
ABSTRACT

How college students form and maintain their “self-acknowledged *kyara*” with friends

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Most contemporary adolescents discuss relationships with their friends by using *kyara*, a shortened form of the Japanese pronunciation of the English word “character.” This study examined how college students form and maintain their “self-acknowledged *kyara*” with friends. We collected data using semi-structured interviews with 15 college students. A Modified Grounded Theory Approach revealed the following processes. When a new friendship began, college students looked back on their past friendships. In addition, they recognized their lack of confidence and a hope for changing themselves. Their “self-acknowledged *kyara*” was formed based on an ideal image of themselves and observations of their friends; the students behaved according to the image of *kyara* based on expectations from friends. Then, they maintained their *kyara* by exploring appropriate behavior based on their friends’ reactions. These results suggest that the communication style of using *kyara* prompted students to reconsider their true nature.

Key Words: *kyara*, college students, friendship, self-formation
