

The Gains and Pains of Pastors' Kids: An Embedded Correlational Study on Positive Self-Concept and Stereotypes

Abstract

This mixed-method study explored the stereotypes, self-concept, and experiences of children of ministers. Seventy-five (75) Filipino Pastors' Kids (PKs) aged between 15-24 years old participated in this study. Results revealed that majority of the PK have both high stereotypical experiences and self-concept. The stereotypical expectation to be well-mannered and highly spiritual yet they have positive self-concept on morality and friendships. Statistically, these two variables have a significant positive relationship. Thus, the higher the stereotypical experiences, the higher the self-concept. Qualitative data support and expound the quantitative data. Although the stereotypes are painful for the PKs, the gains outweigh the pains.

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Introduction

Pastors' kids (PKs) join their fathers' public spotlight, which comes with spiritual and moral scrutiny and the need to exhibit "perfect" spirituality and church commitment. These expectations, or scrutiny, then becomes a struggle pastors' kids enter adolescence and eventually adulthood. The pressure of living their private lives on a public stage leaves little room for personal struggles and regular growing development for pastors' children (Oliver, 2017). Will these expectations put them in the disadvantage?

Objective

This study explores the stereotypes, self-concept, and experiences of children of ministerial fathers. Specifically, it answers the following research questions:

- What are the participants' levels of self-concept and stereotypes experienced?
- Is there a significant relationship between the level of stereotypes and self-concept?
- How do Pastors' kids' experiences better understand their levels of stereotypes and self-concept?

Results

Results show that PKs have high overall stereotypical experiences ($M=3.53$). Being well-mannered is the very high ($M=4.37$) stereotype they experience. Interestingly, PKs also are high in all aspects of self-concept being measured: confidence in their physique ($M=27.6$, $sd=3.7$), friendliness ($M=30.55$, $sd=3.1$), positive temperament ($M=27.55$, $sd=3.34$), perception towards their academic performance ($M=26.9$, $sd=3.69$), morality ($M=31.2$, $sd=2.8$), and on their intelligence ($M=26.48$, $sd=3.32$). Table 1 shows that stereotypical experiences are positively correlated with all the aspects of self-concept.



The themes that emerged from the qualitative data are divided into two, the pains and gains. For the pains, two themes emerged: Pressures from Expectations and Criticisms. On the other hand, the gains include, Privileged and Blessed, and Mature Faith. Pastor's Kids experience pressures from expectations from the church but not necessarily from their parents. These expectations include being highly spiritual, active in church activities, good academics, well-behaved, well versed in the Bible, fewer mistakes committed, and other good attitudes. Criticisms came when PK failed to meet the expectations. Moreover, they are being compared with other PKs who do better. In contrast, PKs gain privileges and blessings in the form of special treatment in church and other gatherings. They get to many places and stay in different locations, allowing them to meet different kinds of people with different backgrounds. Also, the financial subsidies that they received.

Pastor's Kids believe that they are more mature in faith than their age group since growing up, they were molded to know Jesus and witness their parents exercising faith in many circumstances in life. In this study, the qualitative data support the quantitative data. The high stereotypical experiences from the survey questionnaire coincide with the specific stereotypes PK mentioned during the interview. Moreover, the qualitative data expounds on the positive correlation between stereotypes and self-concept wherein the gains they receive as PKs mitigate the pains of stereotypes.

Table 1. Correlations Between Stereotype and Aspects of Self-Concept

	Stereotype (r)	p
1. Physical Self Concept (SC)	.622	.000
2. Social SC	.600	.000
3. Temperamental SC	.591	.000
4. Educational SC	.722	.000
5. Moral SC	.410	.000
6. Intellectual SC	.760	.000

Methodology

Embedded correlational design was utilized in this study. It allows the researcher to embed qualitative data within correlational research. The quantitative data emphasizes this design (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2017). In other words, the correlation result is emphasized while qualitative data serves as the subservient data. Pastor's Kids Stereotype and Self-Concept Questionnaire (Saraswat, 1999) were used to collect the quantitative data. On the other hand, one-on-one interviews were conducted with five PKs composed the qualitative data.

The study used purposive sampling composed of Filipino born pastors' kids between 15-24 years old. Thirty (40%) were males, and forty-five were females (60%). The majority of the participants were aged 20 (20%), 21 (31%) and 22 (16%).

Quantitative data were analyzed through SPSS. Means, frequencies, percentages, and Pearson Product Correlations were used to treat the data statistically. Moreover, thematic analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data.

Discussion

The correlation result implies that as the stereotypical experiences increases, the self-concept also increases. Social psychologists have conducted different research studies demonstrating that individuals unknowingly primed with a concept make unconscious changes in their behavior to match the expected behavior related to the prime concept (John, 2011). It indicates that the more stereotypes Pastor's Kids experience, their self-concept is also boosted. Furthermore, their self-concept may also have been influenced by their benefits, such as special treatment from the brethren.

However, although stereotypes positively influence their self-perception, it affects them emotionally, as expressed in the interview data. It is noteworthy, specifically in our SDA schools, that PKs felt pressure to excel because they have been paid through the educational aid from the mission or conference. Pastor's Kids already know that fact very well and may not need to be reminded. After all, they are like any other kids who commit mistakes, experience failures, and learn from them.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study established that the stereotype of being good and doing good as Pastors' Kids influences their positive self-concept. This study verifies the positive outcome of a psychological phenomenon called the self-fulfilling prophecy of Thomas and Thomas (1928) wherein expectations are fulfilled because the PKs believe them and their behaviors align to those beliefs or expectations.

It is recommended for PKs that instead of lamenting the high expectations set for them, they may instead be grateful as it leads them to do good. On the other hand, the church community may be lenient enough to accept the flaws and mistakes of PKs because they too are humans, and they too can grow from mistakes just like everyone else.

Finally, it is recommended that teachers in Adventist schools not add or bombard the PKs with the high expectations and stereotypes they already carry. Most importantly, learning for PKs would be less burdensome if they feel that their teachers are safe persons to share their struggles with and unprejudiced towards them.

