perceptions of the term "intelligent" will therefore be influenced by time and the changes in culture which have occurred over the span of that time, especially if one has not previously had interpersonal communications with individuals regarding concepts of intelligence over time. Therefore, for this research, primary documents and secondary sources written by both Swazis and Europeans living in Swaziland during the first part of the 20th century will be investigated for evidence of traditional Swazi perspectives on intelligent behavior.

The second part of the study, analyzing present day beliefs, is based on interviews with the parents and teachers of students who were part of a larger longitudinal study conducted by the author (Author 1995; 1996; 1997). The larger focus of that nine-year longitudinal study (1990-1998) concerned the long-term academic achievement of an original sample of 80 primary school children from six rural schools dispersed throughout all districts of the country. This researcher selected a rural population for that study in order to gain the most traditional Swazi perspectives as possible, and in order to investigate the slowly changing nature of the 80 percent of the Swazi population which remains rural and agrarian (and which thus tends to be more traditional in its Swazi beliefs and customs).

The majority of the information for this paper was derived from 1994 interviews where 54 of the original 80 students first interviewed in 1990 remained in the Swazi school system and were 9 to 11 years of age. However, only 51 of the 54 parents were able to be interviewed as part of this “intelligence” research. The interviews with parents that year revealed much about Swazi parental perceptions of their children’s intellectual abilities, desired behaviors, and measures of their own children’s cognitive competencies. Many of the parents had little or no formal education themselves, with mothers averaging 4.7 and fathers averaging 5.4 years of schooling. Consequently, each year, a Swazi research assistant from the University of Swaziland was employed in order to aid in conducting interviews in siSwati. While the primary researcher understood siSwati, complete fluency in the language was needed in order to comprehend the nuances of the

conversation. Both the primary researcher and research assistant took notes during the interviews and compared them for accuracy and consistency following the sessions.

Swazi Traditional Beliefs

Some references to each of the above three themes regarding "intelligence" can be found in early Swazi anthropological literature and primary documents. As for the first, there is evidence that Swazi traditional beliefs regarding intelligence or cognitive competence include a natural developmental characteristic or a maturational process. The Swazi distinguish the growth process of individuals into eight specific stages, from birth to what is termed "almost an ancestor" (Kuper, 1963, p. 50). While specific age (in years) has not traditionally been of primary importance to the Swazi, one's "stage of development" is very significant. Every Swazi passes through the various life stages with a group of age-mates (specific to his/her gender), and it is that group which defines the individual. One's stage is closely tied with one's outward physical development along with cognitive competence. For instance, a child who enters the third stage (usually around age 6 or 7) does so because at this time he or she has usually lost a tooth and also shows signs of acting "sensibly." While the children are still not answerable for all of their actions, it is a time for them to learn how to behave because they now have the cognitive competence to do so (Marwick, 1940, p.69).

One can analyze this Swazi discontinuous theory of development which emphasizes stages as a combination of cognitive and socio-emotional development

theory. Kuper stresses the oft-repeated phrase "respect and obey your elders" as the basis of social cohesion between the younger and the older generations. While he/she is in a particular stage, a specific cognitive level influences one's social understanding and socio-emotional development. Old men, according to Kuper, do not hesitate to dismiss younger people's ideas with, "Be quiet. You are still young and know nothing" (Kuper, 1947a, p. 118). Traditionally, Swazi have also recognized innate differences between individuals: "the superiority of some in intelligence and character" (Kuper, 1947a, p. 109). These differences are attributed to nature, nurture, and supernatural agencies. However, an "intelligent" child is never more intelligent than an adult, even in the case of royalty. Kuper stressed this importance when she explained that the heir to the throne is often a young man without experience. So "his friends advise him: 'A wise man does not oppose the head-rings (the ages)'" (Kuper, 1947a, p. 119).

This traditional understanding that true "intelligence" can only be acquired through the natural maturation process was put at risk by the introduction of Western schooling. While the British colonizers eagerly established schools for European children in the early part of the century and were providing free and compulsory education for white children by 1920, education for Africans was left primarily to the interests and resources of the various foreign Christian missions in Swaziland (Dulton 1916; High Commissioner's Office 1920). Consequently, one of the major purposes of schooling for Africans in the first part of the 20th century was to establish basic literacy and numeracy skills in order to Christianize and "civilize" the Swazi. Until the Second World War,

only a small percentage of the Swazi population was formally educated and the level of education was minimal at that. The Reverend Christopher Watts, an influential African missionary in Swaziland, believed that “a Native probably requires a literary education up to Standard 4 (U.S. grade 6), in order to gain regular habits and discipline” (Watts, 1924, p.2). However, World War II and its aftermath provided the stimulus for a rethinking of colonial education policy and the role it would play in preparing Africans for independence. The British Colonial Office initiated a move to expand the amount of education offered to Africans in the colonies and thereby to increase literacy rates. Various Colonial Office policy documents put forward goal-oriented arguments for the aim of "Mass Education in African Society" and "Education for Citizenship in Africa" (Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies 1944; 1948).

