

ETHNIC IDENTITY AND COUNTERFACTUAL THINKING

ETHNIC IDENTITY AND COUNTERFACTUAL THINKING

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By

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ABSTRACT

Ethnicity is an important component of many people's identities and ethnic identity is socialized from one generation to another through families, communities, and the wider cultural ecosystem (Browne, 2013; Ashmore et al., 2004). Research suggests that having a strong sense of ethnic identity often helps individuals experience a sense of belonging and acceptance which contributes to well-being (e.g., Umãna-Taylor & Updegraff, 2007). This study examined how and to what degree individuals believe that their ethnic identities have contributed to their current lives. Participants were asked to construct counterfactual lists describing how their lives would be different if they did not have their ethnic identities. This new methodology utilized counterfactual thinking, the process by which people create mental representations of alternatives to past events, states or actions (Byrne 2007), to better understand the relationship between strength of ethnic identity and life satisfaction. A total of 145 participants with mean age of 21.87 years ($SD = 3.77$) living in the United States and India completed the study online. As expected, correlational analyses revealed a positive relationship between life satisfaction and strength of ethnic identity ($r = .23, p = .02$). Using an inductive content analysis of the emergent themes, the coding revealed that participants believe that their ethnic identities influence their educational and career choices, relationships with family, friends and significant others, diet/cuisine, health, and their personal characteristics including likes and dislikes. These findings are discussed in the context of the larger ethnic identity literature.

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INTRODUCTION

Culture, Ethnicity and Identity

When people talk about culture, they are usually referring to the learned beliefs, values and norms, language, customs, diet, dress, social roles, knowledge and skills that make up the lifestyle of any society. Culture is often passed on from generation to generation by a process known as socialization (Browne, 2013). Even though there are many different facets of everyday life which are shared collectively by most members of society, individuals have different conceptions and definitions of what constitutes their own personal culture. Ethnicity is an important way that people identify as being a part of their culture.

Identity refers to how individuals or groups define themselves, and also how other individuals or groups see and define individuals. Much like culture, identity is also formed through socialization. Personal identity can be described as the unique combination of personal attitudes, behavioral styles, goals and characteristics that make up an individual; it represents the set of characteristics and beliefs that an individual develops over the course of his or her life (Taylor, 1997, 2002; Erikson, 1968). Some of the major influences on personal identity can be family, the education system, and the mass media (Browne, 2013). Identity itself is very important as it allows us to understand what makes us similar or different from other people. Although individuals may choose to define themselves a certain way, factors like ethnicity, socioeconomic class, and sexual orientation typically influence how others view them. Thus, identity involves both internal and external processes.

In contrast to personal identity, collective identity refers to the connection an individual experiences to a group of people outside of themselves (Ashmore, Deaux & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004; Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979); it represents the shared beliefs, traits, history and

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experiences that are associated with an individual's group. These can be internalized by the individual and can comprise an important component of his or her identity (Ashmore et al., 2004). For example, if an individual's collective identity tends to value community relationships and collective success over individual success, it is plausible that these values will be incorporated into the individual's personal sense of self and identity. Although ethnic identity is an important type of collective identity, there appear to be many different ways of thinking about what exactly ethnic identity is and how it affects individuals.

One definition of ethnic identity put forth by Phinney (1996) states that an individual's ethnic identity refers to one's sense of belonging to an ethnic group and the part of one's thinking, perceptions, feelings, and behavior that is due to ethnic group membership. The ethnic group tends to be one in which the individual claims heritage. In line with this definition, there have been various studies which have explored identity and its relationships to ethnicity. Research has found that people can have multiple identities (Browne, 2013); however, these identities are often linked to whichever group a person feels feel most connected with and accepted into. Thus one's most salient identity could be related to ethnicity, race, religion, community, nationality, ancestry, sexual orientation, language, gender, or even one's dietary preferences. Which identity is most salient depends on the situation and context the individual is currently in (Assmann & Czaplicka, 1995; Bhui, Stansfeld, Head, Haines, Hillier, Taylor, Viner & Booy, 2005; Black, 1974; Collier & Thomas, 1988; Gruen, 1993; Hammersmith & Weinberg, 1973; Lecours, 2000; Nygren, 1998; Shapiro, 2007). Importantly, ethnic identity is increasingly being recognized as an important part of self-concept and is an important type of collective

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identity. Associating with a particular ethnicity can help create a sense of belonging and give people a sense of security. A well-established and strong ethnic identity has been linked with positive outcomes in areas such as academics and behavior (Hughes, Witherspoon, Rivas-Drake & West-Bey, 2009). Individuals in any given ethnic group can differ in terms of how important the group membership is to their overall sense of identity, and based on how much importance the individual places on that group membership, it can influence the individual's psychosocial adjustment (Umãna-Taylor, Vargas-Chanes, Garcia, & Gonzales- Backen, 2008; Umãna-Taylor & Updegraff, 2007).

A strong ethnic identity, coupled with being an active member of your group, can provide access to social networks which help to break down barriers and build a sense of trust between people (Collier & Thomas, 1988; Wexler, 2009). Developing an understanding of the significance and strength of ethnic identity within an individual allows us to understand the extent to which the individual perceives ethnic identity as influencing different aspects of his or her life including well-being. Multiple studies with immigrants have suggested that having a stronger sense of ethnic or cultural identity is related to higher life satisfaction and subjective well-being (Angelini, Casi & Corazzini, 2013; Safi, 2010). Although these studies focused on an immigrant population, one would expect that having a stronger ethnic identity would also be related to higher life satisfaction in the general population as the existing research has focused on the strength of ethnic identity being the major factor influencing life satisfaction as opposed to immigrant status. Although several studies that have been carried out during the last decade focusing on the aspects of emotion, self-processes and personality traits have demonstrated that

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culture and parts of it such as ethnicity are important factors in what it means to be a person (Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2003; Markus & Kitayama, 1998; Triandis & Suh, 2002 as cited in Handbook of Personality: Theory and Research, p. 543), there is little understanding of how people think their ethnic identity influences them. This is mainly due to the fact that, thus far, the methods utilized for studying ethnic identity have been relatively narrow in scope, focusing mainly on quantitative survey measures (Syed & Azmitia, 2008). A qualitative approach might provide a more nuanced method that potentially broadens our understanding of how an individual can experience ethnic identity. Keeping this in mind, I designed a study to develop a better understanding of ethnic identity and its influence on life satisfaction and well-being through the process of counterfactual thinking.

Counterfactual Thinking

Counterfactual thinking essentially refers to the process by which people create mental representations of alternatives to past or current events, states or actions. The thoughts usually take place in the form of ‘what if’ or ‘if only’ statements and can be either upward counterfactuals (better alternatives) or downward counterfactuals (worse alternatives) (Markman, Gavanski, Sherman, & McMullen, 1993; Roese, 1994; Byrne 2007). Counterfactual thinking often occurs when either we wish that a past event hadn’t occurred or we narrowly avoided a bad situation due to perceived luck. We often engage in counterfactual thinking through the course of the day, even if it may not be consciously (Byrne, 2007). A functional view on counterfactual thinking emphasizes that the process itself may be top-down than rather than bottom-up which would make counterfactual thinking an important and almost necessary part of behavior

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regulation (Epstude & Roese, 2008). Counterfactual thinking allows the individual to identify both the upsides and downsides to reality leading to development of belief in fate. This ultimately allows for more meaning to be derived from important life events, states or actions (Kray, George, Liljenquist, Galinsky, Tetlock & Roese, 2010). Thus counterfactual thinking itself allows individuals to create meaning, and could be an important tool to develop a greater understanding of ethnic identity as it can allow us to understand how people assign meaning to their ethnic identities.

