

Collective Pride and How it is Shown in Gen Z

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ABSTRACT

KEYWORDS

collective pride; pride;
generation Z;
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Collective pride is the feeling of pride that arises when others with whom we identify as a group accomplish an achievement. One of the groups in question is the generation, which is then referred to as generational identity. Each group in social identity theory has its own behavioral characteristics, including how they express pride in both their own achievements and those of others. This study aims to describe the characteristics of Generation Z as a generational identity related to pride. This research uses a qualitative method with a grounded theory approach. Data for this study were obtained through an interview process with three informants. The results of this study found that: 1) the tendency to overthink causes Generation Z to be reluctant to show their pride; 2) Generation Z's attachment to technology makes them show their achievements through social media; 3) Generation Z feels proud of their achievements due to the long process involved; and 4) there is empathetic involvement in the collective pride felt by Generation Z. The study concludes that collective pride in Generation Z is shaped by a combination of internal psychological tendencies, technological engagement, and empathy within a collectivist cultural context, all of which influence both the expression and experience of pride.

INTRODUCTION

Social identity is one of the major topics of discussion in social psychology, as it is used by individuals or groups to define their boundaries or attachments to each other. Social identity was first introduced by (Tajfel, 1974), who stated that this theory aims to understand and explain how people adapt and behave in a social context. According to (Hjort, 2002), social identity is formed through the process of comparison and differentiation from outside groups, which involves a sense of belonging among individuals within the same group. Having an understanding of identity can help explore the values that exist in society.

Social identity theory (SIT) is a grand theory that describes various intrapersonal cognitive mechanisms, interpersonal and intergroup behavior, social relations, and connects these processes to provide a broader theoretical framework (Ellemers & Haslam, 2011). One of these frameworks of thinking is generational identity. Generational identity is defined as an individual's awareness of his or her membership in a generational group, as well as the importance of that generational group to the individual (Joshi, Dencker, Franz, & Martocchio, 2010). This term was developed through studies on organizational behavior based on differences between employees in the work environment. The study of generational identity is also a relatively new field, so it is important to explore it in different ways to improve understanding of this phenomenon.

Deaux (2015) emphasizes that social identities are plural, can change over time, and provide behavioral consequences related to an identity. One form of this consequence is the existence of stereotypical threats. This stereotype threat condition arises when there is an association of negative views of the individual attached to the social category the individual

belongs to (Steele, 2010). The existence of this stereotype threat often arises in relation to generational identity. Constanza and Finkelstein (2015) found that there are generational differences in treatment in the workplace, supported by strong empirical evidence, but there is no underlying theory as to why these differences may arise. This finding is also supported by Pan, Wen, and Zuo (2018), who stated that the aging stereotype is related to the sustainability of age in society. This aging stereotype is influenced by various factors, some of which are group identification and intergenerational interaction. Based on this, research related to generational identity can be valuable in explaining why specific behaviors arise in specific generations.

One of the individual psychological constructs related to social identity is a sense of pride. Several previous studies have stated that pride plays a role in building aspects of identity in the form of personal tastes, social status, and group connections when achieving social status both individually and in groups (Ahuvia et al., 2018), increasing prestige based on the respect earned, and dominance based on aggression and coercion (Tracy, Mercadante, & Hohm, 2023), as well as directing individuals in the social hierarchy through emotions that take different forms with self-favorability (2020). These studies show that in a person's social identity, there is always a sense of pride.

Several studies have been conducted to explain the phenomenon of pride. Tracy and Robins (2004) stated that pride is divided into two aspects: authentic and hubristic pride. The difference between these two aspects lies in what makes individuals feel proud. Authentic pride comes from the achievements individuals have attained, while hubristic pride stems from the status individuals have possessed since birth, whether it be a level or family status (Tracy & Robins, 2004; 2007). Although these studies form the basis of influential theories in the development of pride and the emotions it raises, they are more dominated by an individualist paradigm, which overlooks the social aspect in explaining the feeling of pride. Neumann, Steinhäuser, and (Roeder, 2009) found that individuals with self-constructive interdependence, more common in collectivist cultures, are more likely to feel proud when others achieve success. This study confirms what (Chakrabarti, 1992) previously stated, that pride is not only based on individual achievements but also on the surrounding environment.