Consequently, the amount of education in African colonies and protectorates like Swaziland became increasingly important as the date for independence approached (1968, in the case of Swaziland) in anticipation of the post-independence era requirements for professional leaders and skilled workers. While the quantity of formal education increased tremendously during the decades following independence, Swazi curriculum and pedagogical practices remained largely connected to the British tradition, with only minor curricular changes. Direct instruction remained the primary mode of teaching, leaning heavily toward memorization. Teachers who continue to work in that educational culture, which places tremendous emphasis on high-stakes national testing at every level of the school system, are known to “teach to the test.”

During the period of increased development of Western education in Swaziland, the greatest resistance to formal schooling was from elders, who stood to lose the most in economic and political power because of it. "Formal education weakens the claim of the uneducated that the possession of the greatest knowledge is obtainable only through age," Kuper observes. "Books and classes, quick roads to learning, contradict the system of gradual education" (Kuper, 1963, p. 57).

Western schooling also had a tremendous impact on our second theme: "how children learn." Prior to the Colonial era, direct instruction had not been the traditional method for teaching the young. The education of children for their future gender-specific roles had been conducted according to a more natural regimen, emphasizing active participant-observation, as was true in much of Africa. Even today, the significance of traditional learning at home is felt by the individual more immediately than is school learning (Boateng, 1983; Gay and Cole, 1967; Mead, 1970; Read, 1987). Although Swazi mothers are the primary caregivers and take on the brunt of the responsibility for early childhood education, the entire community views the education of a child as its responsibility (Matsebula, 1988).

Traditionally, the development of "intelligent" traits for girls and boys was handled separately once a child entered the third stage in life, around age 6 or 7. All children had their ears pierced at the beginning of this stage, but a boy, now called *umfana*, and a girl, *sidzandzane*, were separated while they learned their future adult roles from older children and adults of their gender. The learning process was accomplished

primarily by listening to conversations of the elders, and imitating and practicing adult activities (Marwick, 1940, p.69). By listening, observing, and imitating, Swazi children developed a cognitive repertoire essential for Swazi society. According to Kuper (1947a), even Swazi play "is based on imitation more than imagination"(p.118). What this all means is that the introduction of Western schooling influenced not only *how* children were taught but also the nature of traditional Swazi beliefs regarding *how* someone could become an "intelligent person."

As for the third theme, *what* an intelligent person needs to know, Swazi "curriculum" for the young traditionally has stressed social knowledge. According to Kuper (1947a, p.128), "within the age class the individual is trained to share and cooperate, to practice generosity, bravery, and loyalty. He is taught to condemn selfishness, cowardice, and independent action." This constitutes the backbone of the Swazi traditional curriculum covering life skills. Although all Swazi children were expected to learn these social skills, the traditional education of girls and boys was differentiated in curriculum and practiced largely by their gender-specific roles in society. Generally, boys were trained to be physically tough and mentally disciplined in order to prepare for public life. "They must be severed from the womenfolk," says Kuper, "and must not grow up under the skin skirts of their mothers"(1986, p.53). Intelligent girls, on the other hand, were equipped with skills for domestic duties, with the goal of preparing for their adult lives as wives and mothers (Marwick, 1940; Russell, 1993).

This Swazi emphasis on social skills was so apparent that even a European

observer in 1934 easily recognized its importance as an intelligent Swazi trait. A memorandum written by Mrs. M. Hervey, a Swedish missionary who once lived in a Swazi homestead in order to acquire a deeper understanding of indigenous culture, described the importance of social customs. She wrote that "the natives are more inherently polite than we...yet Europeans think they are so superior." She went on to explain the serious teaching of Swazi etiquette and wondered whether the Swazi were perhaps more "civilized" with each other and with visitors than were Europeans (Hervey, 1934). This memorandum is particularly important because she was responding to her husband's (Rev. P.J. Hervey's) position, which had been recently published in the Times of Swaziland (Feb.1,1934), and stated that the only way to save the "heathen" Swazi was in education which went beyond reading and writing and included religion. However, Mrs. Hervey bravely stated in her memorandum "as a married woman" she was not to express her "opinions in opposition to" her husband, but after much time with the Swazi people, she felt that the Paramount Chief's (Sobhuza II's) wishes should be followed in regard to Swazi education. This would include Western academic knowledge together with the keeping of traditional ways.