Social Identity Theory and Developmental Theory

The two major theoretical approaches utilized in most of the research done on ethnic identity, and how it develops, have been Erikson's developmental theory (1968) and the social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). According to the Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), an individual has several different 'selves' that relate to different group memberships instead of a singular 'personal self'. Essentially, social identity refers to the derived self-concept an individual develops from his or her perceived acceptance into different social groups (Hogg & Vaughan, 2002). Hence an individual can have multiple social identities and the different identities can be triggered by different contexts (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher & Wetherell, 1987)

According to Erikson's developmental model of identity (1968), increased autonomy after childhood can result in a larger number of interactions with an individual's communities, schools and neighborhoods which allows for exploration of different ideologies, relationships and vocations. Thus, from Erikson's perspective, the formation of an individual's identity allows

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an individual to know his or her role and place in the world and respective social groups. Building on Erikson's ideas, Marcia (1966), proposed two different facets of identity exploration- crisis or exploration and commitment. The crisis or exploration stage refers to a period of sampling different types of roles as individuals and different types of lifestyles and life plans. The exploration stage is generally experienced in late adolescence when individuals are actively trying out alternative lifestyles. The commitment aspect of identity exploration simply refers to the extent an individual was invested in a particular role or lifestyle. Thus, the commitment to a particular role (such as a social identity) could be an indication of the extent of perceived influence of that particular role to an individual's identity. Additionally, Marcia (1993) states that the formation of identity is a key event in personality development and is associated with positive outcomes as it can provide the individual with a sense of well-being and a sense of purpose (Erikson, 1968). Thus, having a strong sense of identity is essential to further development.

Phinney (1993) also used Erikson's developmental model in the context of ethnic identity development and developed three main stages in which it occurs. Firstly, there is a period of unexamined ethnic identity, which refers to a time where individuals might not have explored their ethnic identity in any way. The second stage is an important one of exploration in which individuals interact more with their ethnic identities in the form of ethnic group interactions, researching literature and history of their ethnic identity and attended more cultural events of the particular ethnic group. This stage is similar to Marcia's stage of exploration (1993) as it allows individuals to understand their role and place in their social (ethnic groups). The final stage of

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ethnic identity development is the acceptance of their ethnic identity where individuals reconcile any conflicts they have with their ethnic identities and accept their membership into their ethnic group (Phinney, 1993).

While the social identity approach essentially focuses on the sense of belonging created by a perceived acceptance into a group and the attitudes and feelings that go along with a sense of group membership, Erikson's developmental model suggests that identity development takes place through the process of exploration and commitment and Phinney's model explains how this exploration and commitment leads to the development and acceptance of ethnic identity. Both these approaches seem equally as important in terms of developing ethnic identity.

Emerging Adulthood

Emerging adulthood is fairly newly developed stage of development, beginning at the end of adolescence around 18 and gradually transitioning into young adulthood in the late 20s to 30. This is a period marked by continuing exploration, mainly in the areas of education, work and love (Arnett, 2000). These changing developmental trends are often also marked by a tradeoff, with a delay in adult roles in exchange for that extended period of exploration. This stage is identifiable with change in the areas of identity exploration, establishing autonomy, self-focus, and possibilities. There are many different factors that can influence development in this stage. Due to differences in educational and occupational opportunities, and responsibilities, socioeconomic status and cultural influences have the potential to impact whether or not emerging adulthood is experienced by individuals (Morch, 1995; Cote & Allahaar, 1996; Bynner, 2005). However, given the general importance of identity exploration in this stage (for those who

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experience it), this study focused on participants that were in the stage of emerging adulthood, ages 18-29.

Personality and Identity

Personality, as defined by Funder (1997), is “an individual’s characteristic pattern of thought, emotion, and behavior, together with the psychological mechanisms, hidden or not, behind those patterns” (pp. 1–2). The concept of personality can also be explained as a combination of emotions, cognitions, and habits activated when situations motivate their expression and hence can determine how an individual uniquely adjusts in the world (Triandis & Suh, 2002). Many cross cultural studies have shown that the Big Five personality trait dimensions are cross-culturally robust and tend to show stability across cultures and ethnicities, both Eastern and Western (Benet-Martinez & Karakitapoglu-Aygun, 2003; Kwan, Bond, & Singelis, 1997; McCrae & Costa, 1997; Triandis & Suh, 2002). Understanding the relationship between strength of ethnic identity and personality could prove useful to see if the strength of ethnic identity can be increased based on different personality traits. For example, someone who scored highly on the openness to experience trait of personality which includes intellectual curiosity and receptiveness to novel, varied experiences (John & Srivastava, 1999) might be more malleable and ‘open’ to allowing their ethnic identities to influence more facets of their life than someone who scores lower. This malleability could potentially be reflected positively in the strength of an individual’s ethnic identity. Developing a stronger sense of ethnic identity could allow for individuals to reap the benefits regarding well-being and life satisfaction that are

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associated with a stronger ethnic identity (Collier & Thomas, 1988; Wexler, 2009, Angelini, Casi & Corazzini, 2013; Safi, 2010).

Counterfactual Thinking: Affect, Personality and Life Satisfaction

As mentioned above, counterfactual thinking can often be triggered by negative events. Epstude & Roese (2008) also found that negative affect can influence the activation of counterfactual thinking because negative affect may act as an indicator that goal progress is lacking. Additionally, negative affect possibly acts as an alarm system, which then heightens a range of cognitive activity leading to the development of a larger number of counterfactuals (Lieberman, Gaunt, Gilbert, & Trope, 2002; Taylor, 1991; as cited in Epstude & Roese, 2008). Hence, affect can be a useful tool to understand the process of counterfactual thinking itself and thus can act as a moderating factor during counterfactual thinking tasks. Further research on affect done by Cohn and colleagues (2009) showed that an increase in positive affect predicted an increase in life satisfaction.

Additionally, research done by Ardakani, Mehri and Shandi (2015) found that there exists a significant relationship between the five personality traits (Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Neuroticism) and counterfactual thinking. Particularly, they found that openness has a positive correlation with upward counterfactual thinking whereas agreeableness was correlated with downward counterfactual thinking (Ardakani et al., 2015). Thus, personality traits can influence how individuals create counterfactuals and could provide further insight into how people think about their ethnic identities through the process of counterfactual thinking.

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RESEARCH QUESTION AND HYPOTHESES

Given the literature discussed above, this research aimed to see how people see themselves as a function of their ethnic identity and the extent to which people think their ethnic identity influences their life. Learning about the extent to which people think their ethnic identity influences their life could allow us to understand how people assign meaning to their ethnic identity. Furthermore, this study also explored the relationship between different personality traits and strength of ethnic identity.

Firstly, I hypothesize that having a stronger ethnic identity will be reflected in higher life satisfaction. This hypothesis (H1) is based on studies with immigrants that have shown increased well-being with a stronger ethnic identity (Angelini, Casi & Corazzini, 2013; Safi, 2010). I also hypothesize (H2) that an individual with a stronger ethnic identity will have a larger number of downward counterfactuals (reflected in negative counterfactual list score). This prediction is based on the above findings of a stronger ethnic identity being related to increased well-being – participants with a stronger ethnic identity would see their ethnic identity as having affected their lives positively.

With regards to the personality traits, I hypothesize (H3) that there will be a positive relationship between the traits of extraversion and agreeableness and strength of ethnic identity and a negative relationship between the trait of openness and strength of ethnic identity based on the research done by Ardakani and colleagues (2015) stated above. Additionally, I hypothesize (H4) that participants who have a high negative affect score will have a larger number of counterfactual items as compared to those with a high positive affect score, based on existing

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research on how negative affect can heighten cognitive activity (Lieberman, Gaunt, Gilbert, & Trope, 2002; Taylor, 1991; as cited in Epstude & Roese, 2008). Finally, based on Cohn and colleagues (2009) research on affect, I also hypothesize (H5) that those with high positive affect scores will have a positive relationship with life satisfaction while those with high negative affect scores will have a negative relationship with life satisfaction.

