



SPU Internal Grant Interim¹ or Final Grant Report²

Academic Year & Type of Grant (FRG, SERVE or Innovation): 2014-2015 FRG

PI Name (and Co-PI's): Paul Y. Kim (PI) & Hee-Sun Cheon (CI)

Original Title of the Proposal: A Preliminary Study on the Pre-sojourn Needs of Korean Missionary Kids:
An Application of a Psychosociocultural-Spiritual Framework

1. *Summarize the project goals and the activities that took place to meet those goals during the grant period. Note who was involved and if anyone was an SPU student.*

The main project goal was to implement a qualitative study to yield useful data that can serve as a foundation for a workshop or seminar for adult children of cross-cultural missionaries, or missionary "kids" (MKs). To that end, the following activities were/are being conducted:

- A. Data collection.** Both Paul Kim (PI) and Hee-Sun Cheon (CI) travelled to South Korea during the summer of 2015 and conducted semi-structured interviews with 10 MKs and MK workers. All of the interviews were between 30 to 60 minutes in length, and they were audio-recorded. These in-person interviews also gave the PI and CI some great opportunities to network with MKs and MK workers in a global setting.
- B. Data preparation.** Following data collection, the raw data was transcribed in anticipation of data analysis. Because interviews were conducted in both Korean and English, we hired Sori Yi, a bilingual SPU student, to do the transcribing. After training, Sori was able to begin data transcribing late in the Fall quarter and completed the transcription task in the Spring quarter.
- C. Data analysis as a research team.** While Sori was making progress on the transcription task, we simultaneously began data analysis. The Consensus Qualitative Research method (CQR; Hill, 2012) calls for an intensive data analysis method characterized by regular in-person meetings to discuss domains and core ideas arising from the data. We invited SPU colleague June Hyun (SOE) with qualitative method expertise to be the 3rd member of our research team. This research team met regularly (on average, every other week) this past year to come up with a consensus regarding each transcript's theme. Outside of the team meetings, we individually worked on the transcript assigned for the upcoming meeting. We have finished identifying the domains based on a discussion of all 10 cases and have moved onto the phase of identifying the core ideas within the domains. We will resume the analysis of the core ideas in the Fall quarter of 2015.

¹ Faculty with a multiple year grant or asking for an extension or reallocation of their grant monies must complete as much of this form as possible as an interim grant report before multiple year disbursement, extension or reallocation can occur.

² When electronically submitting your report to CSFD, please cc: your chair and/or dean (whomever received your original grant notification).



2. *What were the major findings? If there are no findings or completed work at this time, what did you learn from carrying out this project that could be applicable to future scholarly works?*

The domains that have emerged so far through the CQR analysis include coping skills, mental health concerns, spirituality, support for college preparation, cultural identity, and hopes/dreams of MKs.

3. *How were or will the results be disseminated (publication, presentation, creative work, etc. – be as specific as possible)? Please add an addendum or link to completed projects or provide a time-line for future dissemination.*

We were able to present the preliminary data of the domains identified at the 2015 Western Psychological Association Convention in Las Vegas. The results were well-received and several individuals expressed genuine interest in the topic, which was encouraging. The presentation is attached below on p.3.

4. *What future scholarly works will be related to this project?*

We plan to submit a manuscript for publication to the *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* or a comparable journal. The manuscript is in progress, and we hope to submit by the end of Summer 2016 term.

5. *Is there external funding that you would like to pursue with the [Office of Sponsored Programs](#)?*

Not at this point, but if possibilities arise in the future, we are open to the idea.

Also, inspired by the initial findings from this study, the PI (Paul Kim) applied for a CCCU Networking Grant with SPFC colleague Lynette Bikos and Wheaton College colleague Pam Davis proposing a quantitative study involving non-American MKs, but this application was rejected. We are currently mulling over how to proceed with this particular project.

6. *Did you run into any problems or difficulties in completing the project? How were these resolved?*

Perhaps because of the nature of qualitative studies, the present study has been more time-consuming and labor-intensive than expected, meaning that we have had to adjust some of our internal deadlines. For instance, the transcription of the data took considerably longer than expected and so the start of the data analysis was a bit disjointed as we had to wait until transcripts were made available for analysis. Related, it has been a challenge, at times, to find a regular meeting time that works for all research team members (e.g., during the summer term). However, we feel that we have a better sense of the rhythm involving our data analysis and are optimistic about reconvening our meetings in the 2015 Fall quarter.

7. *If you had student participation – how did participation in this project further their professional goals or vocational understanding?*

Sori Yi was the student who transcribed our raw audio data. We feel that she got valuable experience in working with a research team and being exposed to a multicultural study. Given her identity as a Korean American, we think this was a great opportunity for her to be involved in a project that related well to her identity.

Psychosociocultural-Spiritual Experiences of Korean Missionary "Kids": A Qualitative Study

Paul Y. Kim, Ph.D., Hee-Sun Cheon, Ph.D., & June Hyun, Ph.D.

Abstract

This presentation is a report on preliminary findings from a qualitative study on the psychological experiences of Third Culture Kids (TCKs), defined as "those spending, or have spent, at least part of their childhood in countries and cultures other than their own" (Pollock & Van Reken, p.3). Specifically, the current study focuses on the psychological, sociocultural, and spiritual experiences of adult children of cross-cultural, religious missionaries (MKs). To address the need for more studies on the experiences of non-American Mks, we conducted semi-structured interviews with 10 Korean Mks and professionals working closely with MKs residing in South Korea. Some of the salient themes that emerged so far in the study include coping skills, mental health concerns, cultural identity issues, spirituality concerns, support for college preparation, and hopes and dreams for MKs. Implications for interventions are especially promising.