Perhaps this conflict of cultures over *what* an intelligent person needs to know is best illustrated by the educational history of King Sobhuza II (1899-1982), the longest reigning Swazi king in history (1921-1982). When his illiterate grandmother, Lobatsibeni Mdluli, was required to decide on the type of education for her grandson Sobhuza, she readily took the advice of the Swazi mission-educated progressives who argued for his

education along Western lines. "In what does the white man's power lie?", she asked. "It lies in money and in books. We too will learn, we too will be rich" (Booth, A., 1983, p. 28). Sobhuza himself desired as much Western education as he could acquire both during his early years and as he ruled. When traditionalist members of the royal house argued against Sobhuza's continuing with his formal schooling, his answer was, "I will always bear a grudge against anyone who refused to allow me to go to school" (Kuper, 1978, p. 49).

Sobhuza, the first Western-educated king of Swaziland, symbolized in many ways the coming together of the two cultures, including beliefs regarding *how* to learn and become intelligent, and *what qualities* an intelligent person does possess. His actions (including the wearing of both traditional and Western dress) and pronouncements on education over the years revealed a man straddling two cultural traditions, and included the blending of traditional "ways of knowing" with Western ideas regarding the cognitive/academic nature of "intelligence."

Throughout his time as "paramount chief," during the colonial era, Sobhuza often emphasized the Swazi need for "respect and obedience" and other "civil" oriented characteristics as the sign of an intelligent person. In a memorandum to the colonial government in 1933, Sobhuza made a case for modifying the European-style education given to Swazi children. While he stated that he "very keenly appreciates the efforts of the [Colonial] Education Department" to teach Swazi children, European education had "grave disadvantages" for them. Primarily, Sobhuza was concerned that it would release

Swazi youth from "the wholesome restraints which the Swazi indigenous method of education inculcated." Furthermore, Western education denied them access to the most important knowledge taught to them within the Swazi regimental system, which included: "pride of race, continence, self-control, respect for lawful authority and the rendering of communal service" (Sobhuza II, 1933, p.2).

In the same memorandum, Sobhuza said that he did not want to blame either Europeans or Africans for the tension between the two systems, but that each did not understand the other enough for this entirely European education to work. He stated that the mistake was to

"treat Africans as Europeans, without first trying to discover what it was that produced good qualities in their own system of education, and without considering how they might be expected to react to a system of education so foreign to their culture. The better course would appear to be to use their own culture as a foundation, and erect the superstructure of European education upon it, and so bring out what is best in both, bringing Africans to world civilisations as true Africans...." (Sobhuza II, 1933, p.1)."

Ironically it was Sobhuza himself who later sparked the reassessment of Swazi traditional thinking regarding what is good knowledge, what is useful, and what an intelligent person needs to know. This dichotomy of two cultures is illustrated well in the king's birthday speech in Mankayane, Swaziland in 1973. The speech is very revealing of Sobhuza's penchant for straddling two cultures. At the outset of the speech, he told the

audience that he had once instructed students to write down everything he said "because you may listen but unless you write what you have heard you easily forget" (Sobhuza II, King, 1973, Kuper's papers). Here the king was promoting the benefits of *literacy*, a byproduct of Western education, which ran counter to traditional beliefs in the benefits of the *oral* process of teaching and learning. However, in the same speech, he used the vehicle of a parable-like lesson, in the old oral Swazi tradition. This story was about a "wise but illiterate diplomat," and one of its morals was the benefits of traditional Swazi ways, knowledge and customs, without need of Western ways or knowledge. He warned his audience not to "clamour" for what they did not have "because in the end you won't know how to operate it and this I consider proper education" (Sobhuza II, King, 1973, Kuper's papers).

Likewise, in a 1972 speech to Swazi school children, the king strongly stressed the value of a socially intelligent individual by proclaiming that "a properly educated person is one who uses his head as well as his hands....You can get all the education of any description but if you have no character you are the victim of the weevil [i.e. you will fail in your profession]." (Matsebula, 1983, pp. 42-43). Thus, as king and chief spokesperson of his people, Sobhuza argued for a strong social element in the Swazi perception of what an "intelligent" person meant when he implied that academic knowledge must be accompanied by the education of character .

King Sobhuza was not alone in feeling the pull between traditional and Western "ways of knowing." Other Swazi, both literate and illiterate, slowly modified their views

regarding what knowledge was important and how that knowledge was to be acquired. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s debates regarding the role of Western education and Western culture surfaced frequently in the pages of the Times of Swaziland. One leading voice, the Swaziland Progressive Association (SPA) was formed in 1929 by a group of mission-educated Swazis and Zulus who considered themselves to be the country's "intellectuals." By the mid-twentieth century, the organization wielded a strong voice and a certain degree of power in influencing the direction of education for Swazis. Memoranda written by the SPA and letters to the editor of the Times of Swaziland over more than three decades revealed strong opinions about the value of European education as the foundation of knowledge essential for Swazis to acquire. "It must be borne in mind," one of them wrote, "that money spent on agriculture for a literate people is money well spent and yielding quick results, but money spent on agriculture for illiterate people is money wasted" (SPA, 1948, pp.11-12).