METHODS

Participants

A total of 145 participants with mean age of 21.87 years ($SD = 3.77$) living in the United States and India completed the quantitative portion of study online through Qualtrics. Out of these, 75 participants completed the qualitative portion of the study. Participants were recruited through social media, campus emails and the SONA system at a mid-sized state school in New York State. The majority of the participants were female (55.17%), while the remaining participants were male (40.69%) and other or did not answer. Additionally, the majority (85.3%) of the participants had attended some college, including and up to doctoral degrees.

Materials

Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS; Watson & Clark, 1994; see Appendix A). This scale measures independent levels of positive affect and negative affect, and consists of 60 words that represent different feelings and emotions. Participants rate how they feel each word describes their emotions from the past week using a 1-5 Likert scale, ranging from very slightly or not at all to extremely, with higher numbers on the scale representing a higher level of affect. The PANAS is considered to be a highly reliable measure fore affect with Cronbach alpha

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coefficient scores of was 0.86 to 0.90 for the Positive Affect Scale, and 0.84 to 0.87 for the Negative Affect Scale.

Big Five Inventory (BFI, John & Srivastava, 1999; see Appendix B). This scale is a 44-item inventory that measures an individual on the Big Five Factors (dimensions) of personality of Openness to experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Neuroticism. The participants rate a number of characteristics from a scale of one to five with one indicating that they strongly disagree with a statement and five indicating that they strongly agree with it. The scale has been tested multiple times with people across the world and has been found to be valid and reliable to measure the five dimensions of personality (McCrae & Costa, 1997; McCrae & Costa, 1999; McCrae, Costa, Del Pilar, Rolland, & Parker, 1998).

Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985; see Appendix C). This is a five-item scale designed to measure global cognitive judgments of one's life satisfaction (not a measure of either positive or negative affect). Participants indicate how much they agree or disagree with each of the five items using a seven-point scale that ranges from '7- strongly agree' to '1-strongly disagree'. The scale reliability for the Satisfaction with Life Scale is around .80 making this a very reliable scale to measure life satisfaction.

Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM; Phinney 1992; see Appendix D). This scale will serve to assess strength of ethnic identity across diverse samples. This scale, in addition to the assessment of ethnic self-identification, has three subscales (a) affirmation and belonging (sense of group membership); (b) ethnic identity achievement; and (c) ethnic behaviours. The participants rate the items on a scale from one to four with one indicating that

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they strongly disagree with the statement and four indicating that they strongly agree with it. The original MEIM has a reported reliability of 0.84 making the scale highly reliable to measure strength of ethnic identity.

Procedure

Participants for this study were recruited through social media, campus emails and the SONA system at a mid-sized state school in New York State and completed the study online through Qualtrics. Participants signed and dated an informed consent page (Appendix E) and completed some demographic measures (age, sex) and then identified their ethnic identity (Appendix F). Participants were given the following definition to help them get a better understanding of what I meant by ethnic identity – “the identification with and perceived acceptance into a group that has a shared system of symbols, meanings, practices, and values, as well as norms for conduct” (Collier and Thomas, 1988). Participants completed the quantitative measures listed above and a counterfactual task (Appendix G).

For the counterfactual task, participants were given the following instructions: “Imagine your life without your ethnic identity. Create a counterfactual list imagining all the ways your life would have been different if your current ethnic identity hadn’t been a part of your life. A sample counterfactual list has been given to you; this has been created for a school choice but please create yours with respect to your ethnic identity. Additionally please rate each of the items on the on a scale of -2 (much worse) to +2 (much better) whether each alternative is better, worse or same as your current reality.” As mentioned in the instructions, participants were provided

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with a sample counterfactual list regarding school choice (see Appendix G) and given a scale from -2 (Much Worse) to +2 (Much Better) to rate each of their alternative nodes.

Finally, participants also answered some open ended questions (see Appendix H) regarding the major influences on their ethnic identity (Where they grew up, where they live now, etc). To ensure that creating the counterfactual list did not influence how participants answered on the MEIM, and vice versa, the participants were counterbalanced in terms of the order in which they complete that measure and task.

RESULTS

Demographic and Quantitative Analyses

Descriptive analyses of demographic variables indicated that participants were between the ages of 18 and 29 with a mean age of 21.87 ($SD = 3.78$). The majority of participants were female ($n = 80$), while 40.96% identified as male and the rest identified as other ($n = 1$) or did not answer the question. Additionally, the majority of the participants (87.4%) identified as heterosexual and the remaining participants were split into homosexual (1.4%) and preferred not to say (11.2%). As the sample largely identified as heterosexual, analyses comparing other variables and sexual orientation were not conducted.

Based on the ethnic identities identified by the participants, they were classified into five main ethnic categories based on region. 42.67% of the participants were classified as Asian (e. g., “Indian”, “Jordanian”, “Korean”), 34.67% of the participants were classified as European (e. g., “Irish”, “Hungarian”, “Italian”), 21.33% of the participants were classified as American/Native American (e. g., “American”, “African American”, “Native American”, “Irish

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American”), 10.67% of the participants were classified as Hispanic/Latino (e. g., “Puerto Rican”, “Caribbean”, “Afro-Latina”), and finally, 9.33% of the participants were classified as African (e. g., “African”, “African American”). Some participants fell into multiple categories due to expressing multiple ethnic identities. 28% of the participants identified two or more ethnic identities, both within the same categories and between different categories.

Based on the ratings assigned to the items on the counterfactual lists from the Much Worse (-2) to Much Better (+2) scale provided to participants, average counterfactual list scores were calculated for all participants. Means and standard deviations of demographic variables and outcome measures are reported in Table 1. No significant difference was observed between males and females regarding counterfactual list score, number of counterfactuals, number of themes endorsed, strength of ethnic identity score, positive PANAS score, negative PANAS score or life satisfaction score. There were also no significant differences between males and females with regards to the personality measures of extraversion, conscientiousness and agreeableness.

However, significant differences were observed between males and females with regards to the personality measure of neuroticism, $t(111) = -2.55, p = .01$, and openness, $t(112) = -1.98, p = .05$ with females reporting higher scores, on average, than males. An independent samples t-test also indicated that there was a significant difference in age between male and female participants, $t(137) = 2.78, p = 0.01$, with females on average being older than males. Means and standard deviations of all quantitative variables separated by gender, along with the corresponding t-statistic are reported in Table 2.

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Correlational analyses indicated there was no significant correlation between age and PANAS score, personality measure scores, life satisfaction scores and strength of ethnic identity scores. There was also no significant correlation observed between age and counterfactual list score or number of counterfactuals generated. Therefore, it is unlikely that participant age had any effect on these outcomes.

