



Brief report: Identity processes in Filipino late adolescents and young adults: Parental influences and mental health outcomes



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ABSTRACT

This study focused on a process-oriented approach to identity formation using a sample of Filipino late adolescents and young adults (17–30 years; $N = 779$). Indirect relations between parenting and mental health via identity formation processes were examined. Two parenting dimensions (psychological control and support), two types of mental health outcomes (depression and psychological well-being), and five identity dimensions (commitment making (CM), identification with commitment (IC), exploration in breadth (EB), exploration in depth (ED), and ruminative exploration (RE)) were assessed. Recursive path analysis showed indirect relations between parenting and mental health via EB, ED, RE, and IC. Model differences between late adolescents (17–21 year olds) and young adults (22–30 year olds) were examined using multigroup path analysis. Results showed that the direct effect of psychological control on RE, and its indirect effect on depression through RE differed between the age groups. Implications and suggestions for future research are provided.

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The links between parenting behaviors, identity processes, and mental health outcomes were examined in Filipino late adolescents and young adults (age range 17–30 years), using the dual-process model of identity of Luyckx, Goossens, Soenens, and Beyers (2006). A model was tested in which the parenting dimensions of support and psychological control predict mental health outcomes (i.e., depression and psychological well-being) via indirect relations with identity processes. The model was tested separately for late adolescents (17–21 years old) and young adults (22–30 years old) to determine whether the relations among the variables would differ in these age periods, following recent efforts to distinguish parenting and identity processes for young adults from those of adolescents (Nelson, Padilla-Walker, Christensen, Evans, & Carroll, 2011; Tsai, Telzer, & Fuligni, 2013). Our sample is from the Philippines, a developing country that is considered largely collectivist, akin to its Asian neighbors, but also Westernized as a result of the extensive colonial and migration experiences of its people and the widespread impact of globalization (Alampay, 2014). Such cultural complexities may affect Filipino family relationships and identity processes in ways that are yet to be investigated.

In the dual-process model of identity, the key dimensions of commitment and exploration have been conceptually and empirically differentiated into the following dimensions: *commitment making* (CM) or the degree to which individuals have

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made decisions about identity-relevant issues; *identification with commitment* (IC) or the degree to which individuals have identified with and internalized their choices; *exploration in breadth* (EB) or the process of searching for different alternatives in ideals, goals, and values prior to forming commitments; and *exploration in depth* (ED) or the evaluation of existing commitments to ascertain that they resemble internal standards upheld by the individual (Luyckx et al., 2006). In addition, the model incorporated *ruminative exploration* (RE) as a maladaptive component of exploration, symptomatic of individuals with elevated levels of anxiety and depression who get “stuck” in the identity formation process (Luyckx et al., 2008).

Parental support and psychological control have been shown to influence identity formation. Parental support facilitates adaptive identity processes because young people feel more secure in their explorations and commitments in a family atmosphere of warmth and acceptance (Adams, Dyk, & Bennion, 1990; Luyckx et al., 2006). On the other hand, psychological control, defined as parenting that intrudes in the psychological and emotional world of the child (Barber, 1996, 2002) is detrimental to identity processes through inhibiting the person's sense of agency and autonomy (Koepeke & Denissen, 2012; Luyckx, Soenens, Vansteenkiste, Goossens, & Berzonsky, 2007). The identity processes of CM, IC, EB, ED, and RE, in turn, have been shown to relate substantially to mental health outcomes (Schwartz et al., 2011). For instance, IC has been shown to significantly predict well-being, whereas RE negatively predicts self-esteem and positively predicts depression and anxiety (Luyckx et al., 2006, 2008).

Our hypotheses conform to the aforementioned studies: 1) parental support is positively associated with adaptive identity processes (CM, IC, EB, ED); 2) adaptive identity processes are positively associated with well-being; 3) parental psychological control is positively associated with ruminative exploration (RE); and 4) RE is positively associated with depression. Furthermore, the present study explored whether the pathways of the model would differ between adolescents and young adults, given the variations in identity processes and commitments expected at these ages (Nelson et al., 2011).

Method

Sample and procedures

Data was obtained from a sample of 779 Filipino between the ages of 17–30 years ($M = 20.08$, $SD = 3.64$; 17–21 = 76.51%; 22–30 = 23.49%). The respondents were recruited via non-probability snowball sampling. Participants were recruited via email and social networking sites and directed to a website hosting the LimeSurvey online survey tool (Schmitz, 2003). After providing informed consent, participants completed the measures online. All measures were in English, the medium of instruction in the Philippine educational system. Demographic variables and descriptive statistics of the variables for the full sample and according to age group are reported in Tables 1 and 2. Cronbach's alphas and zero-order correlations are reported in Table 3.

Measures

Identity

The Dimensions of Identity Development Scale (DIDS; Luyckx et al., 2008) consists of 5-item scales for commitment making, identification with commitment, exploration in breadth, exploration in depth, and ruminative exploration, for a total

Table 1
Demographic variables of the sample used in the study.

Variable	Full sample <i>n</i> (%)	Late adolescents <i>n</i> (%)	Young adults <i>n</i> (%)
Gender			
Female	502 (64.30)	382 (49.03 _a)	120 (15.40 _a)
Male	277 (35.70)	214 (27.47 _a)	63 (8.09 _a)
Civil status			
Single	734 (94.22)	590 (75.74 _a)	144 (18.49 _b)
Married	45 (5.78)	6 (.77 _a)	39 (5.01 _b)
Residence			
Metro Manila	490 (62.90)	371 (47.63 _a)	119 (15.20 _a)
Other provinces	289 (37.10)	225 (28.88 _a)	64 (8.22 _a)
Employment status			
Unemployed	592 (76.00)	552 (70.86 _a)	40 (5.14 _b)
Employed	187 (24.00)	44 (5.65 _a)	143 (18.36 _b)
Living arrangements			
With parents	563 (72.27)	438 (56.23 _a)	125 (16.05 _a)
Away from parents	216 (27.73)	158 (43.77 _a)	58 (83.95 _a)

Notes: each subscript letter denotes a subset of age categories whose column proportions do not differ significantly from each other at the .05 level.

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