Another outspoken Swazi, who was educated at Edendale Wesleyan mission, was Mr. Alpheus Nkosi (M.A.; M.Ed), whose public addresses and speeches were often reported in the Times of Swaziland (Booth, 2000). In his address to the Swaziland Bantu Teachers' Union October 18, 1945, he argues for an increase in Western education, but one that includes both academic subjects and practical training so that the Swazi people can someday be independent. And while others, including Sobhuza II, were somewhat suspicious of a complete acculturation of Western education, he bluntly stated in his address that "African people are under a deep debt of gratitude to the Europeans for....

lead[ing] the Africans out of darkness and ignorance”(Times of Swaziland Oct. 18, 1945.)

The power of a formal Western education was so strong that occasionally it even influenced illiterate Swazi to alter their views regarding the nature of "intelligence." Kuper (1947b) quotes an illiterate commoner as saying, "I know nothing. The strength of my hands is less than the power of that paper on which you write." However at the same time that individual, while understanding the power of European knowledge, was not completely trusting of it, saying later that "if I send my children to school you show them another piece of paper. You Europeans have many ways to deceive us" (Kuper, 1947b, p.75). Thus, in the view of the Swazi commoner, one can be "intelligent," but one should be on guard against that "intelligence" including an element of cunning and slyness. This would not, as an earlier discussion of the Swazi emphasis on "social" understanding indicates, be a desirable trait. As we can see from this historical overview, the Swazi people's perceptions of what constitutes "intelligence" has been laced with ambiguity. It has demonstrated some similarities with other areas of Africa. But at the same time, because the society itself has been in a state of often turbulent flux throughout most of the 20th century, it has both embraced Western enculturation and kept it at arms length.

Present Day Swazi Beliefs

Let us now see how Swazi parents today view the *developmental nature* of intelligence, *how* one becomes intelligent and also *what* constitutes intelligent traits.

Interviews with parents did give some indication that they continue to view the cognitive development of their children in stages. This was evident in parental discussions regarding *when* they knew it was time to send their children to school. Although Swaziland now has a government policy which strongly encourages parents to send their children to school at age 6, many rural parents today still do not rely on age in years as an indicator for school attendance. It was evident in parental interviews, when parents were forced to think hard about the exact age of their children, that calendar or chronological age remains relatively unimportant. This is partially due to the fact that many rural children are still born at home, and hence lack birth certificates; and also because traditionally in Swazi culture exact age has never been extremely important. For instance, those homesteaders who were in possession of birth certificates often requested family members to retrieve them so they could verify their responses.

When asked how they knew that it was time to send one of their children to school, 83 percent of the parents said they relied solely on the “developmental” age as the determining factor. However, with many not knowing the exact age of a child in years, they responded that they looked for physical as well as mental signs of maturity. Many said, “when the front teeth drop out,” because this has traditionally been a sign indicating that a child has entered the Swazi third stage of development. Another 10 percent of the parents indicated that they sent their children to school when they showed some signs of cognitive readiness or level of competence. They specified, “when the child shows he can do something.” This again echoes what Kuper and Marwick described as the child

beginning to act "sensibly" in the third stage of life. This information reveals that at least rural Swazi parents continue to think of the growth of their children overwhelmingly in maturational or natural developmental terms.

What Is Intelligence?

In order to understand our second and third questions: *what* is intelligent behavior, and *how* does one become intelligent, we will review discussions with Swazi parents which, because of the nature of their responses, often answered both questions simultaneously. When the researcher was preparing to structure the informal interviews with parents, a question arose as to what siSwati term to utilize for "intelligence" in interviews. The most commonly used siSwati-English dictionary translates "intelligent" as *hlananiphile*; but it also defines the term *hlananipho* as meaning "cleverness" or "wisdom," and *hlananipha* as "to become wise or clever." However, because common usage often varies from dictionary definitions, a short survey was taken among three Swazi graduate students who were studying in the United States at the time, in addition to a survey of nine Swazi professionals over the internet, all with a minimum of a bachelor's degree.

This highly educated sample of a total of twelve Swazi individuals was first asked to give the term they would use for "intelligent" in siSwati, and then to give a description of the characteristics or traits a person who possess the qualities of the term they have used would exhibit. Ten of the twelve individuals responded with either *hlananiphile* or *hlananipha* which, according to those questioned, are simply different grammatical forms

of the same root word.