Correlational analyses were conducted between all quantitative measures including counterfactual list score (average score of each counterfactual list based on the item ratings), number of themes endorsed and number of counterfactuals generated; results reported in Table 3. A significant, positive correlation was observed between Life Satisfaction and Strength of Ethnic Identity ($r = .23, p = .023$) which indicated that a high life satisfaction score was related with a stronger sense of ethnic identity. A significant, positive correlation was also observed between Strength of Ethnic Identity and Number of Themes Endorsed ($r = .27, p = .03$), indicating that stronger the ethnic identity, more the number of themes endorsed. Thus participants with a stronger ethnic identity believed their ethnic identity to have influenced their lives in a larger number of ways. With regards to strength of ethnic identity, significant, positive correlations were also observed between strength of ethnic identity and personality traits of extraversion ($r = .26, p = 0.01$), openness ($r = .29, p = .00$) and conscientiousness ($r = .27, p = .01$). Additionally, life satisfaction was also found to be positively correlated with extraversion ($r = .23, p = .02$), agreeableness ($r = .34, p = .00$), conscientiousness ($r = .36, p = .00$) and positive affect ($r = .24, p = .01$), and negatively correlated with neuroticism ($r = -.44, p = .00$) and negative affect ($r = -.54, p = .00$). Unsurprisingly, there was a strong, positive, significant correlation between number of

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counterfactuals and number of themes endorsed ($r = .79$, $p = .00$) with a larger number of counterfactual items being reflected in a larger number of themes endorsed. No significant correlations observed between the counterfactual list score with any other quantitative measures.

Qualitative Analysis

An inductive content analysis was conducted on the content of the counterfactual lists of the participants. The coding scheme used in this study was based on themes identified in counterfactual items in a lab study based on counterfactual thinking regarding romantic relationships presented at a conference for the Society for the Study of Emerging Adulthood (Holmes, Pandit, Studer, Colby, Baker, & Beaudette, 2015). To create this coding scheme, in the lab, each item on the counterfactual lists of the participants was sorted into different main themes based on the content of the item (item referring to each individual counterfactual thought; e. g., “I would not have known my mother's extended family”). For example, if the content of the item referred to academia (e. g., “Might not have gained admission into the University of Chicago, since they place weight on athletics), then the theme was Education; or if the item referred to the participant’s finances (e. g., “Might not receive financial support needed), then the theme was Money. Some items could be double coded, depending on if the counterfactual item covered two themes. For example, the statement “I may have better opportunities for education and jobs, if I was in Europe, a Slavic, or Dutch country” was coded as both Education and Employment. Each of the items was then further coded into subthemes which were different aspects of the main theme. For example, an item that was categorized into the main theme of Education would be further broken down into different aspects of Education such as the timeline of education, or the

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academic behavior. Additionally, based on the ratings that participants assigned to each counterfactual item, it was either considered positive (e. g., “Might've had different career choices for future [+1]), negative (e.g., “I wouldn't have this strong sense of duality within my spiritual theologies and my cultures [-2]) or neutral (e.g., “Might had looked awkward at an Indian wedding” [0]). Five researchers coded all the counterfactual data and each participant’s counterfactual data was coded by at least two researchers. Disagreements regarding coding were resolved through consensus and a consolidated list of themes and subthemes were developed. For the purposes of this study, the same coding scheme was adopted for the counterfactual lists with additional themes and subthemes being added as needed. 30% of the counterfactual lists were double coded and inter-rater reliability exceeded 90% concordance; disagreements were resolved through consensus. Table 4 summarizes the themes and subthemes and provides a definition for each.

A frequency analysis was conducted to determine the percentage of participants who endorsed each theme, the results of which are seen in Figure 1. The theme most endorsed was Personal Change with 61 participants (81.33%) making statements that endorsed the theme. The Personal Change theme encompassed counterfactual statements that referred to changes in internal self, for example “Would not have grown to be independent” and “would not have been so much technologically developed”. Personal change was further broken down into subthemes of Perspective change (change in the individual’s outlook, e. g., “Might have heightened awareness of injustice”), Other’s perspective (change in other’s perspective about the individual, e. g., “I may be subjected to increased racism”), Motivation (increases or decreases in one’s

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drive, e.g., “Might've gotten too complacent with comforts and life”), Characteristics (change in the qualities of the individual such as likes/dislikes, self-esteem level, etc, e. g., “be more outgoing”), Knowledge (knowledge gained, outside the realm of academia, e. g., “Would not have improved my knowledge on Black Studies”). Other themes such as Education ($n = 36$; academic activities/pursuits, grades, academic achievements, e. g., “taken Biology as my elective instead of CS in class”), Family ($n = 32$; any mention of familial relationships, e. g., “Might not have been closely linked with family”), and Personal Relationships ($n = 26$; relationships such as friendships outside of family and romantic relationships, e. g., “Would maintain friendship with my school friends”). Additionally, themes such as Activities/Interests, Employment, Event, Food/Cuisine, Location and Romantic Relationships were endorsed by more than a fifth of the participants each. The least frequently endorsed theme was Health ($n = 3$; decisions, activities, and/or behaviors that directly or indirectly affect physical well-being, e. g., “Would've neglected my health and food habits”) suggesting that most participants did not believe their ethnic identity to be influential on their physical health.

Participants generated between one and 33 counterfactual items with an average of 7.44 ($SD = 5.76$) items per participant. Out of all these counterfactual items, 68.61% were direct thoughts, while the remaining 31.39% were indirect offshoots of the direct thoughts. Additionally, based on the counterfactual list scores, 70.15% of the participants had an average negative rating of $-.87$ ($SD = .50$) for their alternate reality, while 17.91% of the participants had an average positive rating of $.91$ ($SD = .63$). The remaining had an average neutral rating of 0,

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indicating that overall, these participants did not believe their alternate reality to be either better or worse.

Independent samples t-tests revealed a few significant relationships between the quantitative measures and theme endorsement (whether the main theme was endorsed or not by the participant). In these analyses, the independent variable was theme endorsement and the dependent variables were the questionnaire outcome variables. Participants who endorsed the theme of Activities/Interests (specific activities one is involved with including cultural/traditional interests, e. g., “Would celebrate other festivals and follow other traditions”) were more likely to have high positive affect scores, $t(68) = -2.43, p = .02$, a higher ‘agreeableness’ score on the personality traits measure, $t(67) = -2.03, p = .05$, higher life satisfaction scores, $t(68) = -2.21, p = .03$, and a high strength of ethnic identity score, $t(68) = -1.98, p = .05$. Additionally, participants who endorsed the theme of Romantic Relationships (romantic relationships, one’s relationship status, or one’s romantic partner, e. g., “No pressure to remain with ex because he was culturally Irish from extended family”) were also more likely to have a high positive affect score, $t(68) = -1.98, p = .05$, and participants endorsing the theme of Language (statements about language, e. g., “I wouldn’t have learned some Spanish”) also scored highly on strength of ethnic identity, $t(68) = -2.43, p = .02$ compared to those who did not endorse the theme.

Conversely, participants who endorsed the theme of Employment (refers to one’s career and/or job, e. g., “Would not have worked at the Wind Tunnel and made connections for my career down the road”) were more likely to have a low ‘agreeableness’ score than those who did not, $t(67) = 2.15, p = .04$. Finally, participants who endorsed the theme Health were more likely

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to score highly on the neuroticism trait compared to participants who did not endorse the theme, $t(68) = -2.18, p = .03$.

No significant differences were observed on Counterfactual list score, number of counterfactuals and theme endorsement between participants who completed the counterfactual task first and those who completed the MEIM first suggesting that one does not influence the other.

Chi-square analyses between sex and themes (whether they were endorsed or not), showed that there was no significant differences between the themes endorsed by males and females. Chi square analyses were also conducted within the themes themselves and the significant results are reported in Table 5. Participants who endorsed the theme Activities/Interests were also likely to endorse the theme of Personal Relationships. Participants who endorsed Education were also likely to endorse the themes of Employment, Location and Personal Relationships. Further, participants who endorsed Family also were likely to endorse Personal Relationships. Finally, participants who endorsed Language were also likely to endorse Physical Appearance.