As a generational group, Generation Z in Indonesia is also a form of generational identity. Generation Z has specific characteristics attached to it, which can also be considered a stereotypical threat from the generation itself. (Sihombing, 2022) emphasized that Generation Z's high proficiency in technology makes them ready to engage in cross-cultural interactions at any time. The cross-cultural interaction that occurs means that the community reach of Generation Z is very wide. This is a concern because, according to (LaMothe, 2005), pride is formed through the mechanism of individual beliefs and judgments within a community. In addition, Herawati (2022) stated that Generation Z is vulnerable to experiencing Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) due to excessive use of social media. However, Malouf, Buckles, Nelson, Pritchard, and Schoenherr (2022) and (Alabri, 2022) stated that individuals with a high level of FOMO also have a high sense of belonging. This suggests that Generation Z has a strong sense of attachment to each other, regardless of the distance between community members.

Based on the gaps revealed in previous literature, this study seeks to explore the phenomenon of collective pride among Generation Z by addressing three main questions: First,

what are the characteristics of Generation Z related to the collective pride they show? Second, how do these characteristics affect their behavior in expressing collective pride? And third, what specific behaviors emerge in relation to collective pride within this generation?

In line with these questions, the objectives of this study are to describe the characteristics of Generation Z associated with collective pride, analyze how these characteristics influence their expression of collective pride, and identify the behavioral forms that arise from collective pride among Generation Z. This study is expected to provide both theoretical and practical benefits. Theoretically, it contributes to the development of social identity theory, particularly in the context of generational identity and collective pride, while also enriching the literature on pride by integrating collectivist cultural perspectives that have been underrepresented in previous individualistic paradigms. Practically, the findings can be used by educators, psychologists, and policymakers to better understand the emotional and social dynamics of Generation Z, thereby supporting the design of educational programs, mental health interventions, and social campaigns that are more aligned with the characteristics and needs of this generation. Furthermore, the results may serve as a foundation for future research on generational identity and collective emotions across diverse cultural contexts.

METHOD

This research was conducted using a qualitative method with a grounded theory approach. The grounded theory approach is a qualitative method aimed at forming a theory based on data (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). The concept studied, or the unit of observation in this study, is collective pride, which refers to the feeling of pride felt when an individual is part of a broader group and achieves something together (Chakrabarti, 1992; Liu, Lai, Yu, & Chen, 2014). The unit of analysis in this study is at the individual level, focusing on the behaviors exhibited by individuals regarding their feelings of pride.

The informants in this study were selected using a purposive sampling technique, where informants were chosen based on characteristics predetermined by the researcher. The informants in this study are three individuals from Generation Z: NB (female, 16 years old), BB (male, 20 years old), and EA (female, 19 years old). NB was born, raised, and currently resides in Denpasar, BB was born in Malang but grew up in Kalimantan and currently resides in Denpasar, while EA was born and raised in Malang but currently resides in Yogyakarta. The data collection method employed was a semi-structured interview technique conducted online, with a total of one session lasting 45 to 50 minutes.

The data obtained was analyzed using the Straussian Grounded Theory Analysis technique, which includes open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). This analysis technique was chosen because the study also emphasizes the social aspects that form collective pride, the semi-structured nature of the interviews, and the research questions arising from previous literature (Alamar, Intezari, Cardow, & Pauleen, 2018). The analysis was carried out with the help of Microsoft Word software.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Gen Z characteristics related to pride

1. Show pride through social media

One of the characteristics of Generation Z that is strongly attached is attachment to technology. Generation Z is the generation that emerged in the era of the technological revolution, where various innovations regarding technology are emerging. Generation Z has been used to electronic gadgets in their daily lives since childhood. Compared to other generations such as millennials or baby boomers, Generation Z has been familiar with mobile phones and console games since childhood. They have adapted since the time of development, until even when some activities in their lives have switched to using digital technology. This makes high technological literacy referred to as a characteristic of generation Z.