Table 1 lists the various definitions for the term *hlakaniphile* given by the twelve respondents. Many individual responses specified several meanings, and therefore each separate meaning was included in the table. The most common synonym given for the term was “clever,” but many respondents also emphasized the need for a person who has *hlakaniphile* as someone able to complete a task or do good work on his/her own, and preferably with some speed or swiftness.

Initially not a single respondent volunteered a definition for *hlakaniphile* which specified a distinct social element, such as has been discussed in the literature of other African research. However, after being probed as to whether the term includes a social element, such as community responsibility or correct behavior among peers or adults, all agreed that the term traditionally has included this as an element. Respondents explained that while the term continues to include a certain element of social responsibility to one’s “cleverness,” this aspect is being overshadowed by the more Western notion of intellectual/academic competence. Nonetheless, all of those surveyed agreed that the term has shifted in meaning somewhat over the years, taking on a stronger intellectual and academic-oriented meaning.

The debatable nature of the translation of the term “intelligent” gave a clear indication that quite possibly there is no exact direct translation in the siSwati language for what these Swazi respondents perceive as the Western notion of “intelligence.” Ultimately however, a consensus among the Swazi graduate students was that it was the

most appropriate to use the term *hlakaniphile* for “intelligence” in homestead interviews with parents. These responses from a well educated sample Swazi population, many of whom have traveled in the West, constitute an interesting contrast to the following study’s parental sample in rural Swaziland.

Interviews in 1994 contained a series of questions posed to parents by the researcher to come to a fuller understanding of parental perceptions of intelligence. Parents were first asked to describe traits or behaviors of an intelligent (*hlakaniphile*) person.³ Table 2 includes a list of all the traits offered by parents in a summarized, paraphrased form. Parents were asked what they meant by the most commonly repeated phrase, “does good work.” They responded “any kind of work, home or school, because they are clever.” They described the general ability to use one’s mind in any situation, and to adapt to and perform well in any kind of environment, home or academic, a facility which would require comprehending a task and performing it well.

While the exact quotations from parents were often simple and included only one meaning for *hlakaniphile*, some of them were by contrast very involved and included several definitions, which were then divided into the appropriate categories in Table 2. For example, one parent’s definition was limited to, “When a child finds a solution to a problem without being told. That is intelligent.” This would fit under the “Problem solver; novel/creative thinker” category. While other definitions were more complex, such as, “When a child comes and tries to imitate you, in any work you are doing and imitates well. The speech of the child is also important. And if the child gives good

advice.” This definition has three components (imitation, speaks well, and gives advice). It could be argued that the ability to imitate well also involves possessing a good memory. However, if a parent was not specific about the necessary skill, inferences were not made in the categorization.

A review of the responses by parents in Table 2 indicates the presence of some similarities between these rural Swazi parents’ perceptions of intelligent behavior and the results of previous research conducted in other areas of Africa. While the social element is not the strongest characteristic, its presence in a total of 17 responses (C, H, and I), or 33%, clearly indicates that a strong social element to the definition of *hlakaniphile* is important to at least rural, semi-educated Swazi adults. Furthermore, these Swazi parents also value, to some degree, the ability to mimic and imitate, as has been found elsewhere in Africa in both the distant past and recent past by other researchers such as Fortes (1938) and Serpell (1993). While only 7 responses specified the ability to “copy or imitate well,” other responses may imply it, such as “has good memory” and “does good work.”

However, there is a noticeable contrast between these responses and the ones presented by Swazi graduate students and professionals. It is important to note that the purpose of the first sample was to initiate discussion to aid in the choice of siSwati vocabulary to use for parental interviews and it was not initially designed as an adequate comparison group to the parental sample (12 vs. 51 in size). However, some notable comparisons and contrasts in the overall responses warrant some comment. First, a few

members of the professional group responded in similar fashion to the parental sample, such as “does good work” and “quick” minded. Those in the professional group also explained their “does good work” similarly to the parental group, emphasizing the ability to carry out any type of a job independently and do it well.

Furthermore, while the parental sample includes traits which are socially and community oriented, they are of the minority in comparison to characteristics which are more cognitively/intellectually oriented. While it could be argued that several categories of these responses may assume expected behavioral traits, that was not specified by the parents. For instance, “does good work” may include an assumption that “good” implies both the quality and the type or social appropriateness of the work. However, when parents volunteered this type of answer, their explanations of it more clearly indicated that they were more concerned with the quality of the end product of a child’s work. Consequently, as predicted by the professional sample, rural traditional concepts of *hlananiphile* continue to include a social element as they had in the past. However, the lesser emphasis of a social element among today’s parents along with its absence among professional definitions suggests an historical change in the understanding of *hlananiphile*. Moreover, various present-day interpretations of *hlananiphile* may be further influenced by levels of formal schooling in competition with traditional values.

