

## Being Authentic is the New “Pieces”: A Mixed Methods Study on Authenticity among African Christian Millennials

**Authors :** Victor Counted

**Abstract :** Staying true to self is complicated. In most cases, we might not fully come to terms with this realities. Just like any journey, a self-discovery experience with the ‘self’, is like a rollercoaster ride. The researcher attempts to engage the reader in an empirical study on authenticity tendencies of African Christian Millennials. Hence, attempting the all-important question: What does it actually mean to be true to self for the African youth? A comprehensive, yet an unfinished business that applies the authenticity theory in its exploratory navigations to uncover the “lived world” of the participants who were part of this study. Using a mixed methods approach, the researcher will exhaustively give account to the authenticity tendencies and experiences of the respondents in the study by providing the reader with a unique narrative for understanding what it means to be true to oneself in Africa. At the quantitative study, the participants recorded higher scores on the Authenticity Scale (AS) authentic living, while showing a significant correlation within the subscales. Hypotheses were tested at the quantitative phase, which statistically supported gender and church affiliation as possible predictors for the authenticity orientations of the participants, while being a Christian native and race/ethnicity were not impact factors statistically. The results helped the researcher to develop the objectives behind the qualitative study, where only fifteen AS-authentic living participants were interviewed to understand why they scored high on authentic living, in order to understand what it means to be authentic. The hallmark of the qualitative case study exploration was the common coping mechanism of splitting adopted by the respondents to deal with their self-crisis as they tried to remain authentic to self, whilst self-regulating and self-investing the self to discover ‘self’. Specifically, the researcher observed the concurrent utilization of some kind of the religious-self by the respondents to regulate their self crisis, as they relate with self fragmenting through different splitting stages in hope for some kind of redemption. It was an explanation that led to the conclusion that being authentic is the new pieces. Authenticity is in fragments. This proposition led the researcher to introduce a hermeneutical support-system that will enable future researchers engage more critically and responsibly with their “living human documents” in order to inspire timely solutions that resolve the concerns of authenticity and wellbeing among Millennials in Africa.

**Keywords :** authenticity, self, identity, self-fragmentation, weak self integration, postmodern self, splitting

**Conference Title :** ICCPBS 2015 : International Conference on Cognitive, Psychological and Behavioral Sciences

**Conference Location :** Zurich, Switzerland

**Conference Dates :** January 13-14, 2015