"From my own point as Gen Z, the most inherent thing is that it's definitely about technology. That's probably the most different from other generations because maybe the generation that used to be still rarely knew about technology, but like in Gen Z, it's nothing now, it's all about technology, let alone learning, for example, it used to be very difficult to find information about learning. It's just that now it's all easier because of technology and in my own opinion I've started to depend on technology because yes, how do everyone already use technology, so I definitely have to keep up with the times too, right?" EA:41

The three informants mentioned that both he and his close friends showed their pride through social media by sharing their achievements. The sense of pride shown is in the form of things related to the achievements that have been achieved, such as one of them is the acquisition of grades or trophies obtained, which are also given personal opinions or captions.

"They're proud of the way that some share on social media, like for example his friend NB can do something that he has learned for a long time, and because he learned that, he can and he updates on social media like, oh my god, finally I can." NB:25

2. Not showing pride because of overthinking and being lonely

Another mentioned characteristic that is inherent with generation Z is the tendency to overthink. This term was also introduced by Generation Z itself which also provided new terms for something that already existed before which it aims to increase awareness of it.

"If Gen Z has a lot of names like COVID time, break time, like what is the name whose purpose is actually the same as lunch." BB:20

Overthinking refers to a condition in which the mind is lost on something that may not have happened yet, but has already thought about various possibilities that have not happened at all. This thinking inhibits Generation Z from showing their feelings of pride due to fear and anxiety about the negative responses that others may raise.

"NB is sometimes like that, like a bit quickly influenced by what people say. You can't be stupid, so anything is really bad. Anything like NB enters the heart, especially NB is a quick thinker. So it was said that what person it was that actually brought down NB." NB:37

"Some people are like, oh, he's arrogant, some look at him, like he doesn't want to upload it, oh because he feels like this (is looked at badly) so he doesn't want to show it to people."

Meanwhile, the characteristics of loneliness possessed by generation Z make the sense of pride shown to be not genuine. The tendency to be alone in question is the habit of doing activities on their own, without being tied to a group

"I prefer to do something on my own, so it's like struggling alone, what do you do on your own, yes, it's more like being alone, I think it's like that, because I also sometimes feel the same way, so it's like being lazy to relate to other people, if it's already exhausted, it's like it's really lazy." EA:28

When there is a group that feels like a part of an individual, Generation Z still shows a sense of pride such as feeling happy but it only lasts for a moment, not attached to it.

Reasons why Generation Z feels proud

Feeling proud of the achievement of something certainly does not appear suddenly, but there is something that causes. Based on the answers of the three informants, the feeling of pride that arises when achieving something is due to various processes before the achievement is achieved. The three informants provided information about the achievements achieved and the process behind them and also the feelings raised, and mentioned that the hard work done and the long process made the achievements enjoyable. This means that the achievements achieved validate all forms of processes that have been passed.

"Because if he is alone, it is because of hard work and cooperation." BB:17

"Then yes, finally that's what I want to be realized because of my hard work too." EA:15

".. On the one hand, it's also fun because it seems like NB has learned so far. It's not worth it." NB:15

One of the informants also mentioned that a feeling of pride was raised when he managed to maintain the expectations of his parents.

"I'm proud because the first one is because the money my mom gave me was not wasted. Maybe if I mean like I didn't win, I'll most likely feel guilty about what my mom gave me because it's also a million." BB:14

This is related to the support that has been given by parents who are considered privileged by the three informants, which shows that the feeling of pride raised is related to fulfilling and maintaining the expectations of the people around them.

"Yes, maybe from the family itself, it means the family that is still supportive. I think it's also a privilege because maybe there are people out there who are less supportive of their families. So because this is my family, I am still supportive, so everyone thinks I am also positive." EA:20

"My family is firm, but they don't force them. So if you want to enter HI, enter. Whatever race you want to join, come on." BB: 19

Empathize with the achievements of others

Generation Z's view of the achievements achieved by others is not much different from the achievements achieved by themselves. According to the informant's presentation, other people's achievements are referred to as "contagious" because these achievements are known to the informant.

"Null. Because it's contagious, it's like feeling what you feel." NB:28

The informant also said that they felt involved in the process of achieving achievements, even though they knew only a little about the process. BB added that by knowing that a friend of his is trying and exerting energy to achieve something, he will feel involved in the process.