An inductive content analysis of the open ended question regarding what participants regarded to be the biggest influence on their ethnic identities showed that most of the participants (62.5%) believed their families to be the strongest influence. When participants talked about their families as the most important influence on their ethnic identities, their statements included their parents, grandparents and other family members. For example, some responses from the participants were “My Parents and other family members passing down traditions”, “My

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grandparents have been really strong ethnic influences in my life” and “my father and grandfather telling me about my family history, and our culture”. Additionally, 38.2 % of the participants believed the place where they grew up or lived to be their biggest influence; examples of some of the responses were “Growing up in the Annapolis area with parents who both worked full time”, “10 yrs of stay in a small town” and “The place where I live in, Mumbai”. Other influences mentioned in participants’ responses were Education, Environment and Neighborhood.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study showed the complex role that ethnic identity plays in the lives of emerging adults. Prompting participants to examine their lives with and without their ethnic identity allowed participants to view both the pros and cons of the most salient aspect of their ethnic identities. Analysis of the counterfactual list scores showed that most participants viewed their alternative lives as worse off than their current realities, suggesting that most emerging adults in our study perceived their ethnic identity as being a positive influence in their lives. Although some participants who identified as having an identity that is in the minority expressed that having a different ethnicity might allow them to experience less discrimination and bullying, they viewed their current reality overall as better than an alternative without their ethnic identity.

Existing literature has suggested that having a stronger identity can lead to higher life satisfaction due to the sense of belonging and acceptance that contributes to subjective well-being (Umãna-Taylor & Updegraff, 2007). Based on existing literature, this study’s first hypothesis stated that there would be a positive correlation between strength of ethnic identity

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and life satisfaction. The significant, positive correlation between strength of ethnic identity and life satisfaction supported this hypothesis. Since the majority of the counterfactuals created were rated negative (e. g., “Exposure to the various art forms, dance forms, stories would have been missed” [-1]), conceptualizing a worse reality could have contributed to participants viewing their own ethnic identities in a positive manner, which in turn could lead to a stronger identity and a higher life satisfaction. Thus, the counterfactual task could have contributed to a perspective change, acting as mechanism to regulate behavior. This is in line with existing literature that suggests that counterfactual thinking can be an important part of behavior regulation (Epstude & Roese, 2008).

The second hypothesis of this study stated that a stronger ethnic identity would be reflected in an overall negative counterfactual score due to participants viewing their ethnic identity positively. The results showed that, although the correlation between the two was negative, it was not significant. So while a majority of participants had an overall negative counterfactual score, strength of ethnic identity scores were variable. Although results were not as expected, it is worthwhile noting that the majority (74.78%) of the participants considered their ethnic identity as a source of pride and thus, despite the strength of their ethnic identity, participants may have viewed alternative lives without their ethnic identity negatively. Further, the significant, positive correlation between strength of ethnic identity and number of themes endorsed indicates that participants appear to have a more nuanced view of their ethnic identity than just whether it affects their life positively or negatively.

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The analyses done to understand the relationships between personality traits and strength of ethnic identity revealed some interesting findings. While literature exists which suggests that personality traits are an important part of an individual's identity due to their potential to determine how individuals 'fit in' in this world (Triandis & Suh, 2002), there doesn't exist much literature on how strength of a social identity (in this case – ethnic identity) can be influenced by personality traits and vice versa. The third hypothesis stated that there would be a positive relationship between the traits of extraversion and agreeableness and strength of ethnic identity and a negative relationship between the trait of openness and strength of ethnic identity. The correlational results showed that individuals who scored highly on the traits of extraversion and openness had a significant, positive relationship with strength of ethnic identity and no significant relationship existed between agreeableness and strength of ethnic identity. Thus this hypothesis was only partially supported and the direction of the relationship between openness and strength of ethnic identity was the opposite of that predicted. Given that extraversion and openness are positively correlated, it is not surprising that openness and extraversion were both positively related to strength of ethnic identity. However, when controlling for life satisfaction, results showed that none of the personality traits had significant relationships with strength of ethnic identity. This suggests that life satisfaction may be a mediating factor between personality traits and strength of ethnic identity. Given that existing literature shows the strong relationships between personality measures and life satisfaction (Schimmack, Oishi, Furr, & Funder, 2016), and that strength of ethnic identity and life satisfaction are positively correlated, the observed results without controlling for life satisfaction might simply be indicative of far reaching

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influence of life satisfaction. Further research can explore if these results are replicated with a larger sample, to really pinpoint if there exists a relationships between personality traits and life satisfaction.

The final two hypotheses stated that those participants with a high negative affect score would have a larger number of counterfactual items and a negative relationship with life satisfaction scores, whereas those with a high positive affect score would have fewer counterfactual items and a positive relationship with life satisfaction scores. Results partially supported this hypothesis with only the relationship between positive and negative affect, and life satisfaction being significant and in the direction predicted. These results support existing literature that suggests an increase in positive affect can increase life satisfaction. (Cohn et al., 2009).

As emerging adulthood is characterized by a period of exploration and identity development (Arnett, 2000), this study gives us a nuanced look at the many ways that emerging adults perceive their ethnic identity (a kind of social identity) to have influenced their personal identity and life. The qualitative results of this study allow us to understand how emerging adults assign meaning to their ethnic identities. The large number of themes that emerged based on the inductive content analyses showed that emerging adults believe their ethnic identities have a rather wide and far reaching range of influence on them, including their personal growth, their personal and romantic relationships, their family, their finances, educational choices and opportunities, their interests and diet and even their religion and language. Particularly, the recurrent appearance of the theme of Personal Change supports the idea that, during a period of

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identity development, social identities and how those social identities determine individuals' 'place in the world', can have an important impact on emerging adults' development. This idea is further supported by a further breakdown of the Personal Change which showed an important belief that the majority (67.33%) of the participants believed that not only did their ethnic identities influence their perspective of the world but also had the potential to influence other's perspective of them (e.g., less discrimination). Based on appeared of the subtheme of Other's perspective, it appears that participants are aware that although they may identify with an ethnic identity in one way, their ethnicity, as it appears to others, influences how others perceive and interact with them.

In addition, the prevalence of the themes of Personal relationships, Family, Employment and Education are also in line with existing emerging adulthood literature that states that the exploration that happens during this period is mainly focused in the areas of education, personal relationships (including romantic ones) and work (Arnett, 2000). Results showing that participants with high life satisfaction and strength of ethnic identity scores were more likely to endorse the Activities/Interests theme highlight the importance of cultural traditions within ethnic groups. Research done by Schweigman and colleagues (2011) and Honko (1995) showed that individuals who participated in cultural activities and traditions tended to have a stronger ethnic identity which is related to higher life satisfaction. Further, participants with a stronger ethnic identity also were more likely to endorse the theme of Language. This result makes sense once we note the ethnic identities of the participants. Participants whose ethnic identities were primarily non English speaking minorities tended to have stronger ethnic identities and were also

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likely to be bilingual or have accents (this data was obtained from the participants' counterfactual lists).

As the majority of the participants believed the strongest influence on their ethnic identities to be their family or the location they grew up; it is safe to infer that these emerging adults rely on their social network and its influences to explore their identity.

Strengths and Limitations

The major strength of this study was the unique methodology that it utilized to study how emerging adults assign meaning to ethnic identity. Using counterfactual thinking as a tool to understand how individuals believe their ethnic identities to have influenced their lives allowed us to look into the many different areas that ethnic identities have the potential to influence. Although some of these themes such as food/ cuisine, traditions and language are intuitively understood to be influenced by ethnicity and ethnic identity, some of the emergent themes such as education, religion, and money showed a far greater and wider range of influence than the literature would expect. Thus, this methodology allowed for a really nuanced and detailed view of the perceived influence of ethnic identity on emerging adults. Additionally, the method of collecting the data (online survey) allowed for wider range of participants, thus allowing for diversity in both the participants and responses.

