

Proud of who I am: The role of authentic pride in adolescent's satisfaction with personal identity

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Abstract

Adolescence is characterized by a series of personal experiences that have important implications for an adolescent's identity development. In the present mixed-methods study, we investigate how the experience of authentic pride in adolescents, experienced from personal successes in both academic and extra-curricular achievements, shapes and influences their satisfaction with their personal identities. In Study 1, a series of semi-structured interviews with seven high-achieving Malaysian adolescents was conducted to explore accounts of achievements amongst adolescents and the meaning they derive from these achievements in relation to their goals, values, and beliefs. Results from this qualitative study, from a thematic analysis showed that the authentic pride-satisfaction with personal identity link was formed through positive self-esteem, internal attribution of successful outcomes, validation from external parties, familial involvement and contribution to and from the adolescent's broader social context. We conducted a quantitative study to validate the findings from Study 1, sampling 99 Malaysian high school students who completed a series of surveys on their experience of pride and how it may possibly relate to the factors uncovered in the qualitative study. Results from Study 2 provide support for our hypothesis in that there is a positive, significant relationship between the experiences of authentic pride with satisfaction with personal identity. No mediating effects were found in between the relationship between authentic pride and satisfaction with personal identity. Results from these two studies nonetheless showed that the mechanism linking pride with satisfaction with personal identity is also partly dependent on affirmations from the adolescent's family and friends. The findings suggest that the satisfaction with personal identity in a collectivist culture like Malaysia is also strongly dependent on validation from the adolescents' immediate social context. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed in light of these findings.

Keywords: pride, adolescence, personal identity

Cite as: Wong, T.Y.M. & Tee, E.Y.J. (2013). Proud of who I am: The role of authentic pride in adolescent's satisfaction with personal identity, paper presented at the *10th Biennial Conference of The Asian Association of Social Psychology*, Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

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