Another indication that Swazi parents tend to equate intelligence more with cognitive competence (with emphasis on academic knowledge) and less with social or behavioral traits lay in parents’ descriptions of their own children. Interviewers, asked

parents to list the homestead chores for which their sons or daughters were responsible, and then to rank their abilities in performing those tasks. The most common homestead chores included cattle husbandry for boys, and younger sibling care, elementary cooking, and water and firewood collection for girls. Later in the interview, following discussion of the term *hlakaniphile*, parents were asked to rank their sons or daughters as ones who demonstrated "above average," "average," or "below average" levels of *hlakaniphile*. Statistical analysis revealed no correlation (.026) between the parents' attitudes regarding the competence level of home chores and their children's levels of *hlakaniphile* or intelligence. In other words, those children categorized as "above average" in their abilities to perform home chores were not always thought of as very "intelligent" by their parents. For example, of the 35 parents who believed that their children were "above average" in home chores, only 10 (or 29 percent) also considered their children to be "above average" in intelligence.

However, when one compared parental attitudes regarding their own children's "intelligence" with their school performance, interesting results developed. Some of the 54 students reinterviewed in 1994 had repeated a grade (failed) once, others twice. This circumstance spread student enrollments from grade three through grade five. A chi-square test found that there was a significant relationship between parental perception of their child's "intelligence" and the actual grade level the child attained, $\chi^2(6, N = 51) = 13.08, p < .05$. For example, none of the children who were in grade three were labeled "above average" in intelligence by their parents. By contrast, 60 percent of those who

labeled their children "below average" in intelligence had a child in grade three. However, these figures indicate a relationship only; they do not define which is the cause and which the effect. The question remains as to whether these Swazi parents are good judges of natural cognitive capability which is then proven in school, or whether parental attitudes regarding their children's intellectual abilities have been influenced by their children's previous school attainment. In any event, it does indicate more of an association between intelligence and school achievement than between intelligence and "practical skills" in the minds of these parents. One mother summed up the prevailing attitude by saying: "As far as this girl is concerned, she is not a genius because she is not good in her school work, but for her homestead work -- she is good."

The best illustration of the strong connection among the parents between "knowing something" and going to school came from interviews taken during the very first year of the longitudinal study. During the first week of the school year in 1990, the 80 children in this sample were beginning first grade. Each child was interviewed about his/her perception of what school would be like, and each was given a school preparedness evaluation. The parents of these grade one pupils were then visited for the first time. During these interviews, parents were surprised that the researcher was taking the trouble to talk with their children who were just about to begin school. According to these parents, because the children had not yet been to school, they "knew nothing" because they had not yet "learned" anything. Some even said, that the child was not *hlakaniophile* (intelligent) yet. One mother, on being shown her child's drawing done as

part of his school-readiness interview, queried, "How did he do this? I didn't know this child knew anything! I thought he knew nothing!"

What Traits do Parents Value in their Children the Most?

So far, we have seen that the Swazi definition of intelligence or *hlakaniphile* has changed within the culture as a whole over time, and that it also continues to vary within the Swazi population as a function of the contexts of individual lives. However, another important question to investigate in evaluating this concept's place in society is the degree of desirability with which this trait is regarded among the parents of rural schoolchildren. Consequently, interviewers first asked parents what qualities or traits were considered the most important for their children to possess. The most frequent responses were *lalela*, meaning "obedience" (45 percent) and *hlonipha*, meaning "respect" (24 percent). However, because the terms are often interchangeable in Swazi society, it is common to think of them as a combined concept. If one respects adults, one will obey them; likewise, if one obeys, that is taken as an open sign of respect.⁴ Accordingly, 69 percent of the parents interviewed believe that the most important qualities for a child to possess were respect and obedience. Of the remaining parents, 14 percent wanted a child first to be "healthy and active," only 6 percent mentioned any characteristics related to cognitive competence, and the rest mentioned traits such as happiness and ambitious. These figures reveal a continued emphasis in traditional Swazi culture on cultivating social traits, especially behavior toward adults, first, and intellectual development second. One parent stated: "What good is an intelligent person if he does

not use his intelligence for the good of his people?" It was clear that although these Swazi parents valued cognitive competence, they placed a heavier emphasis on social competence.