Although the study had its strengths, it also had a few limitations. Since the data was collected online, there was no way to ensure that all participants completed all parts of the survey. This led to some participants completing only the quantitative parts of the survey and not completing the counterfactual tasks and open ended questions; this led to a smaller sample of

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counterfactual lists to be coded. A larger number of completed counterfactual lists could have allowed for an even more detailed view into the perceived influence of ethnic identity on emerging adults. Additionally, although some participants completed the counterfactual task, they did not complete some of the open ended questions regarding where they grew up and where they lived, thus limiting the comparative analyses between participants from India and participants from the United States. Moreover, having a qualitative portion in the study itself created certain challenges, such as the survey taking a longer amount of time to complete, which may have deterred the participants from completing all the parts of the questionnaire.

As research has found that people can have multiple identities and thus one's most salient identity could be related to race, religion, nationality, gender or sexual orientation and not necessarily limited to ethnicity (Assmann & Czaplicka, 1995; Browne, 2013; Bhui, Stansfeld, Head, Haines, Hillier, Taylor, Viner & Booy, 2005; Black, 1974; Collier & Thomas, 1988; Gruen, 1993; Hammersmith & Weinberg, 1973; Lecours, 2000; Nygren, 1998; Shapiro, 2007), the participants in the study may not necessarily be able to adequately identify all the areas in their life they perceive to be influenced by just their ethnic identity. 29.33 % of participants in the study expressed that their ethnic identity was not their most salient one, instead, mentioning that sexual orientation identity and religious identity to be more important to them. Thus, they did not attribute many things in their lives to be influenced by their ethnic identity which prevented the participants from giving detailed responses in their counterfactual lists. Further, as participants were in the stage of emerging adulthood, the current study only represented how they make meaning of their ethnic identities at the moment they participated in the study. Their

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responses may change in the future after this continued period of exploration and a more solidified commitment, or lack thereof, to their ethnic identity. A more detailed, in person survey might be a better approach to get richer and complete data with a larger sample size.

Future research

Although this study allowed for a rather unique look into ethnic identity and the meaning that emerging adults assign to it, there are some ways that this could be explored even further. Addressing the limitations expressed above will allow us to get richer and more detailed counterfactual lists. As an individual's most salient identity can be influenced by many social and individual factors, future research could look into how individuals create alternatives or counterfactuals to different kinds of identities such as racial, sexual, gender, dietary (such as vegan) and religious identities or their role as a parent, child, sibling, mentor, etc. Additionally, exploring whether participants identified with the majority or minority group in terms of their identity might provide a more detailed view into strength of ethnic identity and how it influences individuals. Finally, this study only took a cursory look at the relationship between strength of ethnic identity and personality traits. Future research could take a more detailed look at all the different personality traits and how they relate to not just ethnic, but strength of different kinds of identities.

It might also be worthwhile exploring if the ethnic identities themselves influenced how participants created counterfactual lists. Taking a look at it from this aspect would allow us to see if there is a certain way that individuals think about their ethnic identity or if there are certain

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identities that predispose individuals to thinking about them a certain way. These are questions much better answered in a larger scale, detailed and more diverse study.

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TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1
Means and Standard Deviations for Participants
Variable and Scales

	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Age	21.87	3.78
PANAS Positive	33.20	9.65
PANAS Negative	25.26	9.20
Extraversion	17.02	7.09
Conscientiousness	22.18	5.13
Agreeableness	24.06	5.65
Neuroticism	18.52	6.71
Openness	26.87	5.40
Life Satisfaction	16.55	6.73
Strength of Ethnic Identity	21.00	7.89
Counterfactual List Score	-.45	.86
Number of Counterfactuals	7.44	5.76
Number of Themes Endorsed	4.27	2.17

Note. Age presented in number of years. Counterfactual list score calculated by averaging the score of each counterfactual item.

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Table 2
Means and Standard Deviations for Outcome Measures by Gender

	Males		Females		<i>t-test</i>
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Age	22.88	5.32	21.11	1.67	2.78*
PANAS Positive	33.54	9.86	32.67	9.56	.17
PANAS Negative	24.40	8.87	25.53	9.15	-.65
Extraversion	17.20	6.55	16.87	7.60	.24
Conscientiousness	23.00	5.02	22.63	5.28	-.38
Agreeableness	23.53	4.58	24.73	6.23	-1.14
Neuroticism	16.71	7.21	19.91	6.06	-2.56*
Openness	28.08	4.53	26.17	5.51	1.98*
Life Satisfaction	16.02	7.42	17.35	5.91	-1.05
Strength of Ethnic Identity	20.07	7.57	22.20	7.63	-1.36
Counterfactual List Score	-.44	.90	-.51	.77	.32
Number of Counterfactuals	6.96	6.64	7.84	5.30	-.60
Number of Themes Endorsed	4.33	2.06	4.24	2.37	.16

* $p < .05$

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Table 3
Correlations between Demographic Variables and Outcome Measures

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Age	--												
2. PANAS +ve	-.00	--											
3. PANAS -ve	-.07	-.22*	--										
4. Extraversion	-.10	.48**	-.21*	--									
5. Agreeableness	-.06	.20*	-.40**	.12	--								
6. Conscientiousness	.03	.43**	-.46**	.35**	.44**	--							
7. Neuroticism	-.11	-.34**	.50**	-.40**	-.37**	-.41**	--						
8. Openness	.05	.30*	-.13	.19*	.06	.22*	-.07	--					
9. Life Satisfaction	.14	.24*	-.54**	.23*	.34**	.36**	-.44**	.12	--				
10. Strength of Ethnic Identity	-.17	.19	-.07	.26**	.16	.27**	-.14	.29**	.23*	--			
11. Counterfactual List Score	-.06	.06	.22	-.15	.10	-.14	-.10	-.07	-.06	-.10	--		
12. Number of Counterfactuals	.11	-.11	.06	-.14	.13	.01	.04	.14	-.03	.13	.07	--	
13. Number of Themes Endorsed	.02	-.08	-.05	.03	.09	.14	-.09	.12	.13	.27*	-.09	-.79**	--

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

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Table 4

Themes and subthemes for counterfactual list items with definitions

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Definition</u>	<u>Subtheme with Definition</u>
Activities/Interests	Refers to specific activities one is (or is not, no longer) involved with or cultural/traditional interests Ex: playing guitar, sports, music, traveling Ex: More interest in culture, different traditions	
Education	Refers to academic activities/pursuits, grades, academic achievements	Timeline: refers to when someone would pursued education (graduated earlier, would've been in school already) Academic behavior: refers to the kind of student someone is or a change in how someone acts in education (studied harder, skipped fewer classes) Choices: refers to the choices someone has made in school, major, or whether or not to pursue education Other
Employment	Refers to one's career and/or job Ex: new job, job opportunities	
Family	Refers to any mention of family	
Location	Refers to locale in which an individual lives, one's place of living Ex: wouldn't live in Thailand,	

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would live somewhere else

Money

Refers to finances

Ex: gain/loss of money, loans, salary, expenses, budget

Personal change

Refers to internal change in the self

Perspective: refers to a change in the individual's view on life or outlook

Other's perspective: refers to a change in other's perspective about you

Motivation: refers to increases or decreases in one's drive

Characteristics: refers a change in the qualities of the individual (e.g., likes/dislikes, self-esteem level)

Knowledge: refers to knowledge gained, outside the realm of academia

Other

Event

Refers to a specific event, the individual's overall experience of something, or arbitrary event; an *external* change

Ex: would have had a different study abroad experience, went to Disneyland

Personal relationships

Refers to any relationships outside of family or romance

Friends: refers to a change in the amount of friends one has or the quality of existing friendships