Introduction

- *Third culture kids* (TCKs) are those "spending, or have spent, at least part of their childhood in countries and cultures other than their own" (Pollock & Van Reken, p.3), and they have unique psychological experiences that warrant empirical attention.
- The present study highlights the experiences of one subgroup of TCKs—namely, children of religious, cross-cultural missionaries (i.e., missionary kids, or MKs).

Two Issues

1. The majority of the existing research on TCKs reflects the experiences of *American* MKs.
 - A search in the PsychInfo database using the subject "missionary kids" and the limiter of "peer-reviewed articles" reveals 3 empirical studies that included recruitment of participants (Davis et al., 2013; Davis et al., 2010; Walters & Auton-Cuff, 2009), all of which utilized North American samples.
 - A consequence of this trend is that the unique psychological experiences of international MKs get lumped with the American MK experience at best, and ignored at worst.
2. The empirical studies on the adaptation of MKs tend to focus on re-entry into the United States and related variables, such as re-entry program effectiveness for MK adjustment (e.g., Davis et al., 2013).
 - However, it is also important to highlight the preparatory experiences of international MKs *prior* to academic sojourn, for example, to the United States. Scholars have noted the importance of *anticipatory coping*, or one's preparedness for a potentially stressful upcoming event (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997; Folkman & Lazarus, 1985). Overlooking anticipatory coping on MK adjustment outcomes may lead to an incomplete picture of an important stage during the sojourn experiences of international MKs.
 - Furthermore, for international MKs, sojourn to the United States is not one of repatriation or re-entry, but instead it is a new acculturative experience that is qualitatively distinct from both the American MK and international student experience.

Study Aims

- Elsewhere in psychology, it has been noted that the overreliance on data collected on American samples in making inferences regarding all of humanity means that there is a "neglected 95%" (Arnett, 2009, p. 602) in this world, and therefore it is critical to address the disparity in the MK literature by highlighting the psychological experiences of international MKs.

- The sense of urgency is only heightened when considering the anecdotal evidence that many international MKs choose to pursue higher education in the United States, especially those who were educated in an international/MK school system.
- Given the above backdrop, the present study's aim is to highlight the unique psychological experiences of a group of non-American MKs.

Method

- **Participant Characteristics**
 - Participants for this study were Korean MKs and professionals working closely with Korean MKs (e.g., pastors, teachers):
 - 7 MKs, 3 MK workers
 - 2 males, 8 females
 - Mean age = 31.44 ($SD = 9.45$)
 - Examples of countries lived in: Indonesia, Philippines, and Kenya
 - Years lived in foreign country $M = 11.43$ ($SD = 5.38$)
- **Procedure**
 - As this is an unexplored area of psychological research, a qualitative method using the consensual qualitative research (CQR; Hill, Thompson, & Williams, 1997) method was utilized. The 1st and 2nd authors conducted 10 semi-structured interviews in South Korea.

The interview questions were derived from four major areas of literature:

Table 1. Interview question domains and examples

Literature area	Example
Psychological adjustment	Which internal or psychological coping skills are MKs lacking?
Sociocultural adjustment	What are some social/cultural deficits of MKs? Strengths?
Religious/spiritual issues	What are some ways in MKs are spiritually strong? Lacking?
Other general questions	What predicts success for international MKs? Failure?

Results

- Currently, the data analysis using the CQR method (Hill et al., 1997) is ongoing. The research team is meeting on a weekly basis to analyze the data based on the CQR method. We have identified domains based on the data, and we present a sampling of the domains below:

Table 2. Sample domains and quotes

Domains identified	Quote
Coping skills	"The best way I used to handle my stress was to just blend in with the environment that I'm in because... I didn't know the language and I didn't know anything about the culture, so I just let myself go..."
Mental health concerns	"Korean culture's so monocultural... So, if people aren't really telling you what the social – or the cultural like expectations are, and you're just trying to figure it out on your own – that gets really stressful."
Cultural identity	"...that they get confused, that they're not really Korean or... American, because I'm sure a lot of MKs have American friends as well..."
Spirituality	"Success for international MKs, I think it also has to do with the relationship with God... some MKs, they get lost spiritually."
Support for college preparation	"We need people who know what they're talking about to come [to lead programs in college preparation]. But within that program, what I would put in, is very basic and practical information."
Hopes and dreams	"I think a successful MK means that he or she has understood that all the past occurrences...like they had a meaningful reason behind every single occurrence, and that successful MK will be able to accept that as it happened and turn it into something useful for the future for the greater world."

Discussion

- MKs experience unique challenges originating from various sources (e.g., psychological, cultural, social, and spiritual).
- Personalized spiritual experiences seem especially integral for MKs to develop a sense of secure identity.
- Implications for future research
 - Develop a comprehensive and developmentally sequenced theory to better understand international MKs' adjustment and identity development.
 - Network and collaborate with churches and MK workers to help them to better assist international MKs.

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All correspondence regarding this poster can be addressed to Paul Kim at paulkim@spu.edu