Previously mentioned research elsewhere in Africa has identified a general cultural emphasis on participation/observation and on imitation as ways to learn and demonstrate one's intelligence. Even Kuper and Marwick stressed these methods of learning in earlier twentieth century Swaziland. However, this researcher's interviews with parents in 1994 revealed conflicting evidence on the degree to which these methods were still valued as intelligent behaviors. First, there is evidence that rural parents still value to some degree the ability to copy and imitate. Approximately 14 percent volunteered it to be an "intelligent" trait, while another 4 percent implied its importance with the response, "[he/she]has a good memory." These replies reveal a continued appreciation for imitation rather than imagination as a preferred method of becoming an intelligent person, that one who imitates well is an intelligent person. However, the degree to which observation and imitation were important elements in the alternative parental explanations (such as "does good work") is not clear and should not be assumed. Furthermore, four of the traits in Table 2 (E, K, L, and M), totaling 12 responses (24 percent) involve the exact opposite of imitation, stressing novel thinking instead. Furthermore, the Swazi professional responses in Table 1 never mentioned traits related to copying or imitating behavior, but rather proposed characteristics for *hlakaniophile* which necessitate quite the opposite, independent thinking and behavior.

Finally, the desire for novel or creative thinking was also evident in parental conversations discussing the daily activities of their children and their favorite hobbies outside of school. The majority of children (84 percent) spent some if not most of their spare time being creative (*ku-dála*), such as fashioning wire cars and bicycles, creating rag dolls, or drawing (even patterns in the dirt). Only 16 percent spent little or no time creating new things, preferring instead to spend all their leisure time playing soccer or jumping rope. Parents voiced a preference for their children to be involved in creative activities which produced something. While one could argue that soccer or jump-roping involves some creative enterprise, parents did not view these activities as benefitting their children's development. It was not uncommon to hear parents describe their sports-oriented children as "wasting their time" playing soccer or jumping rope, and declaring that they were not very "clever" (*khalípha*).⁵ Very often, however, parents would describe other children who were especially proficient in wire car or doll design as being very "clever" (*khalípha*). Furthermore, parents proudly requested that children exhibit one of their creations for the interviewers. These discussions clearly indicate that rural Swazi adults value creative play in their children and view it as a sign of the "cleverness" which we have often seen used synonymously with "intelligence".

Conclusion

As Sternberg might query in the context of Swaziland, "Just what is the relation of intelligence to [Swazi]culture, and the range of [Swazi]views regarding it?" Evidence

from this research establishes a strong relationship between intelligence and (Swazi) culture, and demonstrates an historical as well as a present-day range of views regarding the term. In the case of Swaziland, the “range of views regarding it” may be too wide and ill-defined to support the notion that there is anything like a universal concept of “intelligence.” More specifically, this research has contributed to our understanding of local cultural dynamics involved in the evolution of basic psychological principles. In the Swazi case, this process has been influenced by the cultural context of the society’s own traditional beliefs compounded by the impact of other cultural beliefs, both African and Western.

First, this research has shown that like some other African peoples, Swazi parents have historically viewed the development of intelligence as being related to the natural maturational process, which includes specific developmental stages. This developmental perspective is still evident in present day Swazi parental belief systems.

Second, anthropological literature illustrated that Swazi parents traditionally viewed observation and imitation as primary modes for learning. While evidence still reveals strong sentiment for these methods today, there appears to be a heightened value placed on creativity and imagination. This begs the question of whether there has been a change in parental views or whether parents have always valued imagination and novel thinking.

Finally, in regard to *what* constitutes intelligent behavior, evidence has shown that Swazi parents historically placed primary importance on the development of social

knowledge and behavior in children. An intelligent person was one who knew how to behave correctly and who demonstrated those traits. While there were additional gender-specific skills taught to boys and girls, primary emphasis was placed on etiquette, respect and obedience. The introduction of Western schooling and the imprint of other cultures on the Swazi world view presented the Swazi monarchy (which had historically defined and impressed cultural norms on society), with the dilemma of what an intelligent person needed to know and be able to do, and how, he or she was supposed to behave. King Sobhuza beginning in the early 1930s defined the solution to that dilemma as the blending of traditional Swazi and modern Western cultures in a series of speeches, pronouncements and initiatives throughout the rest of his life. Not the least of them was the establishment of national schools which combined Western curriculum with a carefully and rigidly regimented code of traditional student behavior and beliefs. For our purposes, that mixing led over time to the evolution of the traditional concepts of *hlaniphile* to incorporate Western concepts more closely affiliated with the English term “intelligence.”