"Because I know how hard he is how tired he is." BB:16

"Yes, I also feel proud. I mean, yes, it's like being involved in every important thing in his life, he feels proud too. Then, for example, if he succeeds, he is also happy." EA: 17

"But I never followed every stage of him so I don't know where he progressed, and then suddenly it was the grand final and it turned out that he won, and then I didn't feel proud because I used to know him before he was famous like that." EA:31

Regarding the feeling of pride in the identified group, NB mentioned that there is a comparison of what other groups do that is considered negative. According to NB, he is proud of his group which actually has the same characteristics as other groups but does not do something that is normatively considered wrong by NB.

"They are solid. So even though NB is close to three people, they are also still concerned about others, still want to be with others." NB:27

"Then if we are used to it, talking to people like that behind the scenes, who has never done that, right? After that, if they talk about it, it's not a fabricated thing, so it's based on facts." NB:27

Pride and how to show it

According to Tracy and Robins (2004), pride has two forms: authentic pride and hubristic pride. These two types of pride are distinguished based on the source that causes the pride. Regardless of what causes individuals to feel proud, Tracy and Robins mention that pride universally has a specific mimicry, such as raising their hands, tilting their heads, or a small smile. Hernandez, Hovasapian, and Campos (2023) add that although the expression of pride is universal, it varies based on ethnicity and gender.

Regarding the way Generation Z shows a sense of pride through social media, Starchenko and Semina (2020) mentioned that individuals perceive social media as an opportunity to be in the "spotlight" or gain attention, form social status, and influence their peers. As Ahuvia (2018) stated, pride is a way to build social status. It can be inferred that the reason Generation Z shares their achievements on social media is to form a more positive image in the eyes of the public.

Generation Z, Overthinking, and Feeling Proud

Weidman and Tracy (2013) mentioned that excessive pride is negative, although there is also a positive view that pride validates the values possessed by individuals. Pride is also seen as something that can make individuals feel exaggerated and underestimate others, which can lead to heartlessness (Eylon, 2006). This is why some in Generation Z are reluctant to show their achievements, especially in collectivist cultures, which are more hesitant to highlight personal accomplishments (LaMothe, 2005).

Why Generation Z Feels Proud

The results of the data analysis found that Generation Z feels proud of their achievements due to the long process and hard work required to attain them. This aligns with how the components of pride form self-perception (Bayley, 2003). When an individual has a positive self-perception, they will develop an identity and feel proud of it, which is also expressed through pride. Weidman, Tracy, and Elliot (2016) mentioned that authentic pride can increase achievement by motivating individuals to engage in activities related to success and failure. Based on this, it can be said that feeling proud when achieving accomplishments is due to the validation of activities tied to success or failure, which manifests in a feeling of pride.

Generation Z, Collective Pride, and Empathy

Several previous studies have found that, in general, Generation Z has low levels of empathy due to their high attachment to technology and social media (Djedovic, Mujkanovic,

& Mirkovic-Hajdukov, 2021; Rola, Daulay, & Siregar, 2018). However, the findings of this study show that empathy involvement makes Generation Z feel a sense of pride for the achievements of others. This may be because Indonesia is one of the countries with a strong culture of collectivism, as mentioned in the country's constitution (Rahmat, Madjid, & Pernanda, 2020). Other research shows that high empathy is a characteristic of collectivist culture (Sorensen & Oyserman, 2009; Zhu, 2023).

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research on the feeling of collective pride in Generation Z and how they express it, it is shown that an inherent characteristic of Generation Z related to collective pride is their tendency to experience overthinking, which makes them reluctant to show this pride. On the other hand, Generation Z's attachment to technology enables them to express their feelings of pride in their achievements through social media. The reason Generation Z feels proud when they achieve something is the validation of the long process and hard work that has been put in.

Additionally, although Generation Z generally has low empathy characteristics, in a collectivist culture, they still have a high potential for empathy, which allows them to feel proud of the achievements of others.

Based on this study, a suggestion for future researchers is that the forms of pride and the factors that cause certain generational groups to feel proud should be collectively investigated through a survey with open-ended questions. This is because open-ended surveys can provide more specific information related to certain questions without yielding data that is not relevant to the research.

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