Professional: refers to any ties created through colleagues or work, or relationships that will be advance one's career, includes networking references

Other

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Physical appearance	Refers to actual physical appearance Ex: get more tattoos, look scary	
Romantic relationships	Refers to romantic relationships, one's relationship status, or one's romantic partner (real or imagined)	
Health	Refers to decisions, activities, and/or behaviors that directly or indirectly affect physical well being Ex: self-destructive behavior or risk taking behavior, health related choices	
Language	Refers to statements about language Ex: Might not have been bilingual, knowledge of languages	General – refers to general statements about language (ex-wouldn't have known English, wouldn't be bilingual, etc) Accent-references to accent
Religion	Refers to statements about religion Ex: might have been a different religion, statements about religious restrictions	
Food/ Cuisine	Refers to food/Cuisine	

Note. The 'other' category in all subthemes refers to statements that fit into the overall main themes but does not fit into any of the subcategories

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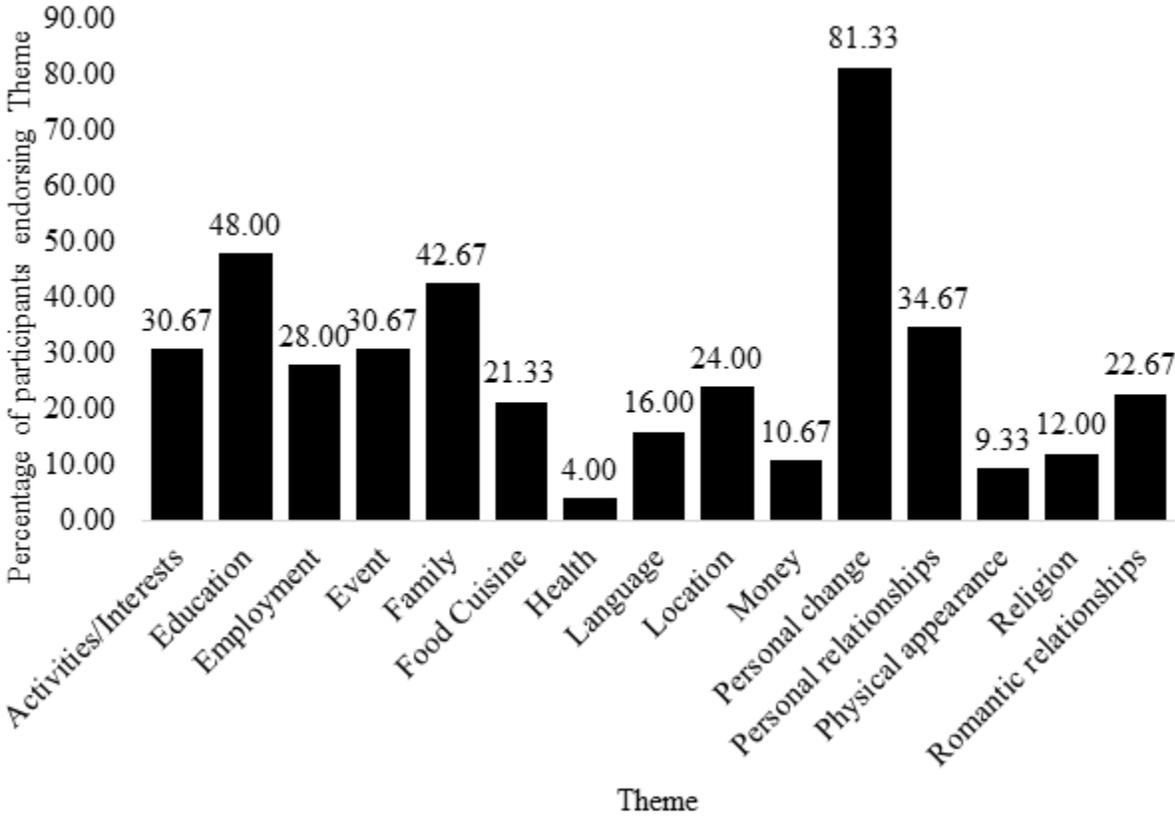


Figure 1. Percentage of participants endorsing each main theme.

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Table 5

Significant Chi-square values for Theme Interaction

Theme interaction	χ^2	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Activities x Personal Relationships	4.96	1	.03
Education x Employment	10.71	1	.00
Education x Location	11.02	1	.00
Education x Personal Relationships	6.13	1	.01
Employment x Personal Relationships	4.54	1	.03
Family x Personal Relationships	6.13	1	.01
Language x Physical Appearance	10.08	1	.00

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS)

This scale consists of a number of words and phrases that describe different feelings and emotions. Read each item and then mark the appropriate answer in the space next to that word. Indicate to what extent you have felt this way during the past few weeks. Use the following scale to record your answers:

1	2	3	4	5
very slightly	a little	moderately	quite a bit	extremely
or not at all				
_____ cheerful	_____ sad	_____ active	_____ angry at self	
_____ disgusted	_____ calm	_____ guilty	_____ enthusiastic	
_____ attentive	_____ afraid	_____ joyful	_____ downhearted	
_____ bashful	_____ tired	_____ nervous	_____ sheepish	
_____ sluggish	_____ amazed	_____ lonely	_____ distressed	
_____ daring	_____ shaky	_____ sleepy	_____ blameworthy	
_____ surprised	_____ happy	_____ excited	_____ determined	
_____ strong	_____ timid	_____ hostile	_____ frightened	
_____ scornful	_____ alone	_____ proud	_____ astonished	
_____ relaxed	_____ alert	_____ jittery	_____ interested	
_____ irritable	_____ upset	_____ lively	_____ loathing	
_____ delighted	_____ angry	_____ ashamed	_____ confident	
_____ inspired	_____ bold	_____ at ease	_____ energetic	
_____ fearless	_____ blue	_____ scared	_____ concentrating	
_____ disgusted	_____ shy	_____ drowsy	_____ dissatisfied with self	
_____ with self				

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Appendix B

Big Five Inventory

Here are a number of characteristics that may or may not apply to you. For example, do you agree that you are someone who likes to spend time with others? Please write a number next to each statement to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement.

Disagree
strongly
1

Disagree
a little
2

Neither agree
nor disagree
3

Agree
a little
4

Agree
Strongly
5

I see Myself as Someone Who...

- ___ 1. Is talkative
- ___ 2. Tends to find fault with others
- ___ 3. Does a thorough job
- ___ 4. Is depressed, blue
- ___ 5. Is original, comes up with new ideas
- ___ 6. Is reserved
- ___ 7. Is helpful and unselfish with others
- ___ 8. Can be somewhat careless
- ___ 9. Is relaxed, handles stress well
- ___ 10. Is curious about many different things
- ___ 11. Is full of energy
- ___ 12. Starts quarrels with others
- ___ 13. Is a reliable worker
- ___ 14. Can be tense
- ___ 15. Is ingenious, a deep thinker
- ___ 16. Generates a lot of enthusiasm
- ___ 17. Has a forgiving nature

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- | Disagree
strongly
1 | Disagree
a little
2 | Neither agree
nor disagree
3 | Agree
a little
4 | Agree
Strongly
5 |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
|---------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
- ___ 18. Tends to be disorganized
- ___ 19. Worries a lot
- ___ 20. Has an active imagination
- ___ 21. Tends to be quiet
- ___ 22. Is generally trusting
- ___ 23. Tends to be lazy
- ___ 24. Is emotionally stable, not easily upset
- ___ 25. Is inventive
- ___ 26. Has an assertive personality
- ___ 27. Can be cold and aloof
- ___ 28. Perseveres until the task is finished
- ___ 29. Can be moody
- ___ 30. Values artistic, aesthetic experiences
- ___ 31. Is sometimes shy, inhibited
- ___ 32. Is considerate and kind to almost everyone
- ___ 33. Does things efficiently
- ___ 34. Remains calm in tense situations
- ___ 35. Prefers work that is routine
- ___ 36. Is outgoing, sociable
- ___ 37. Is sometimes rude to others
- ___ 38. Makes plans and follows through with them
- ___ 39. Gets nervous easily
- ___ 40. Likes to reflect, play with ideas

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Disagree
strongly
1

Disagree
a little
2

Neither agree
nor disagree
3

Agree
a little
4

Agree
Strongly
5

___41. Has few artistic interests

___42. Likes to cooperate with others

___43. Is easily distracted

___44. Is sophisticated in art, music, or literature

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Appendix C

Life Satisfaction Scale

Below are five statements with which you may agree or disagree. Using the 1-7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item.