The merging of cultural beliefs that resulted from these influences is reflected in this study's interviews with Swazi parents. While socially related behaviors remain of primary importance today, parents also recognize the paramount value of skills requiring cognitive competence. Furthermore, interviews revealed that Swazi parents today are beginning to associate cognitive and academic activity more with the definition of intelligence or *hlaniphile*, than with social behavior. Swazi parents' perceptions of

"cognitive competence" make a clear distinction between home and school activities. Terms such as "learn" and "know" were for the most part used solely in connection with formal education, meaning that parents were much more likely to define their child as *hlakaniophile* if he/she had been successful in school. Clearly, those parents whose children have done well academically are heavily influenced by the concept of the modern school, especially as it has come to be seen as the portal for much that is regarded as supremely desirable in the present-day world. Accordingly, many of these parents who were not themselves highly educated now view a child's successful academic career as the sine qua non of his/her future success. As the role of formal Western education in Swaziland (as in most African countries) is increasing in importance, and success at school is recognized as the prerequisite for formal sector employment, the value that Swazi culture is beginning to place on academic skills is undoubtedly increasing in importance, and this change in value has most likely entered the national subconscious concerning "intelligent behavior" in general. Because these rural Swazi parents equate "knowing something" with academic work, and "intelligence" as linked with cognitive academic more often than social activities, their views of what constitutes an "intelligent" person are evidently changing. This should not be surprising when we consider that while cultural change is nearly always slow, it is not static.

In stark contrast to rural parental definitions of *hlakaniophile* were those perceptions of the term by Swazi graduate students and professionals. The impact that Western education and modern culture in general has had on this highly educated group is

striking. While this group was able to straddle two worlds and empathize with traditional views of *hlakaniophile*, they had accommodated their own perceptions of *hlakaniophile* to an extremely Western (specifically heavily American) view of intelligence. Consequently, while the primary researcher of this study may have been viewing the investigation of intelligence from what Berry calls a *derived etic*, we can say that the small group of professionals in this study have contributed what we might call their own *derived emic* perspective by taking their own local Swazi perceptions, incorporating Western views, and interpreting their own culture through these new lenses. As the world becomes a smaller place and cultures continually impact on each other, the lines between the the “local” and the “universal” will become less clear. Over time it may be possible to derive universal truths, such as universal perceptions of intelligence. However, until the local and universal become one, we will continue to wrestle with complicated psychological phenomena such as “intelligence” which is very close to, but not quite, *hlakaniophile*.

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Table 1. Swazi Graduate Students' and Professionals' Descriptions of the Traits or Qualities of an Intelligent (*hlakaniphile*) Child*

Trait	# times mentioned	% times mentioned
Has superior thinking abilities/clever/smart	6	50%
Able to do good work on his/her own	3	25
Shows attentiveness/interest/inquiring	3	25
Fast thinking/quick	3	25
Has very creative ideas	2	16
Can be a "crafty" or sly individual	2	16
Able to do well in school	2	16
Ability to communicate well and inform others	2	16
Long attention span	1	8
Able to analyze and read whatever without much guidance	1	8
Has the ability to take initiative	1	8
Brave	1	8
Able to formulate logical arguments	1	8
Is open-minded	1	8

*12 Respondents

Table 2. Parental Descriptions of the Traits or Qualities of an Intelligent (hlakhaniphile) Child

Trait	# Times Mentioned	% Times Mentioned
A. Does good work – any kind of work; generally capable/clever	15	29.4%
B. Speaks well; eloquent speaker	10	19.6
C. Socially gets along with others	10	19.6
D. Quick mind; easily/quickly grasps things	7	13.7
E. Problem solver; novel/creative thinker	7	13.7
F. Copy/imitate well	7	13.7
G. Does well in school/academic work	5	9.8
H. Responsible/hard working	4	7.8
I. Respectful and obedient	3	5.8
J. Has a good memory	2	3.9
K. Has divination powers or ability to foresee	2	3.9
L. Gives words of advice	2	3.9
M. Is able to joke; be quick-witted	1	1.9

*Parental descriptions often included several traits and thus the total number of descriptions is larger than the actual sample of 51 parental responses.

**Percentages represent the frequency of occurrence per entire sample of responses from 51 parents.

1. For a more detailed description of the "emic/etic distinction" see, Berry (1980), Brislin (1980), and Serpell (1990).

2. The reader can find good, concise reviews of previous African "intelligence" research in Berry (1984); Kim and Berry (1993); Irvine(1969); Serpell (1974, 1993); and Super (1983).

3. This was an open-ended question in order to acquire parents' most natural verbalization of their ideas concerning intelligence. The researcher chose not to limit the respondents to a set of answers from which to choose.

4. College educated Swazi research assistants in Swaziland and also Swazi university graduates in the United States strongly believed that this is the most common understanding among traditional Swazi people regarding these terms (respect and obedience being related to each other). However, these graduates believed that the younger educated people of their own generation often distinguish "obedience" as being separate from "respect" -- that one can obey without respecting. However, because traditional parents constituted the source of these interviews, it was agreed by all the Swazi graduate students that the two terms should be used synonymously for this purpose.

5. Swazi research assistants who translated in interviews all agreed that the term *khalípha* is most accurately translated as “clever.”



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