	Strongly disagree	disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Slightly agree	agree	Strongly agree
In most ways my life is close to ideal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The conditions of my life are excellent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am satisfied with my life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
So far I have gotten the important things I want in life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

ETHNIC IDENTITY AND COUNTERFACTUAL THINKING

Appendix D

Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure

In this country, people come from many different countries and ethnics, and there are many different words to describe the different backgrounds that people come from. These questions are about your cultural identity or your cultural group and how you feel about it or react to it.

Use the numbers below to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)

I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs. _____

I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly members of my own ethnic group. _____

I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means for me. _____

I think a lot about how my life will be affected by my ethnic group membership. _____

I am happy that I am a member of the group I belong to. _____

I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group. _____

I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me. _____

In order to learn more about my ethnic background, I have often talked to other people about my ethnic group. _____

I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group. _____

I participate in ethnic practices of my own group, such as special food, music, or customs. _____

I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group. _____

I feel good about my ethnic background. _____

My ethnic identity is _____

My father's ethnic identity is _____

My mother's ethnic identity is _____

ETHNIC IDENTITY AND COUNTERFACTUAL THINKING

Appendix E

State University of New York at New Paltz Informed Consent Form

Study Title: Ethnic Identity and Counterfactual Thinking

Name of Principal Investigator: Sphoorti Pandit
Graduate Student
Psychology Department
(202)549-5526
sphoortip@hotmail.com

This is a psychological research study. Participation in this study is strictly voluntary. You are being asked to take part in this research study because you are over the age of 18 and in a romantic relationship that has lasted one year or longer.

WHY IS THIS STUDY BEING DONE?

The major purpose of this study is to use counterfactual thinking to develop a greater understanding of ethnic identity, personality traits that can be related to strength of this identity and to study the relationship between strength of ethnic identity and life satisfaction.

HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL TAKE PLACE IN THIS STUDY?

Approximately 100 people will take place in this study.

WHAT IS INVOLVED IN THIS STUDY?

If you participate in this study you will be asked to complete a questionnaire packet and create a list of how your life would be different without your most salient ethnic identity.

HOW LONG WILL I BE IN THE STUDY?

Participation will take approximately 45 minutes. You can stop participating at any time and you may choose not to answer any specific questions that make you feel uncomfortable.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF THIS STUDY?

The risks of participation are minimal and are not in excess of those encountered in daily living. For more information about risks, you can contact Sphoorti Pandit at sphoortip@hotmail.com.

ARE THERE BENEFITS TO TAKING PART IN THE STUDY?

There may be no direct benefits to you for participating in this study. We hope the information learned from this research will benefit the larger community and lead to a better understanding of what contributes to how individuals' experience their ethnic identity. If you are a psychology student at SUNY New Paltz you may earn 4 subject pool credits.

WHAT ABOUT CONFIDENTIALITY?

ETHNIC IDENTITY AND COUNTERFACTUAL THINKING

Efforts will be made to keep your information confidential. Your name will not be associated with any of the information that you provide during the study. The information will be coded and analyzed in such a way that you cannot be identified. We cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. Your personal information may be disclosed if required by law.

WHAT ARE THE COSTS?

There are no costs to participate in this study. You will not receive any payment for your participation in this study.

WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS AS A PARTICIPANT?

Taking part in this study is voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may choose not to take part, may leave the study at any time, or you may choose not to answer any research questions which you consider inappropriate. Leaving the study will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. We will tell you about new information that may affect your welfare or willingness to stay in this study.

WHOM DO I CALL IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

For questions about the study or a research related injury, contact the Principal Investigator, Sphoorti Pandit at sphoortip@hotmail.com. For questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact the State University of New York at New Paltz Institutional Review Board (which is a group of people who review the research to protect your rights) at (845) 257-3282.

OTHER INFORMATION

The Institutional Review Board at the State University of New York at New Paltz has determined that this research meets the criteria for human subjects according to Federal guidelines.

ETHNIC IDENTITY AND COUNTERFACTUAL THINKING

Appendix F

Demographic Questions

1.) Age (In years) _____

2.) Sex

- Male
 - Female
 - Other (please elaborate)
 -
-

3.) Do you think of yourself as

- Heterosexual
- Homosexual
- Bisexual
- Other
- Prefer not to say

4.) Tell us about your ethnicity. How do you identify yourself and why? [Ethnic identity can be defined as one's sense of belonging to an ethnic group and the part of one's thinking, perceptions, feelings, and behavior that is due to ethnic group membership. The ethnic group tends to be one in which the individual claims heritage (Phinney, 1996)]

5.) Is your background a source of pride, confusion, discomfort or something else? Please explain.

6.) How do others react to your perceived and expressed identity? What is that like for you?

ETHNIC IDENTITY AND COUNTERFACTUAL THINKING

Appendix G

Sample Counterfactual List

Create a counterfactual list imagining your life without your identified ethnic identity.

Below is a sample list for your reference that has been created for a school choice, please create yours with respect to your ethnic identity. As you can see below, every main point may have multiple sub-points if the sub-points are a direct consequence of the main point. These may contain further items if those are a direct consequence of the sub-points. However, none of the sub-points or any additional points are a requirement, they simply can be added if you wish.

Additionally each of the main points, the sub-points and any consequently following items have been rated on this scale shown below whether each alternative would have been better or worse than the current reality.

Much Worse	Worse	The Same	Better	Much Better
-2	-1	0	+1	+2

IF I HAD NOT ATTENDED UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND:

1. Might not have come to SUNY New Paltz (0)
 - a. Not met my boyfriend, who is the love of my life and also my best friend. (-2)
2. Would not have become closer to my cousin (-1)
3. Might have gone to Ohio State University (0)
 - a. Been closer to Rajesh Bund family (+2)
4. Would have never met Michelle, Caitlin, Nicole and Carly (-2)
 - a. Would not have had second family (-2)
 - i. Increased depression (-2)
5. No weekly karaoke (-1)
 - a. Would not have improved singing (-1)
6. Would not have had to deal with Stephen's death (+2)
7. Might have stayed in India (0)
 - a. Become too comfortable (- 2)
 - i. Not significant personal growth (-2)
 - b. Would be closer to parents (+2)
 - c. Would have seen grandfather before he passed away (+2)
 - d. Would have studied Biology (0)
 - i. Would have finished Masters by now (+1)

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Appendix H

Open Ended Questions

Please complete the following questions:

This study focused on ethnic identity, but people have many different identities that are important to them. Please describe what identities are most important in your life. For each one, explain why the identity is important to you

How do you feel your ethnic identity has changed over time?

Have you ever felt particularly connected or disconnected from your ethnic identity? Please try to give a specific example or story so I can understand your experience

Where do you currently reside (for how long)?

Where did you grow up (for how long)? How do you think this had influenced your identities?

What do you feel has influenced your ethnic